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EDITORIAL

Acts 17 is the record of the Apostle Paul's defense of the biblical faith before the godless Athenians. His "spirit was being provoked within him" to proclaim the Gospel message with regard to "Jesus and the resurrection" (17:16-18). The understanding of the Athenians was a context of entire spiritual confusion (17:18-21), and although they were inherently religious (17:22), the people of Athens worshipped willfully "in ignorance" (17:23). Paul, therefore, declared truth by proclaiming the Creator "who made the world and all things in it" and "gives to all *people* life and breath and all things" (17:24-25), and who is wholly sovereign (17:26). The proclamation exposed the unacknowledged dependence upon God by the unbelievers (17:27-29). Paul concluded his defense by calling all people everywhere to repent of their foolishness because God "has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness" through Christ who was raised "from the dead" (17:30-31). The command to repent as a consequence of God's judgment and Christ's resurrection was preceded (and even structured) by Paul's theological argument with regard to the origin of all things. The theology of one God is based upon the truth that one God created all things. The answers with regard to origins will either strengthen or weaken the theology of Acts 17. Although the times have changed since Paul stood on Mars Hill, the essence of the biblical argument remains unchanged. The message of recent fiat creation is certainly a theological statement, as is advocacy in the Big Bang since this latter position affirms that the universe is composed of 4% ordinary matter and 96% "otherness." Jonathan Henry demonstrates with expertise why Christian apologists must abandon such advocacy that truly weakens the biblical authority with regard to origins.

The next article in this issue addresses the doctrine of double procession both historically and theologically, which demonstrates the necessary theological statement with regard to the Source or First Principle of the Trinity. Augustine developed psychological analogies of the Trinity that influenced Western theology profoundly, often with great suspicion by the Eastern church. James Larson also explains these analogies with application to the social sciences, and demonstrates the centrality of understanding the Godhead in relation to many forms of thought. Elmer Town's article explains the distinctive position that the church experiences "in Christ," and how this relationship affects the believer's life. The articles herein affirm that there is no greater thought than that of God, and his relationship to those redeemed by His grace.

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SHOULD CHRISTIAN APOLOGISTS ADVOCATE THE BIG BANG? Implications for Dispensationalists

Jonathan F. Henry

The purpose of this article is to address claims by some Christian apologists that the Big Bang was God's method of creation. Another common claim is that the Big Bang is an apologetic for biblical creation. By this reasoning, Genesis 1:1 states that there was a beginning, and the Big Bang was also the beginning of the universe. Therefore, the Big Bang is an evidence for creation not evolution, which is a mistaken conclusion. It is inconsistent for a dispensationalist to believe that God will work miraculously in *future* events, yet to insist that God was constrained to employ natural law acting over billions of years in *past* events.

The ministries of the Christian apologists named in this article, in addition to others that could be named, generally take a "high view" of Scripture that strengthens Christian faith. The focus on Big Bang advocacy in this article should in no way be taken as a broad criticism of any of these ministries. Before proceeding further *a note on word usage* is needed because there are many variants of Big Bang theory. Throughout this article, "Big Bang theory" means all variants collectively considered as a group; the phrase "Big Bang model" refers to a specific variant.

COMMON CLAIMS OF CHRISTIAN APOLOGISTS

Christian apologists advocating the Big Bang include William Lane Craig, Norman Geisler, Hugh Ross, David Noebel, and Lee Strobel. William Lane Craig, research professor of philosophy at Talbot School of Theology, was interviewed by Lee Strobel.¹ Strobel asked, "And the universe came into being in what has been called the Big Bang?"² Craig answered: "Exactly. As [astrophysicist] Stephen Hawking said, 'Almost everyone now believes that the universe, and time itself, had a beginning at the Big Bang.'"³

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¹ Lee Strobel, *The Case for Faith* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000) 80-118.

² Ibid. 103.

³ Quoting Stephen W. Hawking and Roger Penrose, *The Nature of Space and Time* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996) 20.

In an interview with Norman Geisler, who is research professor at Southern Evangelical Seminary in Charlotte, North Carolina,⁴ Geisler referred to “agnostic” Robert Jastrow as claiming that “the Big Bang points to God.”⁵ On the basis that the Bible and Big Bang theory both posit a beginning for the cosmos, Geisler also accepts that “modern astrophysics . . . affirms” that there was a Big Bang.⁶ Strobel himself concluded, on the strength of Big Bang advocacy retraced to secular scientists such as Hawking and Jastrow, that “atheism cannot credibly account for the Big Bang.”⁷

Apologist David Noebel criticized secular humanist Paul Kurtz for failing to reckon with the Big Bang, which, according to Noebel, is a “metaphor” of creation suggesting “a creative point like that in Genesis 1:1, which is outside the purview of Secular Humanist cosmology.”⁸ Noebel further claimed that there is still controversy among Christians “about the age of the universe, [but] not whether a Big Bang occurred. . . .”⁹ Noebel thus implied that the Big Bang is above questioning in the Christian community, which is not truthful.

In *Dismantling the Big Bang: God’s Universe Rediscovered*, Christian coauthors Alex Williams and John Hartnett began with “Four Reasons to Reject the Big-Bang Theory.”¹⁰ Their first reason is, “It doesn’t work.”¹¹ Aside from the scientific difficulties with this theory, the simple fact is that *not all Christians accept it*. Some of these Christians are highly credentialed in physics and astrophysics. Hartnett has a Ph.D. in physics from the University of Western Australia, where he worked in the Frequency Standard and Metrology research department, in addition to working with the European Space Agency’s atomic clock ensemble in space. It is a short step from claiming that virtually all Christians accept the Big Bang to the equally fallacious assertion that the Big Bang is incompatible with atheism. Hartnett, however, reflected that at a young age when he was attracted to a career in cosmology, “I would have described myself as an atheist,

⁴ Strobel, *Case for Faith*, 162-200.

⁵ Ibid. 198.

⁶ Norman Geisler, *Creation and the Courts: Eighty Years of Conflict in the Classroom and the Courtroom* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2007) 257.

⁷ Strobel, *Case for Faith*, 351.

⁸ David Noebel, *Understanding the Times: The Collision of the World’s Competing Worldviews* (Manitou Springs, CO: Summit Press, 2006) 103.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Alex Williams and John Hartnett, *Dismantling the Big Bang: God’s Universe Rediscovered* (Green Forest, AK: Master Books, 2005) 14-15.

¹¹ Ibid. 14.

believing that the big bang had all the answers. . . .”¹² *There are atheists in addition to Christians who believe the Big Bang.*

Astronomer Hugh Ross, founder and director of the apologetics ministry Reasons to Believe, has written that Christian resistance to Big Bang theory is from “a failure to understand the biblical roots of big bang cosmology.”¹³ His claim is part of a chapter entitled “The Big Bang: The Bible Said It First.”¹⁴ According to Ross, the Big Bang is in the Bible because it teaches that in the beginning, God “stretched out the heavens.”¹⁵ However, *God’s “stretching out the heavens” signifies the Big Bang only in the minds of those who want to believe it.* Contrary to Ross’ assertion, this phrase connotes not a chaotic event like the Big Bang, but an *orderly process* consistent with the highly structured origin of the cosmos in Genesis 1.

Furthermore, Genesis 1 teaches that the creation was a *fiat* via the spoken word of God, not a process such as the Big Bang.¹⁶ Seeing the Big Bang in Scripture is therefore a reading of extra-biblical beliefs into Scripture—an *eisegesis*—and not an exegesis. Probably at one time or another almost every manmade idea has been “seen” in Scripture, including the justification of slavery before the American Civil War. *The Bible nowhere explicitly teaches a Big Bang, but does explicitly teach recent fiat creation.* The Big Bang and recent fiat creation are not compatible.

SCIENTIFIC DIFFICULTIES WITH BIG BANG THEORY

Belief that Big Bang theory is a suitable Christian apologetic is flawed because it overlooks serious scientific weaknesses. Big Bang theory has in fact grown more problematic with time. In the late 1940s, it appeared that the Big Bang could explain the synthesis of virtually all elements and their relative abundances in the universe. In the 1950s, it became apparent the Big Bang could account for *at most* the synthesis of only the first few elements, and the rest must have been synthesized in stars. However, stellar synthesis of elements (“stellar nucleosynthesis”) has also been demonstrated to be problematic. In his Nobel lecture, William Fowler, a pioneer in Big Bang and stellar nucleosynthesis theory, acknowledged:

¹² CreationWiki, “John Hartnett” [online] (accessed 26 February 2009) available from http://www.creationwiki.org/John_Hartnett.

¹³ Hugh Ross, *A Matter of Days* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2004) 139.

¹⁴ *Ibid.* 139-48.

¹⁵ *Ibid.* 142-43.

¹⁶ Jonathan Henry, “A Critique of Progressive Creationism in the Writings of Hugh Ross,” *Creation Research Society Quarterly* 43 (June 2006): 17-22.

In spite of the past and current research in experimental and theoretical nuclear astrophysics . . . Hoyle's grand concept of element synthesis in the stars [is not] fully established, . . . It is not just a matter of filling in the details. *There are puzzles and problems in each part of the cycle that challenge the basic ideas underlying nucleosynthesis in stars* [emphasis added].¹⁷

Over the years, theorists have found it necessary to add various “unobservables” to the Big Bang to bring it into line with observations. “Dark matter,” “dark energy,” the “missing mass,” and a hypothetical super-fast expansion called cosmic “inflation” happening immediately after the Big Bang itself are all by nature unobservable (i.e. *they are defined in such a way that they can never be observed*). Scientists will never be able to run experiments to observe “dark matter,” for example. Therefore, Big Bang theorists have to believe in these concepts *by faith*. Christian apologists embracing the Big Bang as if Scripture revealed it appear to be unaware of this subjectivity.

These “unobservables” are needed to control the universe’s expansion rate so that the Big Bang universe matches the real universe in properties like its size. Without these “unobservables,” Big Bang theory would be an obvious failure.¹⁸ The priority of this article is not on the Big Bang’s scientific problems—these have been discussed in the reference just cited—but it is fitting to be reminded that *non-Christian Big Bang advocates continue to express severe doubts about the theory*. Oldershaw wrote, “Theorists . . . invented the concepts of inflation and cold dark matter to augment the big bang paradigm and keep it viable, but they, too, have come into increasing conflict with observations. In the light of all these problems, it is astounding that the big bang hypothesis is the only cosmological model that physicists have taken seriously.”¹⁹ Astronomer John Fix commented on the idea that primordial cosmic “inflation” validates the Big Bang. “[T]his explanation for the period of inflation may sound like a fairy tale. . . . *It seems unlikely that people will ever be able to confirm the validity of these theories by means of experiments*” [emphasis added].²⁰ As for “dark matter,” “its existence must remain an article of faith for the true believer in the stand [Big Bang] model.”²¹

¹⁷ William Fowler, “The Quest for the Origin of the Elements,” *Science* 226 (1984): 934.

¹⁸ Jonathan Henry, “The Elements of the Universe Point to Creation: Introduction to a Critique of Nucleosynthesis Theory,” *Journal of Creation* 29 (July-October 2006): 55-58.

¹⁹ Robert Oldershaw, “What’s Wrong with the New Physics?,” *New Scientist* 128 (22/29 December 1990): 59.

²⁰ John Fix, *Astronomy* (Boston: WCB/McGraw-Hill, 1999) 616.

²¹ Allan Sandage, “Observational Tests of World Models,” *Annual Review of Astronomy and Astrophysics* 26 (September 1988): 623.

None of this means that Big Bang researchers have ceased looking for experimental confirmation of the theory. However, one of the latest examinations of radiation in space conducted to confirm the Big Bang has indicated conclusions contrary to it. The examination revealed a very weak microwave radiation that fills all the background of space, so is called the Cosmic Microwave Background (CMB). Big Bang theory predicts that CMB should have a certain type of fluctuation.

The Wilkinson Microwave Anisotropy Probe (WMAP) was sent into space to confirm the Big Bang prediction, but it did not.²² Continued observations have also failed to confirm Big Bang predictions with regard to the CMB. Instead, the WMAP data are “far outside the current expectations” of Big Bang cosmology, and have added “to the anomalies seen in the CMB.”²³ *The development of this data is opposite the claims of Christian apologists that the Big Bang has been overwhelmingly confirmed.* Nevertheless, some may wonder whether the Big Bang correctly predicted the hydrogen-helium abundance ratio (the H/He ratio) of the cosmos, and if it predicted the existence of the CMB. Various Christian apologists seem to think in the positive,²⁴ but indeed *the Big Bang model has been adjusted backwards to fit the observed H/He ratio.* “It is commonly supposed that the so-called primordial abundances [of the elements] provide strong evidence for Big bang cosmology. However, *a particular value for the . . . ratio needs to be assumed ad hoc to obtain the [observed] abundances*” [emphasis added].²⁵ Big Bang theory predicted the existence of the CMB but not the correct temperature. On the eve of the first CMB detection in 1965, the predicted temperature was over fifteen times too large.²⁶ *Therefore, the Big Bang has not been a predictive theory, but one that has needed continuous “patching” to agree with new observations.*

Aside from scientific difficulties, Big Bang theory is actually an evolutionary concept which many have perceived as creationary because certain theorists and others have used *creation* to mean *evolution*, a topic

²² Stacy S. McGaugh, “Confrontation of Modified Newtonian Dynamics Predictions with Wilkinson Microwave Anisotropy Probe First Year Data,” *Astrophysical Journal* 611 (2004): 26.

²³ Lawrence Rudnick, Shea Brown, and Liliya R. Williams, “Extragalactic Radio Sources and the WMAP Cold Spot” [online] (Cornell University Library, 3 August 2007, accessed 27 February 2009) available from <http://arxiv.org/abs/0704.0908>.

²⁴ Ross, *Matter of Days*, 141; Strobel, *Case for Faith*, 141, quoting Walter L. Bradley.

²⁵ Halton Arp, Geoffrey Burbidge, Fred Hoyle, Jayant Narlikar, and N. Chandra Wickramasinghe, “The Extragalactic Universe: An Alternative View,” *Nature* 346 (1990): 811.

²⁶ Arno Penzias and Robert Wilson, “A Measurement of Excess Antenna Temperature at 4080 Mc/s,” *Astrophysical Journal* 142 (196): 420; Robert Dicke, Jim Peebles, Peter Roll, and David Wilkinson, “Cosmic Black-body Radiation,” *Astrophysical Journal* 142 (1965): 415.

discussed more in following. Christian apologists advocating Big Bang theory generally hold to dispensational views. However, using the Big Bang as an apologetic means that one is building a doctrinal foundation on the uncertainty of manmade ideas. As mentioned earlier, the Bible teaches recent fiat creation via the spoken word of God, not development by a slow, billions-of-years process, or even a process directed by God. For all these reasons, both scientific and biblical, dispensationalists would be wise to avoid the Big Bang as an apologetic for creation or any other biblical doctrine.

COULD THE BIG BANG HAVE BEEN GOD'S METHOD OF CREATION?

People commonly believe that the universe is expanding, but prior to the 1920s the reigning cosmic model described a *static universe*, not an expanding one. Data emerging in the 1920s suggested that the universe was not static after all.²⁷ If the universe was expanding, some said, then running the expansion backwards would mean that the universe began at a single point. Today this “cosmic singularity” is commonly believed to have contained all the mass of the universe when it exploded some 14 billion years ago.

Conversely, the concept of an expanding universe is not anti-biblical, since there is no requirement that the expansion must have originated with a cosmic singularity. God could have initiated a cosmic expansion of the recently created universe. Eventually, in the minds of many, the evidence for cosmic expansion was equated with evidence for a Big Bang. In the 1920s, however, the advent of the cosmic expansion concept only fostered possibilities to Big Bang theory. Modern Big Bang theory was not devised until the 1940s,²⁸ and the Big Bang did not become the dominant

²⁷ As is so often the case in cosmology, it was not actually the *data* that suggested expansion, but a certain bias for *interpreting* the data. One of the earliest framers of the “expanding universe” concept wrote: “The expansion of the universe is a matter of astronomical facts interpreted by the theory of relativity” (Abbé G. Lemaître, “Contributions to a British Association Discussion on the Evolution of the Universe,” *Nature* 128 Supplement [24 October 1931]: 704).

²⁸ Ralph Alpher, Hans Bethe, and George Gamow, “The Origin of the Chemical Elements,” *Physical Review* 74 (1948): 1198. Other papers leading to the modern Big Bang model are discussed in Henry, “The Elements of the Universe Point to Creation: Introduction to a Critique of Nucleosynthesis Theory,” 55-56. George Gamow was the primary influence behind early modern Big Bang theory and also known for his sense of humor. For the paper referenced previously, Gamow added Bethe’s name as a coauthor, which made the authors’ last names start with the first three letters of the Greek alphabet: alpha, delta, gamma (this was Gamow’s alpha-beta-gamma paper). Center for History of

model of cosmic evolution until the mid-1960s with the discovery of the CMB.

In 1920, the expanding universe concept was still in the future. Debate revolved around whether the Earth's galaxy, the Milky Way, includes all the observable universe (the "small" universe view), or whether there are galaxies beyond the Milky Way (the "large" universe). Astronomer Heber Curtis hoped for a small universe, but Astronomer Harlow Shapley advocated a large one. The two scientists confronted each other in one of the most famous debates in the history of science. The Shapley-Curtis debate occurred at the Smithsonian Institution on 26 April 1920.²⁹ There was, as yet, little direct evidence of galaxies outside Earth's own. Nonetheless, the large universe won the day. Verification of the large-universe view fostered the possibility of cosmic expansion, which was first proposed in the early 1900s. Acceptance of an expanding universe, as noted previously, in turn allowed the formulation and eventual dominance of the Big Bang theory.

The Shapley-Curtis debate was commemorated in 1998 at the same location and was called the "nature of the Universe Debate: Cosmology Solved?" Jim Peebles of Princeton and Michael Turner of the University of Chicago argued for different versions of the Big Bang. The moderator was Margaret Geller.³⁰ Geller asked in conclusion, "How many think that neither of these models will be represented in such a future debate in 80 years?" Approximately 500 were present, and the room was filled with hands raised,³¹ which does not indicate much scientific confidence in the leading cosmological models. *How can anyone be certain that God "used" the Big Bang to "create" when widespread doubts persist with regard to the long-term survival of the theory?*

Physics, "A Gamow Joke" [online] (accessed 26 February 2009) available from www.aip.org/history/cosmology/ideas/gamow-joke.htm.

²⁹ Virginia Trimble, "The 1920 Shapley-Curtis Discussion: Background, Issues, and Aftermath," *Publications of the Astronomical Society of the Pacific* 107 (December 1995): 1140-42. The format of the meeting was actually that of a "discussion," not a debate, as there was no time for rebuttal. Nevertheless, the encounter is now known as the Great Debate. Robert J. Nemiroff, "The 75th Anniversary Astronomical Debate on the Distance Scale to Gamma-Ray Bursters: An Introduction," *Publications of the Astronomical Society of the Pacific* 107 (December 1995): 1131.

³⁰ Robert J. Nemiroff and Jerry T. Bonnell, "The Nature of the Universe Debate in 1998," *Publications of the Astronomical Society of the Pacific* 111 (March 1999): 285.

³¹ Tom van Flandern, "Big Bang Alternatives," *Biblical Astronomer* 11 (Spring 2001): 58. Van Flandern, a Big Bang critic, was present at this event. However, even Nemiroff and Bonnell, noted, "Many raised their hands" (Nemiroff and Bonnell, "Nature of the Universe Debate in 1998," 286).

DOES THE BIG BANG IMPLY A BEGINNING?

Prominent Christian apologist and Big Bang advocate Hugh Ross claims that the Big Bang implies a beginning.³² According to Ross, since Genesis also teaches a beginning, the Big Bang must therefore be a valid biblical apologetic for creation. Apologist Lee Strobel quoted William Lane Craig as saying, “Atheists themselves used to be very comfortable in maintaining that the universe is eternal and uncaused. . . . The problem is that they can no longer hold that position because of modern evidence that the universe started with the Big Bang.”³³ By this line of reasoning, the Big Bang must be a valid Christian apologetic because it has confounded the atheists. Unfortunately, such claims are little more than wishful thinking, because (1) prominent non-Christians have asserted that the Big Bang is indeed not evidence for God or a beginning, and (2) the desire for a cyclic universe is still very much alive among non-Christian believers in the Big Bang. They simply regard the current Big Bang as one part of a longer, maybe eternal series of cycles.

Carl Sagan, a believer in the Big Bang, famously asserted, “The Cosmos is all that is or ever was or ever will be.”³⁴ In Sagan’s view therefore, only the *material* is real. However, even though he implicitly denied the existence of God, he did not deny that the universe could be open (i.e. a non-cyclic cosmos *with a beginning*, saying “Very likely, the universe has been expanding since the Big Bang. . . .”). However, he entertained the possibility of a cyclic universe: “. . . it is by no means clear that it will continue to expand forever.”³⁵

Gamow was an atheist³⁶ and preferred a cyclic universe with no beginning, but admitted that the evidence was contrary to his own: “We can now ask ourselves two important questions: why was our universe in such a highly compressed state, and why did it start expanding? The simplest, and mathematically most consistent, way of answering these questions would be to say that the Big Squeeze which took place in the early history of our universe was the result of a collapse which took place at a still earlier era, and that the present expansion is simply an ‘elastic’

³² Ross, *Matter of Days*, 141.

³³ Strobel, *Case for Faith*, 105.

³⁴ Carl Sagan, *Cosmos* (New York: Random House) 4.

³⁵ *Ibid.* 259.

³⁶ Charles Naeser, one of Gamow’s colleagues, stated, “Gamow . . . never did hide the fact that he was an atheist. . . .” See David Anderson, “Interview with Dr. Charles Naeser” [online] (The George Washington University, 21 December 2006, accessed 26 February 2009) available from http://encyclopedia.gwu.edu/gwencyclopedia/index.php?title=Gamow%2C_George_and_Edward_Teller.

rebound which started as soon as the maximum permissible squeezing density was reached.”³⁷ However, then he denied the possibility of cyclic behavior: “There is no chance that the present expansion will ever stop or turn into a collapse.”³⁸

Astronomer James Jeans was not a Christian, yet he proposed that the universe had a beginning. He did this before the Big bang was fashionable, *so the Big Bang is not necessary to conclude that there must have been a beginning*. Jeans’ argument was based on the fact that the entropy (i.e. disorder) of the cosmos is constantly increasing. “The more orthodox scientific view is that the entropy of the universe must for ever increase to its final maximum value. It has not yet reached this: we should not be thinking about it if it had. It is still increasing rapidly, and *so must have had a beginning*; there must have been what we may describe as a ‘creation’ at a time not infinitely remote” (emphasis added).³⁹ Jeans could be described as a Deist who saw God as having no relationship to the physical universe. For Jeans, the universe was self-existent: “We can only think of [the solar system] as something continually changing and evolving, working out its own future from its past.”⁴⁰

Indeed, no one really knows where the Big Bang originated. “Nobody has the foggiest idea what happened the Tuesday before the Big Bang. Who can say whether there was a previously collapsing universe or an incipient quantum fluctuation. That whole domain is part of Bubbleland.”⁴¹ *In other words, the Bible teaches a beginning, but there is nothing in Big Bang theory demanding a beginning*. Cosmologist Paul Davies, a Big Bang cosmologist who believes in a “beginning,” denied that an external supreme eternal being could have brought matter into existence.⁴² He asked, “Did God Cause the Big Bang?,” and answered that God causing the Big Bang “makes ‘little sense’ because a supernatural creation cannot be a causative act in time, for the coming-into-being of time is part of what we are trying to explain. Therefore such an explanation cannot be a case of cause and effect.”⁴³

Cambridge University astrophysicist Stephen Hawking is arguably one of the most recognized names in modern evolutionary (i.e. Big Bang) cosmology. However, he believes in no beginning whatsoever: “[The universe] had no beginning, no moment of Creation.”⁴⁴ Furthermore, he

³⁷ George Gamow, *The Creation of the Universe* (New York: Mentor, 1952) 37.

³⁸ *Ibid.* 42.

³⁹ James Jeans, *The Mysterious Universe* (New York: Dutton, 1932) 176-77.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* 159.

⁴¹ Bob Berman, “Strange Universe: Bubbleland,” *Astronomy* 28 (June 2000): 106.

⁴² Paul Davies, *The Mind of God* (New York: Penguin, 1992) 39-72.

⁴³ *Ibid.* 69.

⁴⁴ Stephen W. Hawking, *A Brief History of Time* (New York: Bantam Books, 1988) 116.

made no profession of atheism, saying, "Science seems to have uncovered a set of laws that . . . tell us how the universe will develop with time. . . . *These laws may have originally been decreed by God*, but it appears that he has since left the universe to evolve according to them and does not now intervene in it" (emphasis added).⁴⁵ However, he does not regard God as Creator: "But if the universe is really completely self-contained, having no boundary or edge, it would have neither beginning nor end; it would simply be. What place, then, for a creator."⁴⁶ *Clearly there is nothing in Big Bang theory that inherently points to God or creation.*

CONFUSING CREATION WITH EVOLUTION

George Gamow, arguably the primary influence behind modern Big Bang theory, was one of the first to use *creation* when he really meant *evolution*. The historical background for this terminology was many decades ago, and Gamow's linguistic conflation met public resistance, which he addressed in the second printing of his (misnamed) book *The Creation of the Universe*. In a "Note for the Second Printing," Gamow wrote, "In view of the objections raised by some reviewers concerning the use of the word 'creation,' it should be explained that the author understands this term, not in the sense of 'making something out of nothing,' but rather as 'making something shapely out of shapelessness,' as, for example, in the phrase 'the latest creation of Parisian fashion.'"⁴⁷

For Gamow, therefore, the Big Bang "creation" was not the fiat creation that the Bible teaches. The redefinition of *creation*, which Gamow espoused, had long been fashionable in the liberal/modernist community. John Gibson is a theological liberal who asserts that a Genesis 1 creation and the Fall lack "any hint elsewhere" in Scripture.⁴⁸ He equated the origins account in Genesis with the Babylonian belief that "creation" was bringing order from chaos,⁴⁹ similar to Gamow's definition. Gibson also wrote that maybe God created the chaos, but then maybe "it was there in the beginning, independent of him."⁵⁰

John H. Walton, an evangelical, noted, "In the ancient world something came into existence when it was separated out as a distinct entity, given a

⁴⁵ Ibid. 122.

⁴⁶ Ibid. 141.

⁴⁷ Gamow, *Creation of the Universe*, vi.

⁴⁸ John Gibson, *Genesis* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1981) 27.

⁴⁹ Ibid. 26.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

function, and given a name.”⁵¹ Walton’s statement is also similar to Gamow’s “creation” concept. Walton noted that ancient Israel’s cosmogeny was different from this, for it posited that God is “eternally existing” but the creation is not.⁵² Gamow had (possibly unknowingly) imported into scientific discussions the pagan concept of “creation” from antiquity, which was also tantamount to the modern liberal definition. Henceforth in scientific discussions, *evolution* would increasingly be called *creation*.

Beyond the Christian community, the dominant view is that the Big Bang “beginning” was merely a quantum mechanical fluctuation. Cosmologists John Barrow and Frank Tipler, in *The Anthropic Cosmological Principle*, have a section entitled “Creation Ex Nihilo.” Echoing Gamow, however, their “creation” does not involve God. According to them, “These ideas envision the whole universe to be a giant, quantum mechanical virtual fluctuation of the vacuum.”⁵³

Nowadays one can assume almost as a matter of course in cosmology that when *creation* is used, *evolution* is meant, as in the following: “Each planet seems to provide another set of essential clues for unraveling the mystery of creation. Every planet has proceeded along some peculiar path of evolution all its own - yet each still defines a certain stage in a general process.”⁵⁴ The author of these sentences was indeed expressing his hope that new discoveries will solve the mystery of *evolution*, as the second sentence makes clear. *Christian apologists who advocate the Big Bang as a creation model have been led astray by this long-standing conflation of evolution with creation.* Gamow, a professed atheist, promoted the conflation most forcefully.

GIVING THE BIG BANG CREDIT IT DOES NOT DESERVE

Does teaching the Big Bang in an old universe lead people to Christ? Hugh Ross told the account of a visitor to the Sunday school class he teaches who heard class members telling of people “who came to faith in Christ as a result of my ministry.”⁵⁵ “That day,” Ross wrote, the visitor “relinquished his belief in the ‘evils’ of old-earth creationism.” Ross’ story illustrates his conflation of old-age advocacy with evangelism. If a long chronology and its attendant evolutionary models, such as the Big Bang, are leading people

⁵¹ John Walton, *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006) 88.

⁵² *Ibid.* 91.

⁵³ John D. Barrow and Frank J. Tipler, *The Anthropic Cosmological Principle* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986) 440.

⁵⁴ Nicholas M. Short, *Planetary Geology* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1975) 334.

⁵⁵ Ross, *Matter of Days*, 137.

to Christ, then teaching young-earth creation—without the Big Bang—must be a hindrance to the Gospel. However, the Bible teaches that even those teaching or behaving erroneously can lead people to Christ (Phil 1:15-18). Evangelism occurs as a result of Gospel words (Rom 10:15), not as a result of human error mixed with those words. Space scientist Robert Jastrow claimed to have found God (though not Christianity) in his study of Big Bang cosmology. In this context, he famously wrote: “For the scientist who has lived by his faith in the power of reason, the story ends like a bad dream. He has scaled the mountains of ignorance; he is about to conquer the highest peak; as he pulls himself over the final rock, he is greeted by a band of theologians who have been sitting there for centuries.”⁵⁶

In the mercy of God toward fallen man, His creation is pervaded with His own self-revelation (Rom 1:20). God’s revelation is sufficiently pronounced that none has an excuse for failing to know Him. It would not be surprising, therefore, if even the flawed theories of men may contain elements of truth. Indeed, there is a “design” apologetic based on the Big Bang. Big Bang advocates, both Christian and non-Christian, have noticed that the parameters in the Big Bang theory must be finely adjusted. One such parameter is the mass of the universe. “The universe . . . is either barely open or barely closed. In the language of cosmology, we say that the universe is ‘very nearly flat,’ a flat universe being one in which there is just enough mass to bring the expansion to a stop. . . . Given all of the infinite possible masses that the universe could have, why does it have a mass so close to this critical value? Why is the universe almost flat?”⁵⁷ The universe is so intricately constructed that any theory will discern design, even a false one. Darwinists, for example, routinely discover intricate designs in living things. Their belief in the rise of life by chance does not prevent their observing the design. However, even as the existence of design in biology demonstrates that Darwinism cannot be true, so also the evidence of cosmic design is declaring that the rise of the cosmos from the chaos of the Big Bang cannot be true.

CONCLUSIONS

Elevating the Big Bang to prominence because it can be taken to imply a biblical truth—that there was a beginning, or that the universe is designed—is like claiming that all cults and false religions must lead to God and salvation because each one also contains elements of truth. Christians can and should be grateful for each person saved through a Christian

⁵⁶ Robert Jastrow, *God and the Astronomers* (New York: Norton, 1978) 116.

⁵⁷ James S. Trefil, *The Moment of Creation* (New York: Scribner’s, 1983) 47.

apologetic outreach, even one advocating the Big Bang. However, it is time for Christian apologists to discard their reliance on manmade philosophies. Christian apologetics needs to be based on a cosmology starting with the recent fiat creation of Genesis 1, which is the cosmology that reveals the power of God like no other. It is the cosmology that dominated before the advent of Big bang theory and its precursor, the Darwinian Revolution. It is especially ironic for a dispensationalist to teach the power of God in *future events*, yet to withdraw from the claim that *in the past* God was constrained to use a process over billions of years. After all, the Bible teaches that Jesus Christ, the Creator, is “the same yesterday, and today, and forever” (Heb 13:8).

The story is told of Francis Deák, a European statesman prior to the catastrophic political Revolution of 1848 and the host of changes it brought. After that Revolution, “an Austrian official remarked, ‘Deák cannot demand after so many accomplished facts that we should begin affairs all over again.’”

Overhearing the conversation, Deák responded, “Why not. . . ? If a man has buttoned one button of his coat wrong, it must be undone again from the top.”

“The button might be cut off.”

“Then the coat could never be buttoned right at all.”⁵⁸

Neither can the cosmos be understood aright by Big Bang theory. It is incumbent on dispensationalists to abandon Big Bang theory, and to build cosmological theory “again from the top” by giving the Word of God the authority it deserves in the matter of cosmic origins.

⁵⁸ Priscilla Robertson, *Revolutions of 1848* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1960) 307.

THE DOCTRINE OF DOUBLE PROCESSION IN EASTERN AND WESTERN THEOLOGIES

Ron J. Bigalke

Eastern Orthodoxy, Protestantism, and Roman Catholicism share certain theological commitments with regard to Trinitarian doctrine. Prior to the biblical division between Protestantism and Roman Catholicism, the Eastern church already divided from Western Christianity in the eleventh century. The purpose of this article is to explain the historical and theological issues with regard to the doctrine of double procession, which culminated in the East-West Schism of 1054. The achievement of this purpose will provide a better understanding of the biblical doctrine of the Trinity, specifically in relation to the Father as the source of the eternal begetting of the Son and the eternal procession of the Holy Spirit.

The doctrine of double procession is the teaching that the Holy Spirit proceeds from both the Father and the Son.¹ The teaching is an explanation of the internal Trinitarian relationships of origination in an attempt to explain what differs with regard to the “members” (persons) of the Trinity.² The origination relations explain how one member of the Trinity

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¹ In response to feminist theology, which is exceedingly critical with regard to masculine gender terminology in naming the persons of the Trinity, it is essential to affirm that God has inspired the masculine imagery in biblical revelation, and is therefore, not to be regarded minimally. The trinitarian name of God is revealed in Scripture. For instance, Jesus addressed his Father uniquely as “Abba” (Mark 14:36), which was His own self-revelation and self-understanding as the Son of God, even though His favored name throughout His earthly ministry was “Son of Man.” By simply requesting of his Father, Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would be given (John 14:16). When the ministry of the Holy Spirit was promised, Jesus deliberately violated peculiarities of the Greek language in employing the masculine pronoun “He” (16:14). Therefore, the biblical and historic identity of the Trinity would be compromised, if not negated, by obscuring this masculine nomenclature. For example, see William J. Hill, *The Three-Personed God: The Trinity as a Mystery of Salvation* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1982); Elizabeth A. Johnson, *She Who Is: The Mystery of God in Feminist Theological Discourse* (New York: Crossroad, 1992); Alvin F. Kimel Jr., ed., *Speaking the Christian God: The Holy Trinity and the Challenge of Feminism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992); and, Peter John Widdicombe, “The Fatherhood of God in the Thought of Justin Martyr, Origen and Athanasius.” Ph.D. dissertation, University of Oxford, 1990.

² The term “member” distinguishes the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Admittedly, such terminology can be misleading because the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are not

gives origin to another, and is therefore distinct, not in substance from one another but in subsistence. The relations explain why there are indeed three members of the Trinity as opposed to merely one, yet truly affirming there are not three gods but that God is one (Deut 6:4; Isa 46:9).

If each member of the Trinity is eternal and equal in substance, then how could they be distinct in subsistence? The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are the same in substance; however, the relations between them are not equal. The Father is different from the Son because he is not begotten from the Son. The Son is different from the Father because he is begotten of the Father, and the Son is different from the Holy Spirit because He is the only begotten son of the Father. The Holy Spirit is not the son of the Father; therefore, the Son has a relationship to the Father that the Holy Spirit does not. Neither the Father nor the Son proceeds from the Holy Spirit. It is evident that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are different not in quality but relation. The distinction between the members of the Trinity is their personal mode of existence (*tropos hyparxeos*). The Father is not begotten, the Son is begotten, and the Holy Spirit proceeds but is not begotten.

THE COUNCIL OF NICAEA

Early church explanations with regard to the begetting of the Son were certainly not modalistic entirely, but were susceptible to modalistic criticisms and interpretations. The reason for this deficiency was the teaching with regard to the begetting of the Son as a process.³ Origen, the third century theologian of the early Greek church, primarily challenged the false notion that the Son was begotten as a process in time. He argued that the begetting (generation) of the Son is an eternal action; therefore,

members of the Trinity in the sense of parts to a whole (God is not three entities or separable members). Each “member” of the Trinity is a complete individual being who is God (i.e. ὑπόστασις).

³ The distinction between the *logos endiathetos* (internal word) and the *logos prophorikos* (uttered word) is an example. The former was latent in the Father from all eternity, and became a second *hypostasis* when the Father uttered His *logos*—the begetting of the Son—as His instrument to create the world. Therefore, only the nature of the *logos* is eternal but the *hypostasis* of the *logos* is not. For the development of this somewhat modalistic (even Sabellian) doctrine from the Stoics, see Max Mühl, “Der λόγος ἐδιάθετος und προφορικός von der älteren Stoa bis zur Synode von Sirmium 351,” *Archiv für Begriffsgeschichte* 7 (1962): 7-56; and, Max Pohlenz, *Die Begründung der abendländischen Sprachlehre durch die Stoa* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1939); for additional historicity, see also, David G. Robertson, “Mind and Language in Philo,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 67 (July 2006): 423-41; and, and Harry Austryn Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Church Fathers, I: Father, Trinity, Incarnation* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1956).

the Father generates the Son throughout all eternity. As a consequence of his approval of Platonist philosophy, (for instance, the notion of cause and effect relations), Origen taught contradictory Trinitarian views.⁴ Since Platonist cause and effect relations are hierarchial, Origen applied this speculative theory to the generation of the Son from the Father.⁵ The result of Origen's philosophical perspective was subordinationism. Origen's understanding of the Son's begetting as cause and effect necessitated him to affirm the inferiority of the Son to the Father, and the Holy Spirit's inferiority to both the Father and the Son. The application of Origen's theology formed the basis for Arianism.⁶

Origen's homeland was the syncretistic milieu of Alexandria, into which Arius became presbyter in the fourth century under Bishop Alexander. In approximately AD 318, the bishop of Alexandria discussed the unity of the Trinity informally with his presbyters. Arius accused Bishop Alexander of affirming Sabellianism, and in his attempt to deny polytheism, Arius denied the true deity of Jesus Christ. The primary characteristic of Arian thought was that Jesus could not be God because God is one. Arius was influenced by the early church tradition with regard to the *Logos* and Origen's contradictory Trinitarian views, and contended that the origination of the *Logos* was from the One God as a component of His *ousia*.⁷ Arian thought differed from Origen because Arius understood begetting (generation) as a process in time, and therefore the divine *ousia* was some form of abstract or bodily (material) substance from which the

⁴ Although Origen affirmed the equality of the Son to the Father, he contradicted himself by maintaining that the Son is subordinate to the Father. His conflicting Trinitarian views are evident in his *De Principiis*. "The God and Father, who holds the universe together, is superior to every being that exists, for he imparts to each one from his own existence that which each one is; the Son, being less than the Father, is superior to rational creatures alone (for he is second to the Father); the Holy Spirit is still less, and dwells within the saints alone. So that in this way the power of the Father is greater than that of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and that of the Son is more than that of the Holy Spirit, and in turn the power of the Holy Spirit exceeds that of every other holy being" (Origen, *On First Principles: Being Koetschau's Text of the De Principiis*, trans. George W. Butterworth [New York: Harper and Row, 1966] 33-34).

⁵ Antonia Tripolitis, *The Doctrine of the Soul in the Thought of Plotinus and Origen* (New York: Libra, 1978) 94.

⁶ David Rohrbacher, *The Historians of Late Antiquity* (New York: Routledge, 2002) 95; Mark C. Taylor, *After God* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007) 145-46; Paul Tillich, *A History of Christian Thought: From Its Judaic and Hellenistic Origins to Existentialism*, ed. Carl E. Braaten (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1968) 68-69. Origen's heterodoxy was condemned in AD 553 at the Second Council of Constantinople.

⁷ R. P. C. Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God: The Arian Controversy, 318-381* (New York: T&T Clark, 1988) 186.

Son originated.⁸ The Son received this secondary substance, and therefore, “God was, when he [the Son of God] was not” and “before he [the Son] was begotten he [the Son] was not.”⁹ Arius regarded the begetting of the Son from the Father as from a different (separate) essence (*heteroousios*), and this secondary substance made the Son subordinate to the Father (“the God”) as a “secondary God.” In teaching the generation of the Son from the Father, Arius sought to reason the seeming impossibility of the Son receiving the same (*homos*) being (*ousia*) for he believed this would divide or lessen the Father’s substance. Arius reasoned that if the Father existed alone in the beginning and He begot the Son, then the Father would be older than the Son; therefore, the Son would not possess the same substance of the Father, which would require the creation of the Son’s subsistence from nothing and a time when the Son was not.

According to his reasoning, Arius denied the full divinity of the Son of God. Athanasius, the archdeacon of Alexandria, opposed Arius and insisted that the Son of God possessed the same divine essence of the Father. The Council of Nicaea (AD 325) convened as the first ecumenical council to resolve the controversy.¹⁰ (Eusebius of Caesarea adopted a mediatorial view that was neither Arian nor Athanasian [semi-Arian]. He believed the Son was of like substance [*homoiousios*] to the Father.¹¹) Considerable discussion was expended to answer the question with regard to the origination (generation) of the Son from the Father. The Arian controversy caused the bishops to distinguish clearly the creation and the Creator in a

⁸ Desiderius Erasmus, *Collected Words of Erasmus: Spiritualia and Pastoralia*, eds. John W. O’Malley, vols. 66-70 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998) 70:295; Robert C. Gregg and Dennis E. Groh, *Early Arianism: A View of Salvation* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981) 66; “The Duties of the Present Times. Addressed to the Presbyterians of Ireland.” *The Orthodox Presbyterian* 1 (November 1829) 44-45.

⁹ Nathan Chapman Kouns, *Arius the Libyan: A Romance of the Primitive Church* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1898) 350; Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, eds., *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church: St. Ambrose*, 2nd series, 14 vols. (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1905) 10:221-22.

¹⁰ Lewis Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy: An Approach to Fourth-Century Trinitarian Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

¹¹ There are perhaps three variations of Arianism: (1) the *homoiousians*, or semi-Arians believed the Son of God to be “similar substance,” and therefore avoided the charge of monarchianism (but paradoxically “similar” does mean “different”); (2) the *anomoians*, or Eunomians believed the Son of God to be “unlike substance”; and, (3) the *homoians* believed the Son was *homoios* to the Father, but rejected the term *homoousios* (which is characteristic of all Arian variations). Valerian presided over the Council of Aquileia (AD 381), which was attended by the *homoians*, with 32 bishops present. A fourth sect of Arianism could be regarded as Arius and traditional Arians who taught that the Son was a creature with a beginning in time for He once did not exist. See Orby Shipley, ed., *A Glossary of Ecclesiastical Terms* (London: Rivingtons, 1872) 43.

most biblical manner. The Son of God is Creator, and therefore not a creature. He is not a lesser or lower God, or even the highest created being of God. The Son of God is fully divine and human, and possesses the same divine essence (*homoousios*) as the Father, from whom He is begotten not created. The council provided “clear expression that the eternal generation of the Son occurs within the unitary and incomprehensible divine being.”¹²

The council condemned the unbiblical antitrinitarian teachings of Arius, who argued that the origination of the Son was of another substance (*homoios*) from the Father. The resolution of the council was formulated from the biblical revelation of Jesus Christ as God and then expressed in the Nicene Creed, which is the confession recited by the majority of denominations worldwide, such as Anglicanism, Eastern Orthodoxy, Protestantism, and Roman Catholicism. In the Nicene Creed, the council articulated the *homoousios* clause which confessed that the Son is begotten eternally from the same being (substance) of the Father, and therefore is not a different kind of God than the Father but is equally and eternally God, as the Father is God. The Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed (AD 381) applied the *homoousios* clause also to the Holy Spirit (sc. the being of the Holy Spirit is equally the same as the Father and the Son). The original Nicene Creed reads as follows.

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of the Father [the only-begotten; that is, of the essence of the Father, God of God], Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance (*ὁμοούσιον*)¹³ with the Father; by whom all things were made [both in heaven and on earth]; who for us men, and for our salvation, came down and was incarnate and was made man; he suffered, and the third day he rose again, ascended into heaven; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

And in the Holy Ghost.

[But those who say: ‘There was a time when He was not;’ and ‘He was not before he was made;’ and ‘He was made out of nothing;’ [*ex ouk ontōn*] or ‘He is of another substance’ [*hupostasis*] or ‘essence,’ [*ousia*] or ‘The Son of God is created,’ or ‘changeable,’ or ‘alterable’—they are condemned by the holy catholic and apostolic Church.]¹⁴

¹² Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 236. See also, William G. T. Shedd, *A History of Christian Doctrine*, 10th ed., 2 vols. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1891) 1:315-21.

¹³ The clause “one in being” means the Son of God is not a different kind of God than the Fathers; He is the exact same essence as the Father. The clause is in contrast to Arius and his supporters who taught conversely that the Son had lesser divinity.

¹⁴ Philip Schaff, ed., *The Creeds of Christendom: With a History and Critical Notes*, 6th ed., rev. David S. Schaff, 3 vols. (New York: Harper and Row, 1931; reprint, Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998) 1:28-29.

AFTER NICAEA

The Council of Nicaea exiled the heretical Arians, but (primarily as a consequence of translation into the Latin¹⁵) the *homoousios* clause did not resolve Trinitarian discussions and intense debate continued until the second ecumenical council at Constantinople (AD 381). Until the Constantinopolitan Council, there would not be theological unanimity with regard to the meaning of the *homoousios* clause at either the Council of Nicaea or in the succeeding half-century.¹⁶ Orthodox bishops objected to Nicaea because the *homoousios* clause seemed to be modalist or Sabellian. If the Father and Son were of one numerically same substance, the Father and the Son would not be two distinct beings but identical and indistinguishable. Agreement among orthodox bishops was eventually settled based upon an interpretation of *ousia* as a kind or species of thing, such as the nature of divinity or humanity, but still affirming that there is numerically only one God. The *homoousios* clause merely intended to convey the reality that the Son is not a different or lesser kind (or species) of God, but that He is deity in the same manner as the Father whose equal He is. Arianism taught that the Son was similar (“like”) substance (*homoios*) to the Father. The Arians distinguished the word similar (*homoios*) for same (*homos*). Therefore, the clause indicates that Arianism is certainly not orthodox and this was the primary reason for articulating it.

The wording of the *homoousios* clause is intentionally ambiguous in meaning. The purpose of the clause was to resolve doctrinal and ecclesiastical division by adopting a minimalist theological approach to trinitarian issues, and to employ a term that would not result in philosophical theories with regard to the meaning of *ousia* (“being” or “essence”).¹⁷ The terms are intentionally ambiguous in meaning to give emphatic assertions with regard to the nature of the divine *ousia* in three

¹⁵ Jaroslav Pelikan, *Christianity and Classical Culture: The Metamorphosis of Natural Theology in the Christian Encounter with Hellenism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995) 243-47; Joseph Owens, *The Doctrine of Being in the Aristotelian Metaphysics: A Study in the Greek Background of Mediaeval Thought*, 3rd rev. ed. (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1978) 145-54; Harry Austryn Wolfson, *Studies in the History of Philosophy and Religion*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1977) 1:87-88.

¹⁶ Richard A. Norris Jr., ed., *The Christological Controversy* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980); William G. Rusch, *The Trinitarian Controversy* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980); Norman P. Tanner, ed., *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, 2 vols. (London: Sheed and Ward, 1990).

¹⁷ Richard Hanson, “The Achievement of Orthodoxy in the Fourth Century AD,” in *The Making of Orthodoxy: Essays in Honour of Henry Chadwick*, ed. Rowan Williams (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989) 147-50.

distinct *hypostaseis* (“subsistences” or “persons”). Consequently, nearly all theologians from the time of the early church fathers until the Protestant Reformation asserted some aspect of the doctrine of God’s simplicity (where the unity of God lacks all distinctions),¹⁸ even though such an affirmation is not a component of the intended meaning of the *homoousios* clause.

The primary issue of Nicene Christology was the *homoousios*, and therefore to assert that the Son was the Word—with the Father—prior to being begotten in eternity past, which would mean that the Son is one substance (consubstantial) with the Father. However, the affirmation that the Son is the same divine “stuff” of the Father was not to connote a materialist interpretation.¹⁹ Nicene Christology affirmed that the divine “stuff” of the Father was given wholly to the Son as His begotten. The Council of Nicaea did not intend to connote any notions of materiality as the meaning of *homoousios*.²⁰ Arius taught that the Son was created from nothing, which would mean that God used something to create Him. Arius strenuously opposed the *homoousios* clause because he believed creation *ex nihilo* made the Son matter and not the same divine substance. The Nicene council rejected the notion that the “substance” of the Son was matter because then the Son would not be God. If the Son were made from matter then the divine substance or *ousia* would be divided, and would lessen the Trinity because the divine substance would be more essential than the *ousia* of the Father and the Son. The Father, however, is not divided in giving his entire *ousia* to the Son; rather, He is Father in begetting the Son, and is Himself in the Son (cf. John 1:4; 5:26; 16:15; 17:10). The Father gives his entire *ousia* but also receives the same in the Son (and in the Holy Spirit). Nicene Christology never intended *homoousios* as a reference to material things, such as two pots being of the same substance (because both consist of the same clay), but to communicate that there is no divine substance other than the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The origin of the divine substance is with the Father, who gives his entire *ousia* to the Son and the Holy Spirit.

¹⁸ Nicholas Wolterstorff, “Divine Simplicity,” in *Our Knowledge of God: Essays on Natural and Philosophical Theology*, ed. Kelly James Clark (Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1992) 133-49.

¹⁹ George Léonard Prestige, *God in Patristic Thought*, 2nd ed. (London: SPCK, 1952) 197.

²⁰ Leo Donald Davis, *The First Seven Ecumenical Councils (325-787): Their History and Theology* (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1983; reprint, Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1990) 60-62; Hanson, *Search for the Christian Doctrine of God*, 197-98; Stephen W. Need, *Truly Divine and Truly Human: The Story of Christ and the Seven Ecumenical Councils* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2008) 51-52.

THE COUNCIL OF CONSTANTINOPLE

The ambiguity in meaning of the *homoousios* clause was further exasperated by the divergent ecclesial languages. “The latinization of the Roman Church rendered relations with the East more difficult. It was not easy to understand one another when there was no longer the basis of a common language.”²¹ Greek was the language of the East, and Latin was the language of the West, which presented translational difficulties as a consequence of this ambiguity in understanding the meaning of *homoousios*. The Eastern Church discussed trinitarian issues with regard to three *hypostaseis* as distinct Persons: *mia ousia, tria hypostaseis* (“one being, three Persons”).²² Eastern theologians were able to defend the unity of the Trinity by emphasizing that the Son is eternally begotten and the Holy Spirit eternally proceeds from the Father, who is the “Source” or “First Principle.” In Greek, *hypostaseis* would be translated *substantia* in Latin. Therefore, the Western church thought three *hypostaseis* was similar to belief in three *substantia* for the Eastern church. The consequence of this translation issue is that Eastern theology appeared to be tritheistic in the West.²³

Western theologians emphasized the unity of the divine nature: *una substantia, tres personae* (“one substance, three Persons”). In the West, the three Persons were understood in terms of mutual fellowship. Augustine, for example (as will be explained in the section, “Augustinian Western Theology”), regarded the Holy Spirit as the bond of union between the Father and the Son. *Personae* in Latin would be translated *prosōpa* in Greek. Therefore, the Eastern Church thought three *personae* was similar to belief in three Trinitarian *prosōpa* (“faces,” “roles”) for the Western church. The consequence of this translation issue is that Western theology appeared to be either modalistic or Sabellian in the East.²⁴

Although there were ambiguities in its usage, the *homoousios* clause needed to be inserted into the Nicene Creed. For instance, if as Westerners

²¹ Adalbert Hamman, “The Turnabout of the Fourth Century: A Political, Geographical, Social, Ecclesiastical and Doctrinal Framework of the Century,” in *Patrology*, Johannes Quasten, 4 vols. (3 vols., Utrecht, Holland: Spectrum, 1950-60; reprint, Notre Dame: Christian Classics, 1986) 4:6.

²² Roger E. Olson, *The Story of Christian Theology: Twenty Centuries of Tradition & Reform* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999) 276.

²³ The theology of the Eastern Church with regard to interpreting the Nicene Creed was later articulated by the Cappadocians: Basil the Great (330-79), Gregory of Nyssa (ca. 330-95), and Gregory Nazianzus (329-89).

²⁴ John Marenbon, *Boethius* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003) 71; E. L. Mascall, *The Triune God: An Ecumenical Study* (Worthing, West Sussex, England: Churchman Publishing, 1986).

in particular argued, the Son is of the same divine essence as the Father, there is only one God; and therefore, the Son of God must possess equal dignity to the Father. However, if the Arian term, *homoiousios*, was used the accusation of polytheism seemed unavoidable. Nevertheless, *homoousios* still seemed to connote modalism as the term did not adequately express the true distinctions between the three divine Persons. The term did adequately convey that there is one divine essence and the Son of God shares the divine essence equally with the Father. Even though *homoousios* was used contrary to Arianism, there was still a desire among several bishops to employ a term that was less ambiguous, which could not be confused as connoting modalism.²⁵ There was also need to develop the doctrine of the Holy Spirit as being equally, eternally, and fully God. Emperor Theodosius called another council in May 381 in Constantinople to resolve these needs.

Athanasius emerged as one of the primary defenders of Nicene Christology in the middle of the fourth century (ca. AD 355).²⁶ Athanasius attempted to demonstrate to the Arians that the Nicene Creed is true because it is indeed biblical. Athanasius argued that the Son of God is not created “out of nothing” but as He is begotten eternally of the Father, the Son is consubstantial with the Father, and is therefore eternal and uncreated as a true Son of God. Jesus Christ is true God and true man. The *Son is God* because He is consubstantial with the Father, and *He is true man* insofar as the *Logos* became flesh as one uniquely begotten from the Father.²⁷ Athanasius also defended “the divinity of the Holy Spirit and his being of the same essence [ὁμοούσιος] as the Father.”

He, therefore, who is not sanctified by another, nor a partaker of sanctification, but Who is Himself partaken, and in Whom all the creatures are sanctified, how can He be one from among all things or pertain to those who partake of Him?

If by participation in the Spirit, we are made ‘sharers in the divine nature’ (2 Pet. 1, 4), we should be mad to say, that the Spirit has a created nature and not the nature of God. For it is on this account that those in whom He is are made divine. If He makes men divine, it is not to be doubted that His nature is of God.²⁸

²⁵ E. Glenn Hinson, *The Church Triumphant: A History of Christianity up to 1300* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1995) 183; Peter L’Huillier, *The Church of the Ancient Councils: The Disciplinary Work of the First Four Ecumenical Councils* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1996) 101-02; Olson, *Story of Christian Theology*, 154-55.

²⁶ Khaled Anatolios, *Athanasius (The Early Church Fathers)* (London: Routledge, 2004) 87-211; William Bright, *The Orations of St. Athanasius Against the Arians according to the Benedictine Text* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1873) 1-67.

²⁷ Norris, *Christological Controversy*, 29.

²⁸ Athanasius, *Letters to Serapion on the Holy Spirit*, 1.23-24, as quoted in Quasten, *Patrology*, 3:76. See also, Anatolios, *Athanasius*, 222-24; and, Michael A. G. Haykin, *The Spirit*

The efforts of Athanasius substantiated the faith, teaching, and unity of the church in his defense of the consubstantiality of the Son with the Father. His explanation of the generation and nature of the Son was edifying in true doctrine and served to unite the church more than any preceding theologian. Not only did Athanasius defend the *homoousios* clause in the Nicene Creed against Arianism, but also contrary to the Semi-Arians, who favored *homoiousios* as a more unambiguous term against modalism, and therefore charged the latter group to return to the Nicene confession.²⁹ In his *Letters to Serapion* (1.2, 20), Athanasius taught that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and belongs to the Son. The Holy Spirit is to be worshipped and glorified with the Father and the Son together. He did not state explicitly that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Son, but it would appear to be “a necessary corollary of his whole argument.”³⁰

The doctrine of double procession was not stated in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, nor did the Creed confess that the Holy Spirit proceeds solely from the Father, but the West inserted the phrase “and the Son” (Lat. *filioque*) into the Creed during the late fifth and subsequent centuries. The inclusion of the phrase led to division between the East and the West because the *filioque* seemed to confess two simultaneous sources of the Holy Spirit’s *ousia*. In the East, the formula by the Cappodocians was “from the Father” and “through the Son,” which would protect the Father as the single source or First Principle of the divine essence reproduced in the Son and the Holy Spirit. The Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed of 381 reads as follows.

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds (aeons), Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance [*homoousios*] with the Father; by whom all things were made; who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made man; he was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered, and was buried, and the third day he rose again, according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father; from thence he shall come again, with glory, to judge the quick and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end.

of God: The Exegesis of 1 & 2 Corinthians in the Pneumatomachian Controversy of the Fourth Century (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 1994) 77-103.

²⁹ Quasten, *Patrology*, 3:66-70.

³⁰ *Ibid.* 3:77. See also, C. R. B. Shapland, trans., *The Letters of St. Athanasius Concerning the Holy Spirit* (London: Epworth, 1951).

And in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of life, who proceedeth [ekporeuomenon] from the Father, who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified, who spake by the prophets. In one holy catholic and apostolic Church; we acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins; we look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.³¹³²

THE *FILIOQUE* CONTROVERSY

Following the first Council of Constantinople, the teaching of the Nicene Creed was extended to the Holy Spirit. The decidedly trinitarian declaration of faith was made official doctrine of the church. The outcome of the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed was that it was no longer acceptable to teach that the Son and the Holy Spirit are inferior in essence to the Father.³³ However, the need to clarify and elaborate the meaning and interpretation of the doctrine remained. The official trinitarian doctrine was no longer debated for it had been adequately formulated and proclaimed, and now the task was to develop understanding of this doctrine theologically.

The Council of Constantinople affirmed the deity of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is to be worshipped and glorified with the Father and the Son. The Latin word *filioque*, which testifies with regard to the Holy Spirit proceeding from the Father, was not a component of the sentence. Western theologians reasoned that since each member of the Godhead equally shared the divine substance and because the Son is truly related to the Holy Spirit, then the Holy Spirit must proceed from both the Father and the Son. Both Eastern and Western theologians agreed with regard to the full divinity of the Holy Spirit but disagreed with regard to the double

³¹ Schaff, *Creeds of Christendom*, 1:28-29.

³² Emperor Justinian I called the Second Council of Constantinople in 553 (the fifth ecumenical council), which condemned the Three (Nestorian) Chapters. The Council was primarily a supplement to the third (Council of Ephesus in 431) and the fourth (Council of Chalcedon in 451) ecumenical councils. The Council reinforced the Christology of the previous ecumenical councils. "If anyone shall not confess that the nature or essence of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost is one, as also the force and the power; a consubstantial [*homoousios*] Trinity, one Godhead to be worshipped in three subsistences or Persons: let him be anathema. For there is but one God even the Father of whom are all things, and one Lord Jesus Christ through whom are all things, and one Holy Spirit in whom are all things." Georges Florovsky, *The Collected Works of George Florovsky: The Byzantine Fathers of the Sixth to Eighth Century*, ed. Richard S. Haugh, trans. Robert L. Nichols, 14 vols. (Belmont, MA: Buchervertriebsanstalt, 1987) 9:147; Henry R. Percival, *A Digest of Theology: Being a Brief Statement of Christian Doctrine* (London: J. Masters & Co., 1893) 196; Schaff and Wace, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, 14:312.

³³ J. N. D. Kelly, "The Nicene Creed: A Turning Point," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 36 (1983): 23-39.

procession of the Holy Spirit. By the time of the Third Council of Toledo in 589, the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed was altered by the West to include the *filioque* clause.³⁴ The Eastern church rejected the addition of the clause because it was made unilaterally (without an ecumenical council), and because Easterners regarded the formula as theologically untrue, in addition to compromising Trinitarian doctrine. Debate continued to intensify between the East and West for centuries, until it became a primary cause for the schism between the Eastern and Western churches in 1054.³⁵

It is understandable why the Eastern church objected to the creedal addition by the Western church without an ecumenical council. Moreover, the Council of Ephesus (431) formally forbade any additions or deletions to the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, as the council regarded it as complete.³⁶ Assuming the council intended that nothing should be added or deleted which would contradict the creed,³⁷ the West may feel justified that the *filioque* clause was not a contradiction but clarification and explanation. Nevertheless, the East still strongly objects to the West inserting the clause into the creed without their consent by means of an ecumenical council. The *filioque* clause is still a matter of primary controversy, with some Eastern Orthodox regarding it as heretical.³⁸ A more lenient approach was provided by Kallistos Ware: “there is today a school of Orthodox theologians who believe that the divergence between east and west over the Filioque, while by no means unimportant, is not as fundamental. . . .”³⁹ The *filioque* doctrine may be interpreted in a manner

³⁴ Jennifer Lawler, *Encyclopedia of the Byzantine Empire* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co, 2004) 127.

³⁵ Photius of Constantinople (ca. 81-95) was the primary initiator of the *filioque* controversy. At a council in Constantinople in 867, he denounced Pope Nicholas I for teaching heresy and altering the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed.

³⁶ John Nelson Darby, *Analysis of Dr. Newman’s Apologia Pro Vitâ Suâ with a Glance at the History of Popes, Councils, and the Church* (London: W. H. Broom, 1866) 146.

³⁷ Richard Price and Michael Gaddis, *The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon*, 3 vols. (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2005) 1:340.

³⁸ Laurent Cleenewerck, *His Broken Body: Understanding and Healing the Schism Between the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches* (Washington DC: Euclid University Press, 2008) 338; Anthony Dragani, *Adrian Fortescue and the Eastern Christian Churches* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2007) 140-43; Donald Fairbairn, *Eastern Orthodoxy through Western Eyes* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002) 57-59; William Palmer, *Dissertations on Subjects Relating to the “Orthodox” or “Eastern-Catholic Communion”* (London: Joseph Masters, 1853) 14-16; A. Edward Siecienski, *The Filioque: History of a Doctrinal Controversy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010) 188-89, 207.

³⁹ Timothy Ware, *The Orthodox Church*, new ed. (New York: Penguin, 1997) 218. Ware noted three reasons for his conclusion. “First, it is only in the present century that Orthodox writers have seen a close link between the Doctrine of the Double Procession and the

compatible with Eastern Orthodoxy, albeit, it is argued to be “somewhat confused in its expression and potentially misleading”⁴⁰ and the West should not have inserted it into the creed (because the assumption is that belief in the doctrine is necessary).

“A favorite analogy for the Trinity has always been that of three torches burning with a single flame”⁴¹ According to Gregory of Nyssa, “the flame of the third is caused by that of the first being transmitted to the middle, and then kindling the third torch.”⁴² The Holy Spirit proceeds through the Son from the Father, which is an entirely acceptable Orthodox interpretation of the double procession. However, Eastern theology is adamant that the Father is the one source of being in the Trinity, and thereby gives the entirety of the divine essence to the Son and the Holy Spirit. The Orthodox objects when the West asserts another Source (or Principle) of Godhead for the procession of the Holy Spirit.

Western theologians confess to the *fons/principium et origo totius deitatis*, that is, the Father is the source/principle and origin of the whole deity.⁴³ The Father is not begotten, but eternally begets the Son. The Father is the source of each *hypostasis* within the Godhead; each distinct *hypostasis* shares the divine *ousia* numerically, but ontological priority does not exist within the Godhead. Eastern and Western theologies agree with regard to the Father as “the unbegotten origin and principle of the other two persons.”⁴⁴ The Father gives His *ousia* to the Son, which is reason for their equality. “All things that the Father has” belong to the Son (with the exception of being Father because the Father is the source of the Son); therefore, the Holy Spirit takes of the Son, and both interprets and applies the character and teaching of the Son to believers (John 16:15).

doctrine of the Church. . . . Secondly, it is not true to assert, in any blunt and absolute fashion, that the principle of divine unity is personal [only] in Orthodoxy . . . ; for the Latin west as well as the Greek east upholds the doctrine of the ‘monarchy’ of the Father. . . . In the third place, the claim that the west depersonalizes the Trinity, overemphasizing the unity of essence at the expense of the diversity of persons, should not be overstated” (ibid. 216-17).

⁴⁰ Ibid. 213.

⁴¹ Kallistos Ware, *The Orthodox Way*, rev. ed. (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1995) 29; see also, Joel C. Elowsky, ed., *We Believe in the Holy Spirit* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2009) 228-29.

⁴² Lucien Turcescu, *Gregory of Nyssa and the Concept of Divine Persons* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005) 111; see also, Siecienski, *Filioque*, 44-45.

⁴³ For example, see Augustine, “On the Trinity” 4.20.29, in *The Master Christian Library*, Version 6 [CD-ROM] (Albany, OR: Ages Software, 1998) 155; John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, 2 vols. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1960) 1:159.

⁴⁴ Antonio López, “God the Father: A Beginning Without Beginning,” *Communio* 36 (Summer 2009): 225.

Eastern and Western theologians agree that the Father is the source or First Principle of the Son and the Holy Spirit. However, if the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son, then the Son becomes a *fons et origo* within the Godhead.⁴⁵ Consequently, the other approach to the *filioque* clause has already been stated, which is that the doctrine is heresy “that produces a fatal distortion in the western doctrine of God as Trinity.”⁴⁶ Prior to its insertion into the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed by the Council of Toledo, the Western church was already generally accepting of the *filioque* clause. The primary reason for its acceptance was usage of the clause by Augustine, and perhaps secondarily that it was inserted into the

⁴⁵ God is triune for all eternity, and since the Father is the primary name for God, then the relationship of the Son of God to the Father is also eternal. The Son of God is eternally begotten from the Father, whose eternal generation is as the *Logos*. The Old Testament is unambiguous that there is only one God, and in the unity of the Godhead, the New Testament especially reveals Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as three equally existing persons (Gk. *hypostaseis*; Lat. *personae*)—same in substance (Gk. *homoousios*; Lat. *substantia*) and distinct in subsistence (Gk. *hypostasis*; Lat. *subsistentiae*)—thereby indicating that the Holy Spirit is also eternal. Since each member of the Godhead is mutually dependent upon one another as deity, there is not a causal relation of origin, which would indicate an ontological subordination (distinction in nature); rather, there is economic self-subordination of the Son and the Holy Spirit to the Father, even with the Son and the Holy Spirit subjecting themselves in eternal ontological equality to the monarchy of the Father in the accomplishing of the divine decrees, as to the mode of function and subsistence. “The Father is greater than” the Son (John 14:28), and when the Holy Spirit glorifies the Son, the Father is also glorified since each member is of one nature and wisdom (*logos*). The monarchy of the Father does not imply ontological subordination because it is mediated to Him through the Son and the Holy Spirit. Ontological subordination would *seem* logical, especially in accord with middle Platonism, if the Father is the origin or source of the Son and the Holy Spirit, which would then necessitate functional subordination (distinction in roles). See Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*; Robert Letham, *The Holy Trinity in Scripture, History, Theology, and Worship* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2004); Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, 3 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991) 1:312-25; Thomas F. Torrance, *Trinitarian Perspectives: Toward Doctrinal Agreement* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994); Bruce Ware, *Father, Son, and Holy Spirit* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2005); and, Rowan Williams, *Arius: Heresy and Tradition* [London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1997].

⁴⁶ Ware identified Photius and Mark of Ephesus as historic examples of this view. Lossky is “the chief exponent of this stricter view in the twentieth century,” who “argues that the imbalance in the western doctrine of the Trinity has also led to an imbalance in the doctrine of the Church” (*Orthodox Church*, 213). Vladimir Lossky regards the western doctrine as wrongly affirming the divine essence as more fundamental, which minimizes the Persons of the Godhead to be not much more than relationships within the one, eternal divine essence. He concluded, “This is why the East has always opposed the formula of *filioque* which seems to impair the monarchy of the Father: either one is forced to destroy the unity by acknowledging two principles of Godhead, or one must ground the unity primarily on the common nature, which thus overshadows the persons and transforms them into relations within the unity of the essence” (*The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church* [Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1976] 58).

Athanasian Creed, “a fifth century Western composition which was later erroneously attributed to Athanasius.”⁴⁷

AUGUSTINIAN WESTERN THEOLOGY

Written between approximately AD 400-20, Augustine’s work *On the Trinity* (*De Trinitate*) in particular was determinative for much of Western theology. Augustine defended the unity of essence and the triunity of *hypostaseis* in possessing the entire divine essence.⁴⁸ He wrote, “But I would boldly say, that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, of one and the same substance, God the Creator, the Omnipotent Trinity, work indivisibly”⁴⁹ “Yet, otherwise, the Trinity does not work indivisibly, but the Father does some things, the Son other things, and the Holy Spirit yet others.”⁵⁰ Augustine rejected any ontological subordination of the Son and the Holy Spirit to the Father, and concluded that the unity of the Trinity taught the full equality of the three *hypostaseis* (substances).⁵¹ “Yet neither three

⁴⁷ Avery Dulles, *The Filioque: What Is at Stake?*, *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 59 (January-April 1995): 31.

⁴⁸ In contrast to Augustine, for example, the Latin scholastic theologian Johannes Roscellinus (ca. 1045-1120) posited tritheism (and criticized his pupil, Peter Abelard). Scholastic logician Gilbert de la Porrée (ca. 1076-1154) was influenced by Boethius’ error in his attempt to define the Persons as individual substances united in the divine essence. See Heinrich Fichtenau, *Ketzer und Professoren: Häresie und Vernunftglaube im Hochmittelalter* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1992); Nikolaus Martin Häring, “A Treatise on the Trinity by Gilbert of Poitiers,” *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale* 39 (1972): 14-50; Bernard McGinn, “The God beyond God: Theology and Mysticism in the Thought of Meister Eckhart,” *The Journal of Religion* 61 (January 1981): 13; and, Hastings Rashdall, *The Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1895) 1:47-51.

⁴⁹ Augustine, “On the Trinity” 4.21, Master Christian Library, 156.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.* 1.5.8, Master Christian Library, 33. With regard to the Holy Spirit, he affirmed, “neither the Father nor the Son, nor both, have begotten, although He is the Spirit both of the Father and of the Son” (*ibid.*). Accusations of Augustine as a Christomonist are invalid. “It is true that Augustine, like western theology in general, lacked a fully developed doctrine of the Holy Spirit such as one finds in the eastern Christian tradition from Basil onward. . . . The Christ-saturated Augustine, as especially his *Enarrationes in Psalmos* (*Enarrations on the Psalms*) shows, is also a Spirit-saturated theologian” (George E. Demacopoulos and Aristotle Papanikolaou, eds., *Orthodox Readings of Augustine* [Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2008] 274).

⁵¹ Augustine admitted difficulty with the distinction “persons” for each member of the Trinity, but nevertheless confessed its familiarity in usage. “This is what we have said; and if it is handled and repeated frequently, it becomes, no doubt, more familiarly known: yet some limit, too, must be put to the discussion, and we must supplicate God with most devout piety, that He will open our understanding, and take away the inclination of disputing, in order that our minds may discern the essence of the truth, that has neither bulk nor moveableness” (*ibid.*, “Preface,” 8, Master Christian Library, 214). He regarded it

Gods, nor three goods, nor three omnipotents, but one God, good, omnipotent, the Trinity itself; and whatsoever else is said of them not relatively in respect to each other, but individually in respect to themselves. . . . And that there is so great an equality in that Trinity, that not only the Father is not greater than the Son, as regards divinity, but neither are the Father and Son together greater than the Holy Spirit; nor is each individual person, whichever it be of the three, less than the Trinity itself.”⁵²

Augustine attempted to illustrate the Trinity through many comparisons. As man is the image of God, he believed a kind of Trinity to exist within humanity. The human mind (*mens*) and the understanding of the mind to know itself (*notitia sui*), and the love of self (*amor sui*) and such understanding are mutually equal, and of one essence. The basis to love anything, therefore, must include love obviously, but also a lover and loved. “For he who loves and that which is loved are the same when any one loves himself; just as to love and to be loved, in the same way, is the very same thing when any one loves himself. . . . Yet love and mind are not two spirits, but one spirit; nor yet two essences, but one: and yet here are two things that are one, he that loves and love; or, if you like so to put it, that which is loved and love. And these two, indeed are mutually said relatively.”⁵³ Augustine believed the most comprehensible and evident imagery to exemplify the Trinity in created things is the interaction of the human mind toward itself in memory (*memoria*), understanding (*intelligentia*), and will (*voluntas*).⁵⁴

With regard to the consubstantiality and equality of each *hypostasis* of the Trinity, Augustine sought analogy to the image of God within humanity. Augustine related the procession of the Son of God to the understanding of the mind (or memory), whereas the procession of the Holy Spirit corresponded to that of love.⁵⁵ Augustine explained in a sermon what he intended to say and what he did not by means of analogy.

better to say, “three ‘persons,’ not that it might be spoken, but that it might not be left unspoken” (ibid. 5.9, Master Christian Library, 169).

⁵² Ibid., “Preface,” 8, Master Christian Library, 213-14.

⁵³ Ibid. 9.2.2, Master Christian Library, 235-36.

⁵⁴ Ibid. Book 10.1-12, Master Christian Library, 251-70. Aquinas developed Augustine’s psychological analogy with regard to the mental actions (*mentis*) of love (*amor*) and word (*verbum*), and interchanged it into a metaphysical conception of God as the ultimate spiritual reality (first cause), or perfection of spiritual being (*Actus Purus*, “Pure Act”). See Matthew Webb Levering, *Scripture and Metaphysics: Aquinas and the Renewal of Trinitarian Theology* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2004) 149-64.

⁵⁵ See also, Gilles Emery and Francesca Aran Murphy, *The Trinitarian Theology of St. Thomas Aquinas* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010) 355.

I do not say that “memory” is the Father,—the “understanding” the Son,—and “will” the Spirit; I do not say this; let men understand it how they will. I do not venture to say this. Let us reserve the greater truths for those who are capable of them: but, infirm, as I am myself, I convey to the infirm only what is according to our powers. I do not say that these things are in any sort to be equaled with the Holy Trinity, to be squared after an analogy; that is, a kind of exact rule of comparison. This I do not say. But what do I say? See. I have discovered in thee three things, which are exhibited separately, whose operation is inseparable; and of these three, every single name is produced by the three together; yet does not this name belong to the three, but to some one of the three.⁵⁶

It is evident that Augustine expended much exertion to differentiate between the procession of the Son (by generation) as the only begotten of the Father from the procession of the Holy Spirit. He believed the only possibility for this distinguishing was to affirm that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of the Father and the Son, and therefore proceeds from both the Father and the Son in common (single) spiration. Augustine concluded that the only principle (*principium*) of the Holy Spirit is the Father (*principium non de principio*, “original principle”) and the Son (*principium de principio*, “derived principle”).

But in their mutual relation to one another in the Trinity itself, if the begetter is a beginning in relation to that which he begets, the Father is a beginning in relation to the Son, because the begets Him; but whether the Father is also a beginning in relation to the Holy Spirit, since it is said, “He proceeds from the Father,” is no small question. . . . If, therefore, that also which is given has him for a beginning by whom it is given, since it has received from no other source that which proceeds from him; it must be admitted that the Father and the Son are a Beginning of the Holy Spirit, not two Beginnings; but as the Father and Son are one God, and one Creator, and one Lord relatively to the creature, so are they one Beginning relatively to the Holy Spirit. But the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit is one Beginning in respect to the creature, as also one Creator and one God.⁵⁷

The sense of equality and unity in these psychological analogies were preparatory for the *filioque* controversy.⁵⁸ According to Augustine, the Holy Spirit belongs to both the Father and the Son. Romans 8:9 does reference “the Spirit of God” and “the Spirit of Christ” (cf. Matt 10:20; John 15:26; Acts 16:7; 1 Cor 2:11; Gal 4:6). Augustine concluded if the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God and the Spirit of the Son, then He proceeds eternally from both. “And yet it is not to no purpose that in this Trinity the Son and none

⁵⁶ Augustine, “Sermons on Selected Lessons of the New Testament,” in *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, ed. Philip Schaff, 14 vols. (New York: The Christian Literature Company, 1888) 6:265-66.

⁵⁷ Augustine, “On the Trinity,” 5.14.15, *Master Christian Library*, 174-75.

⁵⁸ Olson, *Story of Christian Theology*, 276.

other is called the Word of God, and the Holy Spirit and none other the Gift of God, and God the Father alone is He from whom the Word is born, and from whom the Holy Spirit principally proceeds. And therefore I have added the word principally, because we find that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Son also.”⁵⁹ The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father principally, and since the procession is without any time interval, the procession of the Holy Spirit is from the Father and the Son, which the West affirms does make the Son a source or principle within the Trinity, as the procession is from one source or principle.

The Father gives the whole divine essence or *ousia* to the Son, but since He does not possess a partitive nature, the Son is truly begotten, but does not become father.⁶⁰ However, the Father does give the Son the capacity to be a source of the Holy Spirit. Within the context of Eastern theology, the notion that the Son is a principle within the Godhead, and therefore acts as one source with the Father in the procession of the Holy Spirit is rejected as tending “dangerously toward positing two divine principles in the Godhead, the Father and the Son.” “Nevertheless [historically] Augustine was able to phrase thoughts on the double procession of the Holy Spirit, which by insisting on the *principal* procession from the Father, were not unacceptable to Greek theologians.”⁶¹ Much debate would develop from the time of Augustine, but unfortunately by the eleventh century, any sensitivity or understanding between the East and the West would be absent. Gasper explained the developments well.

Defence of the Latin position hung on the necessity for Latin theology of the addition of the *filioque*, in order to guard against the subordination within the Trinity, of the Spirit to the Father. For the Greek the addition to the Creed was an unpardonable abuse made without due authority. . . .

This was the arena Anselm entered at [the Council of] Bari. . . . It is Anselm’s task not to berate and insult his fellow Christians, but to persuade them rationally of what he has to say. . . .

Anselm set himself to demonstrate the consistency of the addition of the *filioque* to the Creed. The phrase was not just a Latin idiosyncrasy, but a necessary theological statement, the denial of which involves the denial of the Christian faith.⁶²

⁵⁹ Augustine, “On the Trinity,” 15.17.29, Master Christian Library, 416. According to this conception, the following is true: the Father is unbegotten, the Son is begotten, and the Holy Spirit is the common gift (or the mutual love of both Father and Son).

⁶⁰ Anatolios, *Athanasius*, 214-16. See also, John Thompson, *Modern Trinitarian Perspectives* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994) 145-47.

⁶¹ Giles E. M. Gasper, *Anselm of Canterbury and His Theological Inheritance* (Aldershot, Hampshire, England: Ashgate Publishing, 2004) 185.

⁶² *Ibid.*

THE MERITS OF DOUBLE PROCESSION

Both Eastern and Western theologies agree that the Father is unbegotten, the Father begot the Son, and the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father. All divine attributes belong equally and fully to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The relation of origination distinguishes the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit from one another. The Father begot the Son, the Son is begotten, and the Holy Spirit proceeds. Anselm sought to demonstrate that the doctrine of double procession is a necessary theological statement to distinguish begotten and proceeds. If there is not a difference with regard to mode of origination, it is not possible to distinguish the Son and the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the Holy Spirit must proceed from the Father and the Son. The Son does not originate from the Father and the Son, but the Holy Spirit does originate from the Father and the Son. Anselm argued the theological necessity of stating what distinguishes the origination of the Holy Spirit from the Father in a manner that is different from the origination of the Son from the Father. The doctrine of double procession does identify the distinctive origination of the Holy Spirit, but the Eastern Orthodox do not have a means for differentiating the origination of the Son and the Holy Spirit.⁶³

Augustine's work, "On the Trinity," developed the traditional perspective of Western theology by emphasizing the unity of the Godhead. A distinguishing characteristic of his doctrine of double procession is his understanding of the Holy Spirit as the bond of love shared between the Father and the Son (Eph 4:13). The Holy Spirit is not only a *hypostasis*, but also He is love. He defined the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit by their relation of origination to one another; therefore, the Holy Spirit is the relation of love and friendship between the Father and the Son. The Trinity is *hypostatic* love (1 John 4:7-16).⁶⁴ The Father is *hypostatized* as self-giving love, who loves the Son, and the Son loves the Father. The *hypostatized* love of the union between the Father and the Son is the Holy Spirit.⁶⁵ Augustine

⁶³ Generally, the Eastern church believes the Western church is relying too much upon logic and discounting the incomprehensibility of God. Eastern Orthodox theology is apophatic, which means positive descriptions of God are not possible. God is an uncreated being, thus He cannot be defined by standard categories of human language and thought; therefore, one speaks by negation (*via negativa*) with regard to God. Apophatic theology emphasizes knowing God positively through mystical experience rather than positive propositions or intellectual expression. The mind is emptied of intellectual and logical categories, so that "right worship" is the priority, as opposed to correct doctrine.

⁶⁴ Augustine, "On the Trinity," 15.17.27—18.32, Master Christian Library, 415-19.

⁶⁵ Sergius Bulgakov, *The Comforter*, trans. Boris Jakim (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004) 125-29.

explained the Holy Spirit as communion between the Father and the Son. The relationship between the Godhead

is consubstantial and co-eternal; and if it may fitly be called friendship, let it be so called; but it is more aptly called love. And this is also a substance, since God is a substance, and "God is love," as it is written.⁶⁶

But because both the Son is born of God the Father, and the Holy Spirit proceeds from God the Father, it is rightly asked which of them we ought here to think is the rather called the love that is God. For the Father only is so God as not to be of God; and hence the love that is God as to be of God, is either the Son or the Holy Spirit. . . . Therefore the Holy Spirit, of whom He hath given us, makes us to abide in God, and Him in us; and this it is that love does. Therefore He is the God that is love.⁶⁷

The Holy Spirit given to believers is the love of God in Person, who is "poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us" (Rom 5:5). There is an evident and vivid soteriological relationship of Trinitarian doctrine with charismatology and soteriology. The argument, however, is dependent upon the doctrine of double procession, which makes the Eastern church suspect.

Eastern Orthodoxy contends that the Holy Spirit proceeds solely from the Father through the Son. Of course, the favorite analogy is three torches: the first (Father) lights the middle (Son), which having been lit by the first torch, lights the third (Holy Spirit). The depiction of the Trinity in Western theology is typically with a triangle that stresses the unity of the divine nature. Contrariwise, the Eastern church depicts a straight line beginning with the monarchy of the Father, who is the sole source of the divine essence which is given from Himself through the Son to the Holy Spirit. The reason for the variant depictions is disagreement between the East and the West with regard to the relations of origination.

Another distinctive teaching of Augustine's work, "On the Trinity," was his usage of psychological analogies of the Trinity, as a development of the doctrine of double procession.⁶⁸ Augustine identified the Holy Spirit as "the God that is love," which caused him to reason that vestiges of God's own being are in creation (his neo-Platonic presuppositions are evident). Especially since humanity is created in the *imago dei*, one may expect to find *vestigia trinitatis* within the human soul. Believing the human soul to be tripartite, he explained the triad as memory (*memoria*), understanding

⁶⁶ Augustine, "On the Trinity," 6.5.7, Master Christian Library, 185-86.

⁶⁷ Ibid. 15.17.31, Master Christian Library, 418.

⁶⁸ David S. Larson has expounded upon Augustine's theory in relation to the social sciences. See "A Theoretical Framework of the Trinity Based upon Augustine's Theory," *Journal of Dispensational Theology* (April 2010): 45-52.

(*intelligentia*), and will (*voluntas*). The structure of the human soul is somewhat reflective of the Trinity because each Trinitarian *hypostasis* is distinct but still only one divine essence or *ousia*. The Father is similar to mind/memory, the Son is similar to knowledge/understanding (the *Logos*), and the Holy Spirit is the love/will of God. The tripartite human soul possesses knowledge/understanding (*notitia/intelligentia*) and love/will (*amor/voluntas*), in addition to mind/memory (*mens/memoria*). Augustine's emphasis upon the unity of the Godhead, in relation to the human soul, became distinctive and influential in Western theology with regard to the Trinity.

CONCLUSIONS

Both Eastern and Western theologies agree that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son, and the Father is the source (first principle) of the entire divine essence. Moreover, the divine essence is undivided among the *hypostaseis* because it is not material "stuff." Eastern and Western theologies disagree with regard to the doctrine of double procession because the East believes it to compromise the monarchy of the Father as the only source of the divine essence. Disagreement with regard to the doctrine does not imply that Western theology is contrary to the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed. The East does object strongly that it was wrong for the Western church to insert the *filioque* clause into the creed without an ecumenical council, and also its inclusion appears to be required belief. Therefore, ecumenical discussions⁶⁹ have attempted to interpret the clause without offense to the Eastern churches. Nevertheless, the reality that the

⁶⁹ The discussions have been in the positive sense by reaffirming the common heritage of Christian traditions and to seek unity when possible without biblical compromise (see John Stott, *Evangelical Truth: A Personal Plea for Unity, Integrity and Faithfulness* [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999]). Negative ecumenical discussions seek unity regardless of biblical teaching and often focus upon political ideology. Some ecumenical discussions attempt to mend the schism between Eastern and Western churches. However, disagreement exists whether Eastern Orthodoxy and evangelicalism are compatible (see James J. Stamoolis, gen. ed., *Three Views on Eastern Orthodoxy and Evangelicalism* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004]). Some also seek to resolve the division between Protestantism and Roman Catholicism as a consequence of the sixteenth century Reformation (see Ron J. Bigalke Jr., "The Theory of Sacrifice in the Mass," *The Conservative Theological Journal* [May–June 2006]: 73-74). While this author does not intend here to answer positively or negatively with regard to whether Eastern Orthodoxy and Evangelicalism are compatible (not because he does not possess biblical convictions with regard to the issue, rather not to distract from the theological history of the *filioque* clause, and because there is lack of space to fully answer the question in this article), he will state emphatically that such union between the former is impossible as a consequence of the wholly unbiblical soteriology of Roman Catholicism.

clause still remains in the Western creed is a point of contention.

With regard to the validity of the *filioque* clause, it is prudent to note that both Eastern and Western theologies possess both problems and solutions. The problem for Eastern Orthodoxy is the possibility of *perichoresis* (sometimes termed circumincession, this view affirms that the divine essence is shared by each *hypostasis* in the one being of God)⁷⁰ and/or subordinationism (an early heresy that affirmed the Son and the Holy Spirit as unequal to the Father because of their procession from the Father, and therefore, would not be fully divine). The *homoousios* clause is a necessary defense against these false doctrines.

One problem for Western theology is the heretical danger of modalism,⁷¹ as a consequence of the psychological analogies of the Trinity. The corrective against this heresy is to understand that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are three divine *hypostaseis*, who each possess the whole of the divine essence. An exaggerated emphasis upon the Persons within the divine nature can lead to tritheism, such as social Trinitarianism (this view affirms that each *hypostasis* of the Trinity is absolutely distinct from the other two *hypostaseis*).⁷² Moreland and Craig noted, “Anti social trinitarianism finds it difficult to avoid modalism, while the danger facing social trinitarianism is tritheism.”⁷³ The distinction between economy (“salvation history”⁷⁴) and theology in Eastern theology would seem to avoid the potential dangers of modalism or tritheism.

Eastern Orthodoxy explains the difference between the love of the Father for the Son, and the love of the Son for the Father based upon the incarnation. The divine nature of the Son is explained according to theology, whereas the humanity of the Son is explained according to economy. The West would be wise to understand this distinction between the “immanent Trinity” (or “ontological Trinity”) and the “economic Trinity.” The “immanent Trinity” refers to the internal relations the

⁷⁰ *Perichoresis* would mean that the action of each *hypostasis* is also fully the action of the other two *hypostaseis*. Any essential characteristic of one *hypostasis* of the Trinity would be shared by the other two *hypostaseis*.

⁷¹ Modalism and other forms of monarchianism affirm the divine nature of the Son and the Holy Spirit but deny their personal distinction from the Father.

⁷² There is disagreement whether this implies a “society of persons” sharing one divine essence, or whether the view is truly a form of tritheism.

⁷³ J. P. Moreland and William Lane Craig, *Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003) 595.

⁷⁴ Paul M. Blowers, “Eastern Orthodox Biblical Interpretation,” in *A History of Biblical Interpretation, Volume 2: The Medieval through the Reformation Periods*, eds. Alan J. Hauser and Duane F. Watson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009) 173; Duncan Reid, *Energies of the Spirit: Trinitarian Models in Eastern Orthodox and Western Theology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997) 31.

hypostaseis of the Godhead possess with one another in the eternal begetting and proceeding. The “economic Trinity” refers to the self-disclosure of the *hypostaseis* of the Godhead in their salvific work in the world. Subordinationism is always a heretical danger if the distinction between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit is not understood immanently or economically. The Eastern formulation of “the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father through the Son,” and the typical Western prayer “to the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit” are both susceptible to subordinationism without the distinction between the “immanent Trinity” and the “economic Trinity.” The terminology with regard to the Trinity is crucial to avoid the heretical temptations, which distort the biblical teaching that the divine essence is not divided among the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; rather, the Godhead is indeed one divine essence (*ousia*) in three *hypostaseis*.

A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE TRINITY BASED UPON AUGUSTINE'S THEORY¹

James S. Larson

The English poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge believed, “the Trinity is the idea of ideas, in some way at once the clue to all thought and to all reality.”² In the words of Coleridge, the “Trinity is indeed the primary Idea, out of which all other ideas are evolved.”³ Coleridge was a man of faith and a man of intellect, whose intuitive powers led him to make bold assertions with regard to God’s power and domain. For Coleridge, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit were not only a description of the Christian God, but also a description of human knowledge.

The purpose of this article is to present a theoretical framework for understanding the Trinity, and apply that theory to human knowledge in a manner similar to Coleridge’s idea. It is loosely based upon a theory of the Trinity propounded by Augustine, that is, a psychologically based theory. It does not claim to be the intimation to all knowledge, as Coleridge did, but it does suggest that the Trinity and the personal relationships between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit *ad intra* (Lat. “at the interior”; i.e. acting within) provide important clues to certain typologies of thought in the social sciences. The argument is in two parts: *first*, there is a review of Augustine’s theory of the Trinity and his basic concepts of memory, understanding and will; and, *secondly*, a theory is developed based upon Augustine’s ideas in combination with a theory of social science.⁴

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¹ The author adapted and modified this article from the following: “A New Theory of the Christian Trinity,” in *The Theory of Archetypes Revisited* (New York: Nova Publishers, 2009) 57-65, and is used by permission of the publisher.

² Colin E. Gunton, *The One, the Three, and the Many: God, Creation and the Culture of Modernity* (Cambridge University Press, 1993) 221.

³ Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *The Complete Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, 7 vols., ed. W. G. T. Shedd (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1884), 5:407.

⁴ The latter theory was presented in the author’s previous work: James S. Larson, *The Theory of Archetypes* (New York: Nova Science Press, 2004).

AUGUSTINE'S THEORY OF THE TRINITY

Mackey wrote in his book on the Trinity that “trinitarian theologies deriving from Augustine in the West and the Cappadocians in the East are frequently considered to be the only ones worth considering critically today.”⁵ Augustine’s work is seminal in the Catholic and Protestant traditions, as it presents a view of the Trinity that has been modified throughout the centuries by other Western theologians. The view is a distinctly personal and psychological one, finding the nature of God in man, specifically in the operations of the human mind, and implying that the soul or spirit is part of that mind. “The psychological analogy, used by Augustine, Aquinas, and others, especially in the Western tradition, sees an image of the Trinity in the individual human being: the self, understanding, and will.”⁶ In contrast, the Eastern tradition employs a “social analogy” to describe God, emphasizing the Trinity as three individual human beings, with separate qualities and actions. The perspective of this article will be to regard the Trinity more consistently with Augustine’s view of God’s tripartite nature as an archetype or original model for human psychology, the mystery of which is revealed by human nature.

There is a natural logic in saying that God is like humanity in terms of his innermost being. Augustine argued, “the drawing of likenesses between creation and Creator,” is a “*necessary* part of the theological enterprise.”⁷ Being in the image of God makes such a metaphor both logical and necessary. The English poet, John Donne, expressed the idea in writing.

As God, one *God* created us, so wee have a soul, *one soul*, that represents, and is some image of that one God; As the three Persons of the *Trinity* created us, so wee have, in our one soul, a *three-fold impression* of that image, and, as Saint Bernard calls it, *A trinity from the Trinity*, in those *three faculties* of the soul, the *Understanding*, the *Will*, and the *Memory*.⁸

Augustine’s idea of analogies with “the structure of the human soul contributed further to the idea of a ‘psychological Trinity’,”⁹ which is the basis of many modern theories of the Trinity found in the work of

⁵ James P. Mackey, *The Christian Experience of God as Trinity* (London: SCM Press, 1983) 173.

⁶ Jonathan Edwards, *Writings on the Trinity, Grace, and Faith*, ed. Sang Hyun Lee (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003) 11.

⁷ Lewis Ayres, “Remember That You Are Catholic” (serm. 52:2): Augustine on the Unity of the Triune God,” *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 8 (Spring 2000): 39.

⁸ James F. Forrest, “Patristic Tradition and Psychological Image in Bunyan’s Three Shining Ones at the Cross,” *The Harvard Theological Review* 68 (January 1975): 63.

⁹ John Gwyn Griffiths, *Triads and Trinity* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1996) 291.

Moltmann, Rahner, Barth and other contemporary writers. As Reinhold Niebuhr noted, Augustine “set forth his conception of ‘an integral self operating in mind, memory, and will’ as an analogy of the triune God—a mysterious human self that is more than any of its functions.”¹⁰

Augustine believed that God was of one substance and that the persons of the Trinity were equal in majesty, power, and authority. It is widely known that his writings on the Trinity were the basis for the historical Creeds that established Christian doctrine for the subsequent centuries. He asserted, “in their external operations, works or functions the three are also one.” Individual works “could be appropriated to each person, but they always acted as one. The Father, the Son and Holy Spirit in their external works functioned in perfect unison and harmony.”¹¹ In the theory, Augustine minimized “the distinction between the external operations of the Persons” of the Trinity, noting that “‘Father’ and ‘Son’ are relational attributes.”¹² In other words, one distinguishes between God’s actions *ad intra* and *ad extra* (Lat. “at the exterior”; i.e. acting without). William Hill wrote that the members of the Trinity are “one in their essential actions *ad intra* and in all action *ad extra*. Only in their personal acts *ad intra* are they distinct, and such activity is that of a pure relating.”¹³

Stephen McKenna, in his introduction to the translation of Augustine’s *The Trinity (De Trinitate)*, noted that the work is divided into 15 books. In the first seven books, “he examines the Trinity in light of the Sacred Scriptures; and in the remaining eight he makes a speculative study of this dogma.”¹⁴ Augustine used the Bible as the basis for his creative concepts on the Trinity, which are the essence of his work. McKenna observed:

The ninth is undoubtedly the most original of the fifteen books. In it Augustine centers his attention on the mind, as the most perfect and related image of the most blessed Trinity, a fact that no one before him seems to have noticed. The first trinity is the mind, its knowledge of itself, and its love of itself. But an even closer one is to be found there, namely, memory, understanding, and love, and this second trinity forms the subject matter of the tenth book.¹⁵

¹⁰ Charles C. Brown, *Niebuhr and His Age: Reinhold Niebuhr’s Prophetic Role in the Twentieth Century* (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1992) 158.

¹¹ Kevin Giles, *The Trinity & Subordinationism* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2002) 15.

¹² David Brown, *The Divine Trinity* (London: Duckworth, 1985) 281.

¹³ William J. Hill, *The Three-Personed God: The Trinity as a Mystery of Salvation* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1982) 281.

¹⁴ Augustine, *The Trinity*, trans. Stephen McKenna (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1963) ix.

¹⁵ *Ibid.* xi.

For Augustine, Memory in the human mind is similar to God the Father. While “beasts” and other animals have the faculty of memory, human beings have a special quality of memory “in which intelligible things are so contained that they do not come into it through the senses of the body.”¹⁶ In other words, the memory of humans is not just sensations that register through the five senses, as in animals (contrary to our current knowledge of animal behavior), but they are complex entities that are influenced by thought and other advanced mental activities unique to human beings.

God the Father is like Memory in His relationship *ad intra* to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. Memory begets Understanding and Will, just as the Father begot the Son and the Holy Spirit. Augustine wrote that Memory is responsible for “everything we know” as “the gaze of thought does not return to anything except by remembering, and does not care to return except by loving.”¹⁷ Similarly, the Father is vital to the works of both the Son and the Holy Spirit. The Son is equated with Understanding or reasoning and the Holy Spirit with Will or love in their relationships to the Father as Memory. Augustine believed that “we understand what we have found to be true by thinking of it, and this indeed we again leave in our memory.”¹⁸

The Memory seems to be a *directive* force that determines the course of thought and will in the human mind. Memory is a directive force in the sense that it causes (or is the source of) Understanding and Will, yet these forces also influence Memory. Memory has a controlling influence over Understanding and Will, yet it can be altered in response to the actions of either. For example, the memory of a pleasant experience can be changed as one thinks regarding the details of the experience (e.g. a sad face or an unkind word that might be forgotten until later). Will can influence memory, as one’s drive to accomplish a goal can force certain memories onward and repel other memories. Will can also distort memories to its purpose. Therefore, Memory is the primary directing force in the operations of the mind, but Understanding and Will can powerfully influence it.

The role of Understanding, for Augustine, is analogous to the Son. In modest language, he wrote: “Although the understanding of man, which is formed from the memory by the attention of thought, when that which is known is spoken—it is a word of the heart and belongs to no language—has in its great unlikeness some likeness to the Son.”¹⁹ Appropriately, the

¹⁶ Ibid. 509.

¹⁷ Ibid. 507-08.

¹⁸ Ibid. 507.

¹⁹ Ibid. 509-10.

Son is described as Understanding that is spoken, or a word. Perhaps, Augustine had in mind the Word of God when he wrote this sentence, that is, the physical presence of God in the form of Jesus Christ. The Son is described as Understanding in His relationship to the Father and the Holy Spirit. The “limit of thinking is in memory,”²⁰ so the Son’s actions are not made in the absence of the Father, rather they proceed from interaction with the Father. Similarly, Understanding cannot be applied to the physical world without Will (i.e. the empowering of the Holy Spirit).

In Augustine’s theory, Understanding is a tangible force that allows Memory to be translated into action, with the help of Will. One might think of Understanding like a *physical* force that translates thought into action, allowing action to have a specific purpose. Understanding makes thought more viable and allows action with a sense of purpose, giving the Will stronger direction and motivation. Jesus Christ is the physical being that allowed God the Father to act in the world, through the process of redemption and empowering by the Holy Spirit. Christ is literally the physical presence of God in the world, and the conveyer of God’s thoughts to the world, so He represents both the Understanding of God and a physical force in the world.

The Holy Spirit in Augustine’s theory is like love or the Will. In the words of Augustine: “If the will of God is also to be specially attributed to any Person in the Trinity, then this name, just as love, belongs more appropriately to the Holy Spirit. For what else is love than will?”²¹ The Holy Spirit is “not of another substance, nor less than the Father and the Son.”²² Augustine emphasized the “unity and equality”²³ of Persons of the Trinity throughout his work, thus setting the stage for the Nicene Creed and other Christian creeds that followed.

In terms of the relationship between Will and the other two elements—Memory and Understanding—Augustine gave the Will a major role. The Will “causes the eye of the mind to turn back to the memory, in order that it may be formed by that which the memory retains, and that there may be a similar vision in thought.”²⁴ In other words, the Will unites Understanding with Memory, allowing there to be a consistency between what is thought and remembered. Augustine wrote, “if the eye of him who remembers were not formed by that thing which was in the memory, then

²⁰ Ibid. 336.

²¹ Ibid. 505.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid. ix.

²⁴ Ibid. 323.

the vision of thought could in no way take place.”²⁵ Without a Will, the whole functioning of thought in the mind could not occur. Consequently, this explains the relationship between the Holy Spirit and the other Persons of the Trinity. The Holy Spirit allows the Son to communicate with the Father, and the Father with the Son. By the Holy Spirit, the Persons of the Trinity have heightened unity and communication, expressing itself through love. The will of God is that there be unity, equality, love and harmony within the Trinity, and the Holy Spirit maximizes the operation of this will.

THE THEORY OF ARCHETYPES

In this author’s work *The Theory of Archetypes*, a parallel psychological theory was presented. While the theory of that work was not based on the operations of the mind (memory, understanding, and will), it is similar to Augustine’s theory. The major contribution of the theory of archetypes is that it provides a linkage between the self-image of man and patterns of human thought, particularly in the social sciences. Therefore, certain patterns of thought in the social sciences are a reflection of human nature. The mind is a directive force, the body a physical force, and the spirit a corrective force in these various theories. If mankind is created in God’s image, and patterns of thought reflect the human self-image, then Coleridge’s idea of the Trinity as the source of ideation becomes more real.

The first step is to demonstrate a relationship between the Trinity and the nature of man (i.e. man created in the image of God). Augustine showed the linkage through the mind and its functions of memory, understanding, and will. Using the theory of archetypes, an alternative way is to demonstrate a parallel between the Trinity and three human attributes: *mind*, *body*, and *spirit*. In the spirit of Augustine’s work, the remainder of this article will consider the Scriptures to see if this makes sense.

The physical aspect of God—the *body*—seems most logically represented by the person of Jesus Christ. Jesus is described in the Scriptures as the “Word,” who “became flesh and made His dwelling among us” (John 1:14). In Christ “all the fullness of the deity dwells in bodily form” (Col 2:9). Jesus not only was God in bodily form on earth, but He also was the physical force in God’s creation. God employed Christ to create the universe, as the Scripture states, “For by him all things were created . . . and in him all things hold together” (1:16-17). Moreover, “through him all things were made” (John 1:3). Perhaps it is a mystery how God the Father and the Holy Spirit used Christ to create all things “in heaven and on earth”

²⁵ Ibid.

(Col 1:16). God used his “physical” nature to create all things which were both physical and non-physical.

If Jesus Christ is the body of God, then the Father is most likely the *mind* of God (i.e. the directive force). During his ministry on earth, Jesus said that he did not act on his own, but was simply doing what his Father told him to do. Just as the mind directs the body, so Christ was directed in his speech and actions by the Father. He said, “I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me” (John 8:28). Similarly, “do not believe me unless I do what my Father does” (10:37).

Despite Christ’s obedience to the Father, one must be careful to note that this does not endorse the Arian viewpoint that Christ was *not* co-equal with the Father.²⁶ The Son’s obedience to the Father is a personal act *ad intra* and speaks of the loving relationship between the Father and Son, because the Son chooses to be the physical force by which the Father accomplishes His ends. Jesus Christ acts as the power of God, as He sits at the right hand of God and is obedient to His will. One can only assume that Jesus, in His present form, is spirit and that he assumes a physical form and attributes only when necessary. However, this is something not presently known.

If God the Father is mind, then the Holy Spirit must be the *spirit* in the Trinity. The spirit of man understands the mind of man, because the two are intimately related. In the case of God the Father and the Holy Spirit, the apostle Paul wrote (inspired by God), “the Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God” and “no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God” (1 Cor 2:10-11). The Holy Spirit is explained as a “Counselor” and a corrector of wrong thinking when it comes to human beings. Jesus said to his disciples that the Counselor “will teach you all things” (John 14:26) and “will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness” (16:8).

CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this brief article was to present a theory of the Trinity, and to relate that theory with the human nature and certain knowledge in the social sciences. It began with Augustine’s theory of the Trinity, where the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are similar to the Memory, Understanding and Will in the human mind. This relationship does not contradict the Christian Creeds, which emphasize the co-equal nature of the Persons of the Trinity, or the concepts of identical substance and interpenetration. God’s relationship to Himself *ad intra* refers to major functions within the

²⁶ Merrill F. Unger, *Unger’s Bible Dictionary* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1966) 1119.

Trinity, but implies no subordination of one Person to another as the functions are assumed and accomplished with love and mutual respect.

Augustine's theory of the Trinity was used as a basis for a new theory that related God's nature with human nature, finding a parallel in human thought. According to the theory of archetypes, the mind, body, and spirit are archetypes for theories in the social sciences. The theory of the Trinity presented in this article said that God's nature is like mind, body, and spirit, whereas the Father is like mind, the Son like the body, and the Holy Spirit like the human spirit. By implication, a proof of God's triune nature is found in human beings themselves, and in their ways of thinking (at least in the social sciences).

Coleridge was correct in the sense that the Trinity is the most important idea that mankind can understand, as God is the key to understanding many forms of thought. However, as Augustine emphasized, the Trinity still is a mystery. God, and particularly the personal relationships between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, must be studied with humility, understanding the limits of human knowledge. The Scriptures encourage reasoning and seeking God, but mankind must understand his limits. As the Apostle Paul wrote, "We have the mind of Christ" (1 Cor 2:16), so understanding God on some level is possible. Christians can understand God on a rudimentary level, and this understanding may help to understand the world, but one can never fully know the complexities of the interactions of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

THE BELIEVER'S POSITION IN CHRIST¹

Elmer L. Towns

A dispensational interpretation of Scripture reveals the believer in the Church Age (also called the Age of Grace) has many privileges that were not afforded in previous dispensations. When viewing the exalted place of New Testament believers, there is no room for the continuation of the influence of the old covenant in their life. The believer's position "in Christ," is one of the most important distinctives between the old and new covenants.

The night before Jesus died He revealed much of the believer's new position in embryonic form. Among the most important things He promised, Jesus said believers would enjoy a new relationship to Him described as "You in Me, and I in you" (John 14:20). Almost no one misunderstands the part that says Christ would dwell in believers (i.e. "I in you") (cf. Gal 2:20; Col 1:2, 7; Eph 3:17). However, perhaps the most inscrutable mystery is the promise, "You in me." What does it mean to be "in Christ"? The believer's position "in Christ," is also described as "the believer's standing," "the believer's union," or "in the heavenlies."

In recent history the doctrine of "in Christ" has been almost exclusively identified with what is commonly known as the Keswick movement. Though the movement is not without its critics, it is generally conceded to have been an asset to evangelical Christianity because it has popularized this doctrine. James M. Campbell observed:

In recent years certain groups of Christian students and workers, like the Keswick school in England, have made the doctrine of the believer's union with Christ central in their teaching; and while they may not have been always free from exegetical vagaries and from exaggerated representations of truth, they have done not a little to quicken and edify the lives of Christians. To their gatherings many have repaired to find a spiritual uplift which they have failed to find elsewhere. In the region which they explore, and over which they sometimes seem to claim proprietary rights, lie the treasures of truth by which the spiritual life is enriched. Perhaps the main service which they have rendered to the religious thought and life of the times has been the emphasizing of the mystical side of the Pauline theology. While preserving the doctrine of justification by faith in its forensic setting, they have found in it an explanation of the method by which the soul is

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¹ The author adapted the majority of this article from chapter 6 of the following: *Understanding the Deeper Life* (Grand Rapids: Revell/Baker, 1988).

related to God, and made a partaker of the Divine and enduring life from which all the fruits of holiness spring.²

Campbell has correctly analyzed the Keswick movement that has misunderstood this doctrine. They have wrongly said to be “in Christ” was a mystical walk with Christ, which they described as the deeper Christian life. Donald Grey Barnhouse, while not exclusively Keswickian, has explained the experience of being “in Christ.”

Then, still further, we find that the moment we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as our personal Saviour from sin, not only does the Godhead come to dwell within us, but *we are said to be in God*. There are scores of references which speak of the believer as being *in Christ*. . . . Thank God, it is not necessary to live in accord with our condition! It is possible for us to know that condition altered, to realize day by day that our path shineth more and more to the perfect day, and to experience the reality of the good works which He has begun in us being perfected until the day when He shall come to complete that perfection. That life is ours, and that position is ours as children of God, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ. Sons? Yes, but to sum it all up in one word, we are “in Christ.”³

There are reasons why the Keswickians say “in Christ” is experiential and mystical. When conversion is viewed as an experiential process, it is only natural to interpret the phrase “in Christ,” which relates to conversion, as experiential. One realizes that conversion is more than an intellectual reformation or a mental assent to the content of the gospel message. It begins more than a forensic religious exercise; conversion is the beginning of a new relationship with a person, Jesus Christ. A person's experience involves a total commitment of his total person, not merely to a religious philosophy or dogma but to a person. A. W. Tozer emphasized:

To accept Christ is to form an attachment to the Person of our Lord Jesus altogether unique in human experience. The attachment is intellectual, volitional and emotional. The believer is intellectually convinced that Jesus is both Lord and Christ; he (the believer) has set his will to follow Him (Christ) at any cost and soon his heart (emotions) is enjoying the exquisite sweetness of His fellowship.⁴

Perhaps because of their emphasis on this unique conversion experience and the theme of fellowship with Christ; the Pauline expression “in Christ” is a favorite Bible topic for study and preaching by certain deeper-life teachers. Many

² James M. Campbell, *Paul the Mystic: A Study in Apostolic Experience* (London: Andrew Melrose, 1907) 66, 67.

³ Donald Grey Barnhouse, *Life By the Son: Practical Lessons in Experimental Holiness* (Philadelphia: Revelation Publication, 1939) 47, 48, 59.

⁴ A. W. Tozer, *That Incredible Christian* (Harrisburg, PA: Christian Publications, 1964) 18.

theologians also argue this was a fundamental theme in the theology of the Apostle Paul. In the thirteen epistles that bear his name, Paul used this expression no fewer than 172 times. Edgar Young Mullins concluded:

The phrase “in Christ” is a favorite one in the writings of Paul. There is scarcely any phase of the Christian life which the apostle does not express by means of this or an equivalent expression. There is no condemnation to those who are “in Christ” (Rom. 8:1). Christians are alive unto God “in Christ Jesus,” (Rom. 6:11). If any man is “in Christ,” he is a new creature (2 Cor. 5:17). Paul declared that he had been crucified and that Christ lived in him (Gal. 2:20). We are baptized “into Christ” (Gal. 3:27). Christ dwells in the heart by faith (Eph. 3:17). We are created “in Christ Jesus unto good works” (Eph. 2:10).⁵

Albert Schweitzer further observed.

The concept of being-in-Christ dominates Paul’s thought in a way that he not only sees in it the source of everything connected with redemption, but describes all the experience, feeling, thought and will of the baptized as taking place in Christ. Thus the phrase “in Christ Jesus” comes to be added to the most varied statements, almost as a kind of formula. The believer speaks the truth in Christ (Rom. ix. 1), knows and is convinced in Christ (Rom. xiv. 14), has a temper of mind in Christ (Phil. ii. 5), exhorts in Christ (Phil. ii. 1), speaks in Christ (2 Cor. ii. 17, xii. 19), gives out his Yes or his No in Christ (2 Cor. i. 19), salutes in the Lord (1 Cor. xvi. 19; Rom. xvi. 22), labours in the Lord (Rom. xvi. 3, 9, 12), labours abundantly in the Lord (1 Cor. xv. 58), presides in the Lord (1 Thess. v. 12), has freedom in Christ Jesus (Gal. ii. 4), rejoices in the Lord (Phil. iii. 1, iv. 4, 10), has hope in the Lord Jesus (Phil. ii. 19), has confidence in the Lord (Phil. ii. 24), is weak in Christ (2 Cor. xiii. 1), has power in the Lord (Phil. iv. 13), stands fast in the Lord (Phil. iv. 1), becomes rich in Christ Jesus (1 Cor. i. 5), glories in Christ Jesus (1 Cor. xv. 31; Rom. xv. 17; Phil. i. 26, iii. 3), is wise in Christ (1 Cor. iv. 10), is kept safe in Christ (Rom. xvi. 10), has love in Christ (1 Cor. xvi. 24; Rom. xvi. 8), receives a person in Christ Jesus (Rom. xvi. 2; Phil. ii. 29), is of one mind in Christ (Phil. iv. 2), has confidence in a person in the Lord (1 Cor. vii. 39), Paul’s bonds become manifest in the Lord (Phil. i. 13).⁶

Therefore, it is prudent to answer what the expression “in Christ” means. How does it apply personally?

BEING “IN CHRIST”

There are many interpretations of the phrase “in Christ.” A person’s theological suppositions will determine how he interprets this truth. The intent of this article is to examine eight explanations of the phrase “in

⁵ Edgar Young Mullins, *The Christian Religion in Its Doctrinal Expression* (New York: Roger Williams Press, 1917) 10.

⁶ Albert Schweitzer, *The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle*, trans. William Montgomery (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1931) 124-25.

Christ," looking to both the positive and negative arguments for each interpretation. Obviously, the final (eighth) position is the one adopted by the author.

1. *Mystery-Religion Influence.* Some contemporary writers tend to interpret Paul in terms of the pagan mystery religions common to his time. They assume that to some extent the apostle borrowed concepts or at least the language of these cults to express his own view of Christianity. Kirrsopp Lake argued, "Christianity has not borrowed from the mystery-religions, because it was always, at least in Europe, a mystery religion itself."⁷ D. Miall Edwards, conversely, sought to limit the relationship between Pauline Christianity and the mystery religions to a coincidence of language.

Paul was after all a Jew (though a broad one), who always retained traces of his Pharisaic training, and who viewed idolatry with abhorrence; and the chief formative factor of his thinking was his own profound religious experience. It is inconceivable that such a man should so assimilate gentile modes of thought as to be completely colored by them. The characteristics which his teaching has in common with the pagan religions are simply a witness to the common religious wants of mankind, and not to his indebtedness to them.⁸

2. *Sacramental Orientation.* Some who argue for a relationship between Pauline Christianity and the Hellenistic mystery religions tend to interpret the expression "in Christ" sacramentally and view baptism and the Lord's Table as initiatory rites of Christianity. Albert Schweitzer, for instance, argued as follows.

We have seen how Pauline mysticism contrasts with Hellenistic; on the other hand it offers a striking analogy to the mysticism of the Hellenistic mystery-religions, and to primitive mysticism in general, in the fact that it is sacramental mysticism. . . . In primitive Christianity Baptism guaranteed the forgiveness of sins and allegiance to the coming Messiah, and the prospect of sharing the glory which is to dawn at His coming. In this significance Paul takes it over, but he explains its operation by his Christ-mysticism. On this basis he asserts that what takes place in Baptism is the beginning of the being-in-Christ and the process of dying and rising again which is associated therewith.⁹

The major problem with Schweitzer's interpretation of Paul is Paul himself. Paul's statement concerning baptism in 1 Corinthians 1:17 can hardly be the statement of one who viewed baptism as the initiatory rite into Christ.

⁷ Kirrsopp Lake, *The Earlier Epistles of St. Paul* (London: Christophers, 1934) 215.

⁸ D. Miall Edwards, "Mystery," in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, ed. James Orr (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974) 2106.

⁹ Schweitzer, *Mysticism*, 18-19

For Paul, baptism is not a means of grace effecting salvation but rather the symbolic testimony to the reception of the grace that brings salvation.

3. *A Meaningless Idiomatic Expression.* Another tendency among some writers is to deny any particular significance of the expression “in Christ.” Accordingly, Michel Bouttier concluded his study of Pauline Christianity, noting that the phrase “in Christ” means nothing.

We may have been able to analyze the different elements of *in Christo* which, when blended together, make up the whole; but in every passage where we meet the expression, its shade of meaning is so affected by the context as to enrich the latter. Strictly speaking, from an abstract point of view, it means nothing in itself; it always needs the appeal of particular circumstances to take shape and receive its extraordinary fullness.¹⁰

Similarly, others see the phrase “in Christ” as nothing more than a style of writing that has no implication of mysticism. Lucien Cerfaux questioned any significance in the use of *en* over *dia* or *ek*.

In the Pauline epistles, the preposition *en* is used about once in every two verses: in the epistle to the Romans alone it is used 170 times. It is also very frequently used with nouns, as *en dunamei*. The captivity epistles make use of these phrases, especially at the end of a sentence. They are not rare in the other epistles. We find them more or less everywhere in the New Testament and in the Septuagint, especially in the poetic parts. They often have a liturgical sound. It is clear that the expressions “in the Holy Spirit”, “in Christ”, and “in the Lord” become more frequent as the style becomes more rhetorical and they tend to become stylistic ornaments.¹¹

The difficulty with Bouttier’s and Cerfaux’s position is evidenced in their failure to demonstrate the consistency of this use in Pauline literature. One can only conclude the apostle would 172 times make use of this “stylistic ornament” only if one assumes it has no other significance. The reasoning is circular. Richard N. Longenecker noted:

It is true that in many places the expression can be viewed as merely synonymous with the adjective and noun “Christian. . . .” However, in most of the passages where it is possible that Paul meant only Christian by the term, or where it is asserted that the instrumental, causal, source, or dynamic idea is uppermost in his thought, the local designation, if it were not for the revulsion of the interpreter to the seeming crudity of the idea, can just as easily be seen.¹²

¹⁰ Michel Bouttier, *Christianity According to Paul*, trans. Frank Clarke (Naperville, IL: Alec R. Allenson, 1966) 118.

¹¹ Lucien Cerfaux, *The Christian in the Theology of St. Paul*, trans. Lillian Soiron (New York: Herder & Herder, 1967) 358.

¹² Richard N. Longenecker, *Paul: Apostle of Liberty* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980) 167-68.

4. *The Republican View.* A fourth view of this expression tends toward a republican or representative view of the union of Christ and the believer. Hence they deny a mystical union of Christ and believers. The republican view tends to limit this concept to the act of justification, assuming the role of Christ as only the federal head of the race. In describing the union of Christ and the believer in its nature, Alexander Archibald Hodge argued:

It is a legal or federal union, so that all of our legal or covenant responsibilities rest upon Christ, and all of his legal or covenant mercies accrue to us. . . . This union is between the believer and the person of the God-man in his office as Mediator. Its immediate organ is the Holy Spirit, who dwells in us, and through him we are virtually united to and commune with the whole Godhead, since he is the Spirit of the Father as well as of the Son. -John xiv. 23: xvii. 21, 23.¹³

The difficulty with this view is not so much in what it states as in what it leaves unsaid. It is not to be disputed that justification is the believer's union with Christ, a conversion-related experience. The relationship is even closer, as it is "in Christ" that the believer is justified. The believer is clothed in the righteousness of Christ and is thereby justified not on the basis of his own merit but rather the merit of Christ. However, this is only one aspect of being in Christ. The believer is made a new creature "in Christ," which goes beyond the realm of justification (2 Cor 5:17).

Justification is an act whereby one's legal position in heaven is changed. Being declared justified is similar to the moment in which a government declares that an alien is a citizen. The moment the person is pronounced a citizen, nothing happens to him physically. His thought processes remain the same, as do his personality and pattern of speech. The only actual change is in his legal standing. While being in Christ involves the act of justification, it also involves far more than a mere change in one's legal standing before God.

5. *A Metaphor for a Believer's Communion.* A fifth view of the phrase "in Christ" interprets it as a metaphor of communion with Christ, either personally or corporately. Historically the Roman Catholic Church has tended to emphasize this view from a corporate perspective, that is, to be "in Christ" is to be part of the "holy catholic church." More recently, however, non-Catholic writers have begun to argue along similar lines. According to Rudolph Bultmann, "'in Christ,' far from being a formula for mystic union, is primarily an eschatological formula . . . to belong to the

¹³ Archibald Alexander Hodge, *Outlines of Theology* (London: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1883) 484.

Christ Church is to be ‘in Christ’ or ‘in the Lord.’”¹⁴ Similarly John A. T. Robinson interpreted this expression from the perspective of “the Church as literally now the resurrection ‘body’ of Christ.”¹⁵

Again the failure of this view is not so much in what is stated but in what remains unstated. There can be no disputing that being “in Christ” is the basis for an intimate communion with Christ, both personally and corporately in the church, which is His body, but it cannot be limited to a mere metaphor of personal or corporate communion. Augustus Hopkins Strong correctly noted:

Lest we should regard the figures mentioned above as merely Oriental metaphors, the fact of the believer’s union with Christ is asserted in the most direct and prosaic manner. . . . Thus the believer is said to be “in Christ,” as the element or atmosphere which surrounds him with its perpetual presence and which constitutes his vital breath; in fact, this phrase “in Christ,” always meaning “in union with Christ,” is the very key to Paul’s epistles, and to the whole New Testament. The fact that the believer is in Christ is symbolized in baptism: we are “baptized into Christ” (Gal. 3:27).¹⁶

6. *Being in the Spirit of Christ.* A sixth view of this phrase interprets it as, in the words of Adolph Deissmann, “a literal local dative of personal existence in the pneumatic Christ.”¹⁷ One writer explained:

Deissmann thought that St. Paul regarded Christ as a king of spiritual space in which the believer lives, as in an atmosphere, and maintained that “en Christo” had this mystical meaning every time it was mentioned. Though this cannot really be maintained, in the overwhelming number of cases it must mean what it says; it must be given a “locative” sense. To be “in Christ” is to possess an entirely different kind of life.¹⁸

Deissmann tended to use the analogy of air, which is within the human body at the same time as individuals are in an atmosphere; and while the analogy is consistent with his view, he tended in doing so to deny the personality of Christ. More contemporary writers have corrected this error in following Deissmann’s argument yet also insisting upon the personality of Christ. Richard N. Longenecker represents this modification as he noted:

¹⁴ Rudolf Bultmann, *The Theology of the New Testament*, 2 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1951) 1:311.

¹⁵ John A. T. Robinson, *The Body* (London: SCM Press, 1957) 51.

¹⁶ Augustus Hopkins Strong, *Systematic Theology* (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1907) 797.

¹⁷ Adolph Deissmann, *Die Neutestamentliche Formel “in Christo Jesu”* (Marburg: Elwert, 1892), as cited by Longenecker, *Paul*, 164.

¹⁸ Sister Sylvia Mary, *Pauline and Johannine Mysticism* (London: Barton, Longman & Todd, 1964) 22.

As the Old Testament can say that Abraham “trusted *in* Jahweh” (nine times out of eleven using the preposition *ba* rather than *al* with the hiphil form with its object as God), and as Jesus is reported to have spoken of His relationship to the Father as being “*in* the Father,” all without diminishing the concept of the real personality of God, so Paul, with his high Christology, can speak of being “in Christ” without that concept of person “in” person softening or dissolving the fixed outlines of personality for either Christ or the Christian. To be forced to give a definite psychological analysis of this relationship would have left Paul speechless. But he was convinced that he had experienced just such an intimacy with Christ.¹⁹

7. *In the Universal Church.* Some dispensationalists have used the phrase to mean the believer is placed into the body of Christ, which is the universal church. The action occurred in the baptism of the Spirit (1 Cor 12:13). It produces a nonexperiential position for the believer. John F. Walvoord explained this position.

The expression “in Christ” in every one of its many instances in the New Testament refers only to the saints of this dispensation. As far as the expression “the dead in Christ” indicates, only those in Christ are raised. Of course, all the saints are in Christ in the sense that Christ is their substitute, but the question is whether they are in the body of Christ, baptized into His body, as the Scriptures picture. . . . There is no explicit teaching anywhere in the Bible that reveals that the Old Testament saints are resurrected at the time the church is resurrected. In other words, the two events are never brought together in any passage of Scripture. The best explanation of the expression “dead in Christ” is to refer it to the church alone.²⁰

8. *In the Person of Christ in the Heavens.* The final view is similar to the immediately previous position, “in the universal church,” but notes that the believer is placed into the person of Christ in the heavens, not just a heavenly church entity. Placement in the person of Christ is His body. Interpreting these ideas literally, the believer was placed “in Christ” historically on Golgotha and remains “in Christ.” The believer was positionally placed in Christ on the Day of Pentecost. He was actually placed in Christ at his conversion and symbolically placed in Christ when he is baptized in water.

The Pauline description of the believer “in Christ” is not too unlike the prenatal description of a child “in his mother.” There is perhaps no more intimate relationship between two human beings than that of mother and child during that period. At the same time, however, both individuals have a distinct identity, so much so that some forms of medicine specialize in

¹⁹ Longenecker, *Paul*, 170.

²⁰ John F. Walvoord, *The Thessalonian Epistles* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1973) 72-73.

treating one party in this relationship without affecting the other. The baby is “in his mother,” and at the same time the very lifeblood of the mother sustains the baby.

The position of the believer in Christ is only half the truth; Christ is in the believer. Jesus said, “. . . Ye in me, and I in you” (John 14:20). The first is nonexperiential; the believer is positionally “in Christ.” The second is experiential and is based on the first, “Christ in me.”

Just because one says to be “in Christ” is nonexperiential does not mean one does not have an experience related to it. One cannot be “in Christ” without having “Christ in you.” So when one experiences Christ in his life, the experience is based on being “in Christ.” Those who attempt to remove the mystery or life from this doctrine take the supernatural from Christianity. According to Richard N. Longenecker:

Endless debate will probably continue to gather around Paul’s expression “in Christ,” for it signifies that central aspect of the Christian life which is much better experienced than explained. Indeed, the more confident we are that we have reduced the expression to the cold prose of the psychologist’s laboratory the more assured we can be that we have lost its central significance. The inexplicable must always remain in the truly personal relationship. Yet that relationship can be intellectually understood and expressed up to a point.²¹

Being “in Christ” is not merely some religious experience to be divorced from the rest of life and living. As noted previously, Paul used this expression in connection with virtually every aspect of Christian experience. Albert Schweitzer observed:

Though the expression has thus almost the character of a formula, it is no mere formula for Paul. For him every manifestation of the life of the baptized man is conditioned by his being in Christ. Grafted into the corporeity of Christ, he loses his creative individual existence and his natural personality. Henceforth he is only a form of manifestation of the personality of Jesus Christ, which dominates that corporeity. Paul says this with trenchant clearness when he writes, in the Epistle to the Galatians, “I am crucified with Christ, so I live no longer as I myself; rather, it is Christ who lives in me” (Gal. ii. 19-20). The fact that the believer’s whole being, down to his most ordinary everyday thoughts and actions, is thus brought within the sphere of the mystical experience has its effect of giving to this mysticism a breadth of permanence, a practicability, and a strength almost unexampled elsewhere in mysticism.²²

Similarly, Watchman Nee argued the believer is placed “in Christ” as the believer accepts “Christ in him.”

²¹ Longenecker, *Paul*, 167.

²² Schweitzer, *Mysticism*, 125.

But if God has dealt with us 'in Christ Jesus' then we have got to be in Him for this to become effective, and that now seems just as big a problem. How are we to 'get into' Christ? Here again God comes to our help. We have in fact no way of getting in, but what is more important, we need not try to get in, for we are in. What we could not do for ourselves, God has done for us. He has put us into Christ. Let me remind you of I Corinthians 1:30. I think that it is one of the best verses in the whole New Testament: 'Ye are in Christ.' How? 'Of him (That is, 'of God') are ye in Christ.' Praise God! It is not left to us either to devise a way of entry or to work it out. We need not plan how to get in. God has planned it; and He has not only planned it but He has also performed it. 'Of him are ye in Christ Jesus.' We are in; therefore we need not try to get in. It is a divine act, and it is accomplished.²³

The experience of being placed in Christ occurs at conversion, whereas usually at some later point, the believer enters into or experiences the reality of this truth (some understand it at conversion). The key, according to Stuart Briscoe, is faith. Appealing to his Noah in the Ark illustration, he argued:

The simple faith of Noah which motivated his step-in was evidenced as he stepped out. Noah heard the word "go forth," and "Noah went forth" (Genesis 8:18). To him, the one step of faith into the salvation of God was as logical as the series of steps of faith that were going to carry him to the extremities of the riches of a new land which God had made part of his salvation. Noah did not look out and long for the land. He did not have an all-night prayer meeting asking God to make the land his experience. Noah did not sit in his ark giving his testimony of how God saved him from the flood, and he did not plead with God to come and do a wonderful work in his heart that was going to bring the land to his own experience. He *looked* out, and he *stepped* out. If Noah had sat in his ark much longer, he would probably have suffered from acute boredom and deep depression, even though he was saved. But once he stepped out, he had no time to be either bored or depressed. The man of God who gets bored or depressed is the man who is still sitting in the ark and rejoicing that his sins are forgiven, but hasn't reached the point of stepping out and exploring the land. Remember boredom and depression are aliens in the land of freshness and newness.²⁴

The holiness view of "in Christ" is that it occurs in a sanctifying experience at some point in the Christian life. The believer prays for sanctification and receives it in a second work of grace. The Calvinist views sanctification as a continuous progress in Christian growth. The holiness view regards sanctification as a crisis experience, described as "placing all on the altar," "letting go and letting God," or "receiving" spiritual truth, followed by a continued experience of continued growth.

Being "in Christ" is therefore a description of the believer not only at conversion but also throughout his Christian experience. In identifying

²³ Watchman Nee, *The Normal Christian Life* (Fort Washington, PA: Christian Literature Crusade, 1973) 29-30.

²⁴ Stuart Briscoe, *The Fullness of Christ* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1965) 59-60.

the believer's position "in Christ," Paul also hinted further at the intimacy that exists between the believer and his Lord. As the child in his mother is an individual personality while very much a part of his mother, so the believer retains his individual personality while being in Christ. The concept involves a greater degree of intimacy than may be implied in the togetherness statements or partnership statements of Paul. The truth of "in Christ" establishes a connection between the believer's association with Christ and living in Christ.

BOOK REVIEWS

New Testament Greek: A Beginning and Intermediate Grammar, by James Allen Hewett, revised and expanded by C. Michael Robbins and Steven R. Johnson (includes CD). Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2009, xxiii + 324 pp., cloth, \$34.95.

First published in 1986, *New Testament Greek: A Beginning and Intermediate Grammar* has helped countless numbers of first-year Greek students learn the fundamentals of New Testament Greek. The revisers are C. Michael Robbins, who teaches Greek at Claremont Graduate University, and Steven R. Johnson, who teaches Greek at Lycoming College. James Allen Hewett, who previously taught Greek at Asbury Theological Seminary, apparently had no part in the revision, although he has an entry on the dedication page with the revisers.

Like the first edition of *New Testament Greek: A Beginning and Intermediate Grammar*, this revision is one of the better grammars of New Testament Greek available. There are about 475 Greek words introduced in the vocabularies, mainly words occurring more than thirty times. The material presented is comprehensive in scope and much more detailed than other grammars. Each chapter ends with an abundance of translation exercises, many drawn from the New Testament, to give students practice in using the grammatical concepts introduced in the current and preceding chapters.

Just over a fourth of the new preface by Robbins and Johnson is a discussion of revisions and additions to this edition. (The original preface is wisely retained.) The revisers stated: “While the original structure has been left essentially intact, this revision involves more than the correction of errors and improvements in formatting. Building on Hewett’s excellent work, the discussions in each chapter have been substantially rewritten in the light of more recent discussions in Greek grammar.” Changes from the first edition, the vast majority of which are improvements, can be categorized as additions, omissions, and revisions.

The revision of Hewett’s grammar contains some important new features. There are additional tables, charts, and examples, including the addition of a table of abbreviations at the beginning of the book. There is a greatly expanded use of Scripture verses as examples. Beginning with chapter 5, there are now five basic English-to-Greek exercises at the end of each chapter. The sections within each chapter are now numbered for easier reference to them. The most notable additions are the two new introductory chapters that precede the chapter on the alphabet. The first

new chapter “replaces some of the scattered discussion of English grammar found throughout the first “edition.” It is truly comprehensive, progressing from phonemes to sentences. The second new chapter is basically about semantics. A nice addition to this revision is the new appendix on the principal parts of common verbs.

A few things have been omitted from the revision. Some wordy explanations have been shortened. References to secondary literature in the text and footnotes have been reduced. The “B. Provide the requested information.” section of the exercises from original chapters 3—6 has been eliminated. The “List of Scriptures Used with Exercises” has unfortunately been eliminated.

What would a revision be without revisions? The physical dimensions of the new edition are larger. The typeface is larger and clearer. A simple but effective change is the use of bold print for various types of headings. (The original edition had no bold print anywhere.) The overall formatting of the book is much more attractive. The explanations are up-to-date and clearer. The translation exercises are no longer fully justified with the resultant hyphenation of some Greek words. The revisers have corrected errata in the first edition. However, one should not that, only in the revision, ἄφθην should be ἥφθην (p. 102). The tedious minutia on accents commonly found in the initial chapter of most Greek grammars has been wisely moved to an appendix. The discussions of *Aktionsart* have been replaced by explanations of verbal aspect. The indexes have been expanded. About half of the chapters have the material divided into “The Basics” and “A Step Beyond.” The discussions of verb endings are more accurate when it comes to connecting vowels and the perfect tense using primary endings.

The book also comes with valuable resources on a CD, including an answer key to the translation exercises, Greek word charts, and *GreekTools* software by Thomas A. Robinson, author of *Mastering New Testament Greek: Essential Tools for Students*, now in its third edition. There are some things that should have been changed in this revision but obviously could not be done because of the revisers desire to leave the original structure essentially intact. Adjectives and nouns are first introduced in the same chapter, as are personal and relative pronouns, second-class conditional sentences and the perfect and pluperfect active tenses, and third declension nouns and interrogative and indefinite pronouns. The worst combination is contract and liquid verbs, not only in the same chapter, but joined by comparative and superlative degrees of adjectives.

What is most disappointing is that even with keeping the original structure intact, some necessary changes could have been made to the

vocabularies and the translation exercises. The number and variety of vocabulary words introduced in each chapter is highly irregular. There are thirty-seven vocabulary words introduced in chapter 6, but only three words in chapter 25. Adjectives and second declension masculine nouns are each introduced in eight different chapters. Most of the small number of changes in the vocabulary that were made in the revision are of no consequence. Additions include ἀντί added to the chapter with the other prepositions that use one case, ἀναγγέλλω added to the other liquid verbs, μέν . . . δέ added to the particles in chapter 22, δία τοῦτο added to chapter 23, and ἄμα added to the last chapter. The verbs that have already been introduced are removed from the vocabulary in chapter 11. Left unchanged is ἁμαρτάνω appearing as a vocabulary word in two different chapters. The compound forms ἐκβάλλω (chap. 9) and ὑπάρχω (chap. 10) are still introduced before βάλλω (chap. 17) and ἄρχω (chap. 23). Moreover, there is still no mention that ἐγγύς (chap. 21) is a preposition.

Perhaps one reason that the vocabularies were not made more uniform is that the translation exercises would of necessity have to be modified as well—some of them substantially. However, even though some of the exercises were modified, none of the changes are the result of any changes in the vocabularies. The modifications mean that none of the words newly introduced or moved are used in the exercises in the chapter in which they first appear. The number of translation exercises at the end of each chapter is likewise very uneven, ranging from ten to twenty. The changes made in the exercises are diverse. In seven chapters there are from one to four sentences replaced by new ones. Thirteen chapters have some sentences that have been modified. In three chapters there are sentences omitted. In one chapter there is a sentence added. In five chapters there are no changes made whatsoever.

The most unsatisfactory thing about this revision, as well as Hewett's original work (and most other grammars of New Testament Greek) is the disorganized and inferior way that the verbs are introduced. Although sixteen verbs are introduced in chapter 4 and thirty-two in chapter 11, three verbs are pointlessly introduced in chapter 8—with the demonstrative and reflexive pronouns. In the chapter on deponent verbs, the perfectly regular verb ἐτοιμάζω is also introduced. The verbs ἁμαρτάνω, ἀναβαίνω, καταβαίνω, and φέρω are wrongly classified as liquid verbs. The verb δοκέω is mislabeled as a contract verb. The main problem with the verbs is that so many irregular verbs are introduced where they should not be. In the initial verb chapter, where there are sixteen verbs introduced, eight of them are irregular, but only γινώσκω and λέγω have a note that they are irregular. In the next major chapter on verbs (chap. 11),

fifteen of the thirty-two verbs introduced are irregular. Clearly, these irregular verbs ought to be introduced later and given some further explanation. In spite of the somewhat unsatisfactory handling of the vocabulary, exercises, and verbs, this revised edition of *New Testament Greek: A Beginning and Intermediate Grammar* is still an admirable work that would make a good text for a New Testament Greek course, which is even more true when this revision is compared with past and current grammars.

Laurence M. Vance, publisher, Vance Publications

Presuppositional Apologetics: Stated and Defended by Greg Bahnsen, ed. Joel McDurmon. Atlanta: American Vision and Covenant Media Foundation, 2009. 289 pp., cloth, \$24.95.

Bahnsen's work is truly exceptional on the subject of presuppositional apologetics. Complementary to his book, *Van Til's Apologetic: Readings and Analysis*, which is a comprehensive address of presuppositional apologetics, in this work Bahnsen offered an outright defense of presuppositional apologetics and a critique of those who have mistakenly been labeled as presuppositionalists.

Part one addresses the method and defense of presuppositional apologetics as the only biblically and theologically consistent approach to defending the faith. In chapter 1, Bahnsen set forth the presuppositional method and forcefully demonstrated how presuppositionalism is (and must be) part of Christian theology. He demonstrated, in chapter 2, the foundation for Christian presuppositionalism, namely revelational epistemology, and gave ample Scripture references to this effect. It must be said that if one is familiar with Bahnsen's writings or lectures, until this point most of the material is nothing more than a heavy review, which seems very repetitive at times. However, in chapter 3, Bahnsen truly took revelational epistemology to another level, effectively demonstrating the impossibility of divorcing one's metaphysic from one's epistemology. Taking the accepted definition of knowledge—a justified true belief—he demonstrated that one must already know something about the state of affairs (metaphysics) before he establishes a criterion of how he can proclaim his beliefs justifiable (epistemology). One must know in order to know. His argument transitioned perfectly into the presuppositional view that the unbeliever *does* know God (even while suppressing that knowledge); and, his worldview is tainted by that metaphysic even though it is professed otherwise in his epistemology.

Bahnsen then demonstrated (as Frame has done in his tri-perspectivalism) that not only is one's epistemology undivorceable from one's metaphysic, but

both are inseparable from one's ethic. Such a statement only further demonstrates the presuppositional implications in defending the faith—that the apologist must address primary issues and demonstrate that the unbeliever cannot give a rational account for his unbelief—epistemologically, metaphysically, or ethically. He then demonstrated the foolishness of autonomous epistemology (contrasted to revelational epistemology) from both a biblical and philosophical standpoint.

Part two of the work focuses on showing the inconsistencies of certain apologists who historically have been labeled presuppositionalists but in practice have shown themselves to be otherwise. While being gracious to these men and quoting extensively in areas where he agreed with their works, Bahnsen maintained a critical approach toward them and is unrelenting in his push for revelational epistemology as a presupposition.

Chapter 4 focused on Gordon Clark and illuminates his true apologetic as being (roughly stated):

- (A) The best worldview will be the most logically consistent.
 - (B) Christianity is the most logically consistent.
- Therefore, Christianity is the best worldview and should be adopted.

Similarly, chapter 5 focused on Edward J. Carnell and demonstrated his true apologetic to be (roughly stated):

- (A) The best worldview will be the most internally coherent.
 - (B) Christianity is the most internally coherent.
- Therefore, Christianity is the best worldview and should be adopted.

Finally, chapter 6 discussed the beloved Francis Schaeffer and demonstrated his true apologetic as thus (roughly stated):

- (A) The best worldview will give the most satisfactory answers to life.
 - (B) Christianity gives the most satisfactory answers to life.
- Therefore, Christianity is the best worldview and should be adopted.

In each of these chapters, and culminating in chapter 7, Bahnsen demonstrated that these men establish a criterion for the best worldview—apart from Scripture—and then try to argue from the Scriptures that Christianity passes the test and should be considered the best worldview among all competitors. It is sufficient to state that Bahnsen argued that true presuppositionalism establishes not that Christianity is simply the best worldview but that it is the *only* worldview that will allow anyone to make sense of anything. He further critiqued these men on their internal inconsistencies with their respective views and shows the inadequacy of their ability to actually defend those views.

He argues that, at best, all these men have done is argued for the *probability* of Christianity rather than the *certainty* of it (and even in that they have not done a thorough job). Bahnsen challenged them: because no one knows when a worldview that will better fit their criterions will come along and how many of those worldviews exist, who can say that Christianity really is the “best” worldview?

Throughout the book and in his conclusion Bahnsen maintained that true biblical, presuppositional apologetics humbly and obediently submits to the Scriptures at the outset, rather than establishing a criterion for evaluation and giving the Scriptures a passing grade. Furthermore, presuppositionalism always argues for the *certainty* of Christianity and the fact that it is the only viable worldview, not merely the most probable. The three appendices following the book are somewhat helpful, but did not really add a whole lot to what Bahnsen already addressed.

The book has a hint of theonomy, as Bahnsen was a postmillennial reconstructionist. However, this book is a colossal reminder that the Scriptures must be the authority for all of life and thought. The reminder is key not only to presuppositional apologetics, but also to the principle of consistent, normal, grammatical-historical hermeneutics. For someone seeking simply to understand the basics of presuppositional apologetics and practical examples of how it works, this reviewer would more readily refer them to Bahnsen’s *Always Ready*. However, this reviewer highly recommends this book to all who would teach presuppositional apologetics or to those who have a great desire to learn it more adequately on the intellectual side. A good working knowledge of logic and philosophy is helpful to the reader but is not necessary. Bahnsen’s work is an invaluable resource in presuppositional apologetics and a critical help in maintaining a solidly biblical approach to the practice of defending the faith.

Adam T. Calvert, instructor of biblical studies, Tyndale Learning Center

Guide to Nouns in the Greek New Testament, Guide to Adjectives in the Greek New Testament, Guide to Pronouns in the Greek New Testament, and Guide to Prepositions in the Greek New Testament by Laurence M. Vance. Pensacola, FL: Vance Publications, 2007-08. Approx. 30 pp. each, paper, \$5.95 each/\$20.00 set.

In these four booklets, the author has provided the Greek student with some very helpful tools. There are many Greek grammar books, such as the classic *Essentials of New Testament Greek* (Summers) and *New Testament Greek for Beginners* (Machen). Modern, and easier, texts include: *Basics of Biblical Greek Grammar* (Mounce) and *Teach Yourself New Testament Greek* (Macnair). While such a grammar book is essential for learning New

Testament Greek, Vance's little booklets are an excellent supplement. Their strength is that each targets one aspect of the language in an overall manner, while most grammar books (of necessity) change from one topic to another. They are also very helpful for those who need to refresh their Greek, not to mention those who might need an aid in preparing for a seminary Greek qualifying exam.

The reader should start with the "Noun" booklet, as the author suggests on the backcover of the other three. It first covers the foundational concept of "declensions" (a far more helpful term, as Macnair offered, is "families"), does a good job on the article, and does especially well on covering the cases. While in this reviewer's analysis, it is not "truly comprehensive," as the author claimed, it is close.

From there, the student can move to any of the other booklets. Like the noun booklet, each covers the essentials of that part of speech. The word "comprehensive" does better fit these three, as every preposition, adjective, and pronoun is addressed. Highly commendable is that every example in all four booklets is taken directly from the New Testament with chapter and verse. A very minor criticism is that while they are only about 30 pages each, a table of contents to major sections would be a nice addition (perhaps on the back of the booklet). In short, if a supplement is needed for seminary Greek study, a refresher, or just a quick reference, Laurence Vance's "Greek Guide Booklets" are the answer. The booklets are highly recommend, and as a set they are a bargain.

J. D. Watson, pastor-teacher, Grace Bible Church

The Popular Encyclopedia of Apologetics: Surveying the Evidence for the Truth of Christianity, eds. Ed Hindson and Ergun Caner. Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 2008. 502 pp., cloth, \$24.99.

First Peter 3:15 says, "But sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you." In *The Popular Encyclopedia of Apologetics*, Ed Hindson and Ergun Caner sought to provide readers with an up-to-date resource for applying this verse to their lives. With 180 articles and 60 different authors, the encyclopedia is a wealth of information regarding cults, philosophical movements, theological controversies, biographies of famous apologists from the past and the present, and controversial issues that believers interact with today.

The articles are edited and compiled by two faculty members of Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia. Ed Hindson is the assistant chancellor

and dean of the Institute of Biblical Studies at Liberty University. He has authored numerous books and serves as speaker for *The King is Coming* telecast. Ergun Caner is the president of Liberty Theological Seminary. He is a leading voice for Frontline Apologetics and has authored several books as well. Due to their influence, many of the articles (24 of the 60) in this encyclopedia are written by faculty of this school system.

The purpose of the book is given in the introduction: "We wanted to place in your hands a tool that will enable you to both defend your faith and answer the major objections to Christianity. More specifically, we wanted to provide a resource that is accessible to every Christian – a popular encyclopedia that avoids the technical jargon of specialists while cogently presenting a Christian response to skeptics and cynics" (p. 11). To do this, the authors exhausted a considerable amount of time showing Christians the fallacious thinking of false religions and cults. For instance, James Walker, president of Watchman Fellowship provided an excellent article on Mormonism that covers everything from the movement's history to their teaching regarding spirit children, salvation by works, temple rites, second chance salvation, and eschatology. In a closing evaluation, Walker wrote, "Latter-day Saints should be respected for their hard work, dedication, and sincerity. Evangelicals should be aware, however, that the LDS have a "different gospel" and a different Jesus than theirs" (p. 362).

Ergun Caner, a former Muslim, has also written an excellent article on the history and doctrine of Islam. In addition to the articles on cults and false religions, the editors decided to select several articles concerning philosophy and its relation to Christianity. Behaviorism, Dualism, Empiricism, Evidentialism, Existentialism, Foundationalism, Hedonism, the philosophy of Language, Logical Fallacies, Postmodernism, Relativism, Socratic Philosophers, and the various Theories of Truth were all discussed in this encyclopedia. Fred Smith, associate professor of theology and biblical studies at Liberty Theological Seminary, devoted one article to Philosophical Apologetics. He wrote, "Philosophical Apologetics emphasizes the importance of showing that the Christian worldview is reasonable" (p. 53). How does the philosophical apologist do this?

Norman Geisler and other philosophical apologists attempt to avoid the circular reasoning that comes from assuming the authority of Scripture at the beginning of the argument. One should reason toward the authority of Scripture rather than assuming it. The authority of Scripture must be judged the same as any other argument. Philosophical apologists seek, by using reason, to refute common objections to biblical inspiration (p. 54).

The most helpful part of *The Popular Encyclopedia of Apologetics* may be its discussion of controversial issues in the contemporary culture and how these issues relate to believers. Most of these subjects are faced by believers every day. Abortion, embryonic stem cell research, genetic ethics, homosexuality, suicide, and war are all typical conversation-pieces around every water cooler and office complex in America. To write about such subjects from a Christian perspective is indispensable in any guide to defending the faith in the 21st century. Moreover, this particular guide serves its audience well in doing so.

Al Mohler's article on homosexuality is particularly insightful regarding the origins of the homosexuality movement in the United States and how Christians should respond biblically to it. In a charge to all Bible-believing Christians, Mohler wrote:

Furthermore, we must learn to address the issue of homosexuality with candor, directness, and unembarrassed *honesty*. This is not an hour for prudish denial. To fail at the task of speaking clearly and directly to this issue is to fail to speak where God has spoken. . . . To the homosexual, as to all others, we must speak in love, never in hatred. But the first task of love is to tell the truth. Those who genuinely love homosexuals are not those who would revolutionize morality to meet their wishes, but those who will tell them the truth and point them to the One Who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life (pp. 271-72).

Regarding criticisms for this book, there are three. *First*, it is not altogether clear why some subjects were discussed while others were omitted or given little treatment. For example, there are nine articles on Jesus Christ and only one on the Holy Spirit. "Love," "Marriage," and "Divorce" are each given special recognition while Lordship Salvation, the Emerging Church, and the Charismatic Movement are omitted entirely. An entire article is devoted to liberalism, but fundamentalism and evangelicalism are ignored in complete silence. Additionally, for all of its discussion of philosophy, one of the most popular philosophies in the church today (*viz.* pragmatism), is given just a few paragraphs in this 502 page tome. In a *popular encyclopedia*, some of these subjects should not be neglected.

Second, there is an inconsistency regarding the subject of presuppositionalism. In his article "Types of Apologetics," Ergun Caner wrote, "Presuppositional apologetics begins with the absolute belief that the listener cannot come to any conclusions concerning any evidence without first agreeing to certain premises" (p. 66). However, later in the book, Mark Coppenger, professor of apologetics at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, wrote that one theme of presuppositionalism is,

The skeptic presupposes God's existence whether he knows it or not. Through a "transcendental argument," presuppositionalists claim that instruments in the

skeptic's toolbox, such as moral indignation and logic, can only make sense in light of creation. . . . When [the skeptic] condemns Christians for their failings or moral insensitivity, he presupposes an ethical order, which can only be grounded in transcendent truth secured by the living God. And when he uses such divine resources to attack the divine, he only makes a sorry spectacle of himself (p. 402).

In other words, Caner stated that presuppositional apologetics teaches that the listener must agree to certain premises before coming to any conclusions regarding evidence, whereas Coppenger wrote that presuppositional apologetics teaches that the listener *has already come to conclusions* regarding the evidence and it is the task of the apologist to make these conclusions known. To have two contradictory definitions about the same subject is confusing to any reader of this book.

Third, in his article on "Determinism," Troy Matthews, associate professor of contemporary issues at Liberty University, made a false caricature. He incorrectly placed Martin Luther and Jonathan Edwards into the category of *theistic determinism* or what some would probably call "Hyper-Calvinism." Matthews quoted Norman Geisler in defining theistic determinism as "the view that God ordains every event and situation; man does not have the capacity to choose or influence his own ultimate destiny" (p. 172). He then proceeded to claim that "Martin Luther (1483–1547), Jonathan Edwards (1703–58), and others who hold to a strong Calvinistic interpretation of Scripture generally embrace this view" (p. 172). The claim is a misrepresentation of the views of these two men, as evident in the subsequent two quotes from their writings, describing what they thought about man's capacity to influence his own destiny.

A Christian man is the most free lord of all, and subject to none; a Christian man is the most dutiful servant of all, and subject to every one. . . . Therefore, the first care of every Christian ought to be to lay aside all reliance on works, and strengthen his faith alone more and more, and by it grow in the knowledge, not of works, but of Christ Jesus, who has suffered and risen again for him (Martin Luther, *Basic Luther: Four of His Fundamental Works* [Springfield, IL: Templegate Publishers, 1994] 115, 119).

You need not be at all the more fearful of coming [to God] because of your sins, let them be ever so black. . . . Therefore, if your souls be burdened, and you are distressed for fear of hell, you need not bear that burden and distress any longer. If you are but *willing*, you may freely come and unload yourselves, and cast all your burdens on Christ, and rest in him (*The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, ed. Edward Hickman, 2 vols. [Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 2005] 2:112).

Neither of these two men believed that "man does not have the capacity to choose or influence his own destiny." Martin Luther and Jonathan Edwards spoke often of the responsibility of men to *believe* on Jesus Christ for their

eternal salvation. Such talk is senseless and self-contradictory if they held to theistic determinism.

In closing, *The Popular Encyclopedia of Apologetics* has many strengths. Its evaluation of false religions and cults is noteworthy and much of the information it provides for contemporary issues in the realms of science and morality is very useful. However, there is some disparity regarding its selection of topics and there are a few inaccuracies and inconsistencies in the book that need to be addressed.

Jeremy Cagle, pastor, Middletown Bible Church

Everything Must Change by Brian McLaren. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2007. 327 pp., cloth, \$21.99.

Everything Must Change is a large diverse work in which McLaren dabbled in everything from economics to politics to the eco-system to Jesus. McLaren believes our planet is facing a perfect storm (his words) involving crises of four kinds. He called them:

- Prosperity crisis—an unsustainable global economy that is overwhelming the environmental resources.
- Equity crisis—caused by the growing gap between the rich and the poor with respective fear and resentment.
- Security crisis—war and violence is the inevitable outcome of the equity crisis.
- Spiritual crisis—world religions, including and especially Christianity, have failed to address these issues with Jesus’ “framing story” (i.e. worldview).

It is these four crises that McLaren believes desperately need to be addressed, but Christianity has misunderstood what Jesus desires believers to say about these issues. The church needs to rescue Jesus from false understanding about Him and what He taught (pp. 72-73). His true “framing story” must be discovered and proclaimed. What is this framing story? “The Bible is the story of the partnership between God and humanity to save and transform all of human society and avert global self-destruction” (p. 94). “Jesus came to launch an insurgency to overthrow that occupying regime. Its goal is to resist the occupation, liberate the planet, and retrain and restore humanity to its original vocation and potential” (p. 129). These, and other similar descriptions, are what McLaren, here and elsewhere, called the gospel of the kingdom of God which he believes Jesus initiated when He was on earth.

In order to promote his new emerging agenda it is necessary for McLaren to reject many, if not most, of the major doctrines held dear by the historic evangelical church, for it is these very doctrines that have caused the global “mess” in which believers find themselves. McLaren claimed:

- Christ’s cross work was not for the purpose of propitiating divine wrath or redemption from sin; it was a nonviolent example for us to follow (pp. 158-59).
- The second coming of Christ is without biblical warrant “for it leads us to believe that in the end, even God finds it impossible to fix the world apart from violence and coercion [therefore] no one should be surprised when those shaped by this theology behave accordingly” (p. 144). A new heaven and earth are unnecessary because “good will prevail by peace, love, truth, faithfulness, and courageous endurance of suffering” (p. 146).
- Original sin is not our problem; McLaren fully believes that unregenerate mankind will be able to change society to conform to God’s kingdom (pp. 223, 262, 265)
- The need for forgiveness and salvation from sin are not on the agenda because most, if not all, are already citizens of the kingdom by virtue of having been created in the image of God (p. 223). The greatest problems facing mankind have to do with physical concerns of the planet, not spiritual issues (p. 46).
- Hell is not a literal place of judgment for rebels against God but starts on earth now when we don’t live for the kingdom of God, as described by McLaren (p. 146).

When the author turns to Scripture in an attempt to support his views it is an exercise in distortion. McLaren resorted to several methods: changing the meaning of words to suit his preference (pp. 96, 99, 113), ignoring Scripture he does not like (e.g. concerning the second coming, pp. 144-46), or simply twisting the meaning beyond all recognition (pp. 97, 107, 111, 135, 137, 144-45, 177, 238-41). All of this would be laughable if it was not so serious. Without question, McLaren cannot reconstruct Jesus, the Gospel, and Christianity if he faithfully interprets the Scriptures with any sane method of hermeneutics. However, if his readers are willing to ignore this fact then some will be deceived by the message of *Everything Must Change*.

From a social/political angle, McLaren might be described as the Michael Moore (ultra-liberal film producer) of Christianity. Capitalism is “legalized greed,” Moore said and it would seem McLaren would agree. McLaren used the same poor interpretive skills which he applied to Scripture to analyze the evils of society. His understanding of what is

wrong with the planet is as pathetic as his solution. Here is his prescription for societal ills:

- First, we will seek to help the poor through generosity.
- Second, we will call the rich to generosity.
- Third, we will work to improve the system (p. 246).

If you are disappointed with this “revolutionary” solution to our global crisis you should be. Like many, McLaren is long on identifying problems but short on answers. What McLaren consistently misses is that the gospel of Christ (the true Gospel as derived from proper interpretation of the Word) addresses man’s real need of alienation from God and sinful corruption through regeneration found through the blood of Christ. Regenerated lives will have true impact on societal problems, but the final solution awaits the return of Christ and the new heaven and earth. This is the good news that Christ came to offer and McLaren has rejected.

Gary E. Gilley, senior pastor, Southern View Chapel

Pierced for Our Transgressions: Rediscovering the Glory of Penal Substitution by Steve Jeffery, Michael Ovey, and Andrew Sach. Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2007. 384 pp., paper, \$25.00.

Debate concerning Christ’s cross work has become intense of late. The traditional view, often termed penal substitutionary atonement, has been accepted and taught by the evangelical church throughout the ages but is now under open attack. The doctrine of penal substitution states, “God gave himself in the person of his Son to suffer instead of us the death, punishment and curse due to fallen humanity as the penalty for sin” (p. 21). Certainly there is nothing new about this. One only has to note higher-critical attacks that emerged from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (forming “old” liberalism) to see a parallel. For “old” liberalism to be successful penal substitution had to be jettisoned. As any student of church history knows, as liberalism won the theological and denomination battles, new movements, denominations, churches and organizations were created which maintained fundamental doctrinal stances. Those taking their stand on the fundamentals, including penal substitution, ultimately became known as either fundamentalists or evangelicals, depending on how far one wanted to push separation from unbiblical theology and other corrupting influences. It is this group of conservative Christians that is now being challenged by a new wave of liberalism. On a theological level,

movements such as the New Perspective on Paul (NPP) are mounting this attack heavily. At the grassroots level, it is the Emergent church that is leading the charge. While the NPP is not synonymous with Emergent, they intercept at the cross—more precisely, at the meaning of the cross. In order for either the NPP or Emergent to be a strong influence in evangelical/fundamental thought and practice it is necessary for penal substitution to be severely minimized if not eliminated altogether. As long as conservative Christians are convinced that Christ went to the cross primarily to save them from sins by propitiating the wrath of God, dying in their place, and taking their sins upon Himself, even becoming sin for them, the NPP and Emergent have no significant voice. By necessity, penal substitution must be rendered impotent. Hence, the evangelical/fundamental universe has been flooded of late with wave upon wave of attack on penal substitution and this often from those who claim to be within the conservative camp. Of course this comes as no surprise since the apostle Paul warned of the same in Acts 20:28-30.

With this backdrop it is with open arms that one should welcome *Pierced for Our Transgressions*. The authors acknowledge that there are other good books dealing with the subject (pp. 26-30), but these works tend to be on a popular level or else highly scholarly, with little in between. The authors wanted to write a book that would bring into one volume all the key biblical passages and provide a detailed yet readable defense against the latest affronts to penal substitution. In all of this, they have been successful.

In regard to this latest challenge, the authors know the issues and are current on the latest debates. However, it is in this area that this reviewer would offer one minor criticism. The authors are all from England and are most familiar with contemporary British opponents of penal substitution. Therefore, there are just three passing comments about Brian McLaren, the leading figure of Emergent, but major encounters with the teachings of Steve Chalke, McLaren's English counterpart. While the teachings of the two men are from the same perspective, few in America have ever heard of Chalke. Furthermore, if McLaren is ignored, Rob Bell, Tony Jones and a host of other Emergent leaders are nonexistent. It would have been most helpful to engage these American Emergent leaders. The authors also hold to a limited atonement view (pp. 268-78) which will be bothersome to some.

With these issues aside, *Pierced for Our Transgressions* is a highly valuable, extremely powerful polemic for penal substitution. In the first part of the book the authors build their frontline defenses with a thorough survey of pertinent passages of Scripture, which is followed by explaining

the theological framework which makes penal substitution necessary. Next, they guard their position by clearly demonstrating that penal substitution has been taught throughout church history and is by no means a modern Western creation as some would propose. All of this is accomplished in “Part One,” which exhausts most of 200 pages. When the authors are done, their opponents have been rebutted sufficiently, in this reviewer’s opinion.

In “Part Two,” the authors answer the critics who are left standing. Even though the biblical, theological, and historical evidence is overwhelming there are some who refuse to lay down their arms. Unfortunately, these few are vocal, articulate and find the current generation of biblically illiterate people easy to confuse and manipulate. The authors therefore address some of the most popular attempts by critics to undermine the true meaning of the cross. They deal with other models of the atonement, accusations that penal substitution is a human product, promotes violence, is unjust, offers a distorted view of God and fails to address cosmic evil. When the authors are done, all reasonable (and unreasonable) objections to penal substitution have been exposed and demolished. *Pierced for Our Transgressions* is highly recommended for anyone encountering challenges to penal substitution. Every pastor should read and digest this book, for in one form or another he will be confronted with this issue.

Gary E. Gilley, senior pastor, Southern View Chapel

The Truth War: Fighting For Certainty In An Age of Deception by John MacArthur. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2007. 224 pp., cloth, \$7.99.

John MacArthur’s purpose for writing this book is to sound a clear and compelling alarm for all who love God’s truth to earnestly contend for the faith. The present and pervasive climate within the church is one of accommodation to the world, popularity with the culture, and a desire to look “cool,” rather than to be right (p. xiv). The driving desire is simply to have fun, and the greatest fear in evangelicalism today is not false teaching, but rather the fear of being outdated. As a result of this climate the truth is being jettisoned.

The evangelical church has become open and affirming to almost any doctrine (i.e. pantheism, moral relativism, unbiblical philosophies). Any teaching, method, organization, or activity that seems to be “in” at the time is accepted. The question in many churches is not biblical accuracy, but the pragmatics of attracting more people. For this reason, MacArthur stated,

“The evangelicalism *movement* as we speak of it today is already doomed. It stands roughly where the mainstream denominations were in the early part of the twentieth century when those denominations began formally excommunicating conservative voices of dissent from their midst. . . .” (p. 172, emphasis in original). Christians must be willing to fight for truth, “. . . to live and die for the truth” (p. xv). He continued, “We cannot sit idly by and do nothing while worldly, revisionist, and skeptical attitudes about truth are infiltrating the church” (p. xvii).

In this book, MacArthur identified many prominent individuals, ideologies, and movements which contribute to this departure from the truth. He identified postmodern culture as largely to blame, and the Emerging church movement with its lack of certainty about *anything* biblical (p. 155). MacArthur is correct in targeting individuals such as Brian McLaren (pp. x, 18-19, 34-40, 139, 169), Tony Campolo (p. 139), Rob Bell (pp. ix-x, xi), Stanly Grenz and John Franke (pp. 19-20), and John Armstrong (pp. 20-21). MacArthur clearly documented that these individuals perpetuate doubt about any authoritative interpretation of Scripture and theology. Even (especially?) on the most basic of doctrines these men are skeptical that Christianity is correct on very much. They act on their own supposed authority in sifting through millennia of biblical interpretation and determine what should be salvaged.

Throughout the book, MacArthur interwove the epistle of Jude’s call to fight for the truth stating, “. . . Jude’s warning is particularly applicable for the times in which we live” (p. xxvi). One of the best features of the book is that MacArthur highlighted Jude’s instructions on how to combat this attack on the truth (ch. 8), as well as how to identify an apostate (pp. 136-43). MacArthur also devoted a lengthy section to the specifics of ancient false teaching (pp. 85-114: Judaizers, Gnostics, Sabellianism, Arianism), and demonstrated how the early church fought for truth in those times. His portrayal of the early church’s endurance is effective in demonstrating that the war that believers wage is not confined to only this time period, and requires tenacity and endurance.

Possibly the best value of MacArthur’s book is that he identified defining issues over which many pastors and evangelicals are presently departing from the truth. At the center of these issues are homosexuality (pp. 139, 208), abortion (p. 139), substitutionary atonement (p. 168), the Bible (perspicuity, and hermeneutics, pp. 157-58), the Trinity (p. 170), biblical morality (pp. 139-40, 194-95), preaching (p. 191) and a host of other once thought non-negotiable issues. In mentioning issues that tend to affect the political arena, this reviewer is pleased that MacArthur was

not pushing politics over the Gospel. He was merely indicating how far the church has come in its drift from the truth.

While MacArthur did an excellent job of rallying Christians for truth, it might be said that the book is somewhat repetitive and circular in its arguments. Many propositions were oft stated and could have been somewhat condensed. The result is that the book is slightly less concise and organized than it might have otherwise been. Having said that it may be that MacArthur's restatement of the major propositions does well to reinforce the case for truth in the minds of readers. In an age where definitive truth statements are hard to identify, it is refreshing to find someone who is not afraid to pound the pulpit for truth. A thoughtful reading of *The Truth War* is a wise investment of time for all pastors, Christian leaders, and laymen. With the subtlety of false teaching so prevalent and overwhelming this book provides a stimulating call to stand for truth.

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