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AD FONTES

A JOURNAL OF PROTESTANT LETTERS

A SYMPOSIUM ON *METAMODERNISM: THE FUTURE OF THEORY*

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About

***AD FONTES* IS A QUARTERLY JOURNAL PUBLISHED BY THE DAVENANT INSTITUTE.**

Ad fontes, "to the sources," was a rallying cry of the Reformation. The Reformers bequeathed to us a heritage, rooted in the Scriptures and their wide-ranging humanistic studies, which sought to address the hard questions of theology, philosophy, and culture in a way that was true to the revelation of God's word and God's world. *Ad Fontes* channels this ethos into a modern context, seeking to explore our questions alongside the great cloud of witnesses and the many exemplars who have gone before us.

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From the Editor's Desk

Over the past few years, evangelicals have learned how to "deconstruct." With increasing frequency, social media users and readers of outlets like the New York *Times* are treated to the spectacle of once-prominent evangelical Christians "deconstructing" the religion of their youth, recasting it as totally lacking in transcendence—contingency all the way down. True to form, evangelicalism seized on this intellectual *zeitgeist* just as everyone else realized it was utterly spent. Even so, and despite their tendency to produce parodies rather than the genuine article, evangelical deconstructors have, in their better moments, identified some real problems in contemporary evangelicalism and American Protestantism in general. And once one has "seen through" what one once took for granted, one cannot simply go back; we cannot recapture edenic innocence. Thus, Protestant "deconstruction," the attempt to demythologize, expose, and relativize inherited forms of being and knowing in the world, is here to stay.

But as astute academics and commentators on the academy will attest, postmodern deconstruction is ultimately a dead end. Useful for undoing what should never have been done, it has nevertheless proven itself incapable of *doing* anything of its own; it is parasitic, leeching the life out of the organisms to which it attaches until there is nothing left. Postmodern deconstruction has, in a matter of decades, laid waste to the academic humanities and social sciences (the latter not necessarily unjustly), and it is currently moving into the hard sciences and, of course, to people in the pews. Since the academy, theological and otherwise, has determined it will move down this path, it will behoove those of us who know how parasitic relationships necessarily end to begin thinking about how we can emerge on its far side, not simply intact, but as matured agents ready and able to do the hard work of building again.

Few have participated in deconstruction with as much insight and then diagnosed its shortcomings with such forthrightness as Jason A. Josephson Storm, who has decided it is time to build again. Although not a Christian thinker himself, Storm's previous book, *The Myth of Disenchantment* (Uni-

versity of Chicago Press, 2017) has already proven a vital read for Protestants (and, indeed, Christians of all stripes) seeking to understand post-Reformation modernity and post-modernity. His latest offering, *Metamodernism: The Future of Theory* (University of Chicago Press, 2021), is an epistemological *tour de force*, beginning with the stark realization that "postmodern skepticism was supposed to be liberating, but it failed us." Rather than doubling down on failed postmodernism or trying to claw our way back to "modernist essentialism," Storm insists we must move *through* postmodernism—and he thinks "metamodernism" is up to the task. If postmodernism is the negation or, less elegantly put, "problematization" of inherited categories and forms of knowing, metamodernism is the project of moving beyond postmodernism by negating it. In negating the negation, Storm hopes, we will not simply revert to the past, but, as a spiral passes "over its starting point while perpetually ascending," so we will return to our past forms of knowing in a higher register.

In response to the publication of *Metamodernism*, *Ad Fontes* is hosting its first ever written symposium dedicated to a single work. We have invited Christian scholars from a variety of disciplines to reflect upon Storm's book, seeking out what Christians can appropriate (which is a great deal), while also seeking to think critically about how, in Protestant hands, Storm's proposals will be necessarily inflected by the catholic intellectual tradition. Storm himself graciously agreed to pen a response.

It is often debated whether our postmodern, post-Christian moment is truly "unprecedented." There is, of course, nothing new under the sun. And yet we cannot hope to navigate the decline of Christianity in the West if we are not attentive to our moment's unique contours. As the cast of Shakespeare's *Tempest* depart their desert island, the play famously ends with the sheltered Miranda declaring "*O brave new world, that has such people in it!*" Her wisened father Prospero wryly replies "*'Tis new to thee.*" As we depart the desert isle of postmodernism into whatever lies beyond, our Christian witness must likewise proceed in the tension between these two dispositions—eyes keenly peeled for the new with feet firmly anchored in the old.

The goal of *Ad Fontes* from the beginning has been to recapture the riches of our past, not simply for the purpose of fixating upon it, but for the purpose of finding ideas, figures, and ultimately a *legacy* that can help us learn how to move well in *our* world. It is our sincere hope that this symposium will contribute to that end.

Onsi A. Kamel, *Editor-in-Chief*
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Metamodernism and its Premodern Forebear

D. C. SCHINDLER

After participating for most of his career in the anarchic thrill of postmodern deconstruction, Jason Josephson Storm has come to see the need to *build anew* in the space that such destruction has cleared. His current book, *Metamodernism: The Future of Theory*, is offered as something of a programmatic text for this hopeful effort into which he wishes to invite his colleagues in the various disciplines typically known collectively as "the humanities." The proposal he announces is "apocalyptic," in the sense that it arises in the later days of the crisis into which any sentient observer would admit the humanities have fallen, but at the same time it is "revolutionary," not just proclaiming the end of something but heralding the beginning of something new.

Confessing the difficulties that inevitably beset the attempt to find a label that can truly be said to fit cultural phenomena or intellectual movements, Storm names as his target in this book "postmodernism," which he identifies more or less with five different philosophical positions: 1) antirealism; 2) an emphasis on endings; 3) an extreme version of the linguistic turn; 4) skepticism; and 5) ethical relativism. Taking his cue from deconstruction, or perhaps even more fundamentally from Hegelian dialectic, Storm—philosophizing, as his name would indicate, "with lightning"—quite cleverly affirms each of these positions, and then proceeds to turn them against themselves, showing how, for example, genuine skepticism, which aspires to doubt everything, must inevitably learn to doubt its own doubt. The point in such a dialectical critique is *not*, it must be emphasized, to dismantle postmodernism so that we may return, perhaps chastened but more confident and self-aware, to the certainties that constitute modern thought. Even less is it simply to absolutize the negativity of postmodernism, so that we end up in the sterility of an utter void, and, at least as far as the humanities go (to say nothing of our daily lives), to satisfy ourselves with the scholarly pursuit of increasingly minuscule objects that make no "grand" claim to any sort of

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meaning. Instead, the point is to *move beyond* both modernism and postmodernism at once, overcoming them both from within in much the same way that Nietzsche sought to overcome the nihilism of weakness that he believed was overtaking Europe in the late nineteenth century. The point, to be more precise, is to outline a new *kind* of theory (rather than just a new theory), which Storm calls "metamodernism."

It is hard to know which is more astonishing, the ambition of the book or the seemingly infinite resources Storm effortlessly draws on to tackle the task he has set for himself. It is rare to find a scholar with such competence and internal freedom, able to bring long-held notions into the light, not necessarily just to expose hidden flaws but, more positively, to reconsider things in a fundamental way and to retain only what is genuinely worthwhile.

But there is one question that arises right at the outset of the project, namely, whether and in what sense the approach to theory Storm sketches out in this book is in fact new and revolutionary. The point in raising this question is not simply to discredit the argument or deflate the pretensions of the claims Storm is making but, as I hope to explain, concerns the substance of the matter directly. Storm is devastating in his characterizing of the various stages of the postmodern critique of modernity and modernism, which have unfolded since the latter half of the twentieth century, typically under the banner of some sort of "Turn." But his account does not acknowledge that there has been a strong critique of modernity that has never claimed for itself the title of "postmodern," and has none of the five features Storm has loosely grouped under this title. This current, which for a variety of very good reasons has never sought to give itself any particular title, may be described, for the sake of a helpful contrast, as "pre-modernism." This current, which ought more fittingly (since it is certainly not *defined* by its relation to modernity and is not after all principally a temporal movement) to be called perhaps simply "the Western tradition," or more provocatively "the Catholic tradition," was critical of modernity "before it was cool," to use the popular expression. In fact—and the paradox is intended—it may be said that this tradition, precisely as a tradition, has always, and from the very beginning, been critical of modernity.

By "Catholic tradition", I mean the Christian synthesis of Jerusalem, Athens, and Rome, which was achieved in the reality of history. I mean the aspiration (in principle, however much the principle has been betrayed in practice) to receive and affirm whatever is good, true, and beautiful wherever it may be found and from whoever it may be received, as the cosmos is brought in and through time into the body of Christ. This synthesis is an ongoing mission, but it is not essentially revolutionary because it takes its starting point as authoritatively given and understands its openness to the other as a fruit arising from deepening its obedient reception of its starting point—rather than by denying it has a starting point and constantly substituting for it something new. In other words, this tradition affirms that the universal is best reached *through* the particular (hence: *catholic*) rather than by eliminating the particularity of the particular (or more honestly put, *claiming* to eliminate that particularity, which can never be eliminated in fact and so always tends to return surreptitiously).

This mission has amassed an intellectual treasure of extraordinary proportions, which, far from being a museum of dead artifacts that can be exhaustively catalogued, has arguably never been, and never will be, fully understood by any individual. It is a treasure *semper inveniendus* ("always to be discovered anew"), as it were. Inspecting this treasure, one sees a number of things that may be said to anticipate almost every aspect of Storm's metamodernism. The most obvious

example is the recovery of virtue ethics that he proposes, centered on a notion of "eudaimonia"; this may be given an "East Asian" twist, as Storm observes, but it nevertheless resonates quite straightforwardly with the traditional view. More subtly, Storm seeks to avoid "essentialism"—that is, the idea that there is a "fixed essence" to things like art or religion, which appears exactly the same in every context—without falling into a now rather tedious postmodern "anti-essentialism."

The traditional notion of *analogy* achieves this, and arguably in a more satisfying way than the solution Storm proposes. Analogy beats a path between both univocity (modern "essentialism") and pure equivocity (postmodern "anti-essentialism") by insisting that being is radically diverse, even while it remains one, because that diversity is not opposed to unity: there are no two things simply alike, because each thing that is always is according to a diverse mode, and so its unity is shot through with difference from the ground up. Similarly, one familiar with the classical tradition knows that the supposition that something can be real only as "mind-independent" is a modern confusion: Plato (to take an obvious case, but one could go back to Heraclitus and Parmenides before him) understood that reality is *essentially* mind-related, and this notion was a bedrock foundation to the Christian neoplatonism that constitutes the heart of the Western soul. Moreover, Storm's "process ontology" has a forerunner in the new privileging of the category of relation in Thomistic metaphysics (admittedly only really developed in the twentieth century) over and above Aristotelian substantialism, and Storm's "zetetic abduction"—the notion that we do not ever simply come to a definitive conclusion in our thinking, but every result ought to be taken as a new beginning and every insight as a revelation of how much more there is to understand—has a pre-resonance in Augustine's exhortation, "Let us therefore so seek as if we should find, and so find as if we were about to seek."

Now, to say it again, the point in claiming that these various insights and proposals are not altogether new is not to "show up" Storm and undermine his project. In a sense, it can reinforce and encourage that project by revealing that it has an old ally, a premodern forerunner. But this ancient tradition also allows a different, and it seems to me ultimately more promising, way into some of the basic notions Storm proposes. For instance, as many have observed regarding Hegel (starting already with his old roommate Schelling), the negating of a negation is not the same thing as affirming what is positive, even if the dialectic appears to cover similar ground. Positivity as result is actually profoundly different from positivity as *archē* (beginning). To take a specific example, doubting one's universal doubt, as Storm's metamodernism proposes, is not enough to open one up beyond radical skepticism, because this self-destroying doubt still stands ultimately under the banner of the negative.One still holds oneself back from giving assent, even if it is in this case assent to one's endeavor to doubt everything.

Such an endlessly recursive skepticism can be fruitfully transformed only by beginning with what is positive precisely *as* positive, by receiving the tradition that is given to one as a tradition, which is ultimately to say: *as a gift*. With respect to this grateful reception, doubting even one's doubt can help put one in a condition of docility that might, in fact, truly open up to an affirmative reception of what is given; in this way, even if it cannot be ultimate, doubting doubt can be genuinely useful. The contribution that Storm's metamodernism promises to make, I submit, can be most fruitful if taken up within a much more ancient current, which would enable us to face the general *human* task of resisting the life-denying reductions of both modernity and postmodernity.

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SYMPOSIUM

After *Metamodernism*

JOSEPH MINICH

I must admit, for better or worse, that I love intellectually dramatic projects. In a world of endless academic compartmentalization, it is refreshing to encounter a monograph that actually says something big (indeed, several such things!). Still more impressive is that the book does not sacrifice the specific for the general. Jason A. Josephson Storm demonstrates comprehensive awareness of the state of the question in each of the disciplines addressed. If one might pardon a phallocentrism, a project like this requires testicular fortitude—what the generations before Z called "balls" (even if only the process social kind, on which…).

Certainly one of the central claims in *Metamodernism* is that the master disciplinary objects of the human sciences (religion, art, society, etc.) can be clarified if we come to understand that each is not a fixed and transhistorical entity but rather possesses an irreducibly *temporal* quality. To talk about religion intelligibly is always, as when identifying a biological "kind," to draw boundaries which could be drawn otherwise. One might also say that boundaries could *have been* drawn otherwise, since these ways of understanding are largely inherited. It can be a bit disorienting to realize just how little our ancestors thought in terms of the contemporary category of "religion" (or its analogues), but crucially, this does not mean that such notions are mere social constructions or are ultimately arbitrary. Stated more precisely, there is an account of social construction that could never be described as *mere*, and which is an irreducible aspect of any full account of reflexive human self-understanding and action. Just as the boundaries drawn by biologists are not arbitrary (even if they could be drawn otherwise), so human self-understanding generally arises from a concrete *circumstance* which elicits a particular discursive approach to the world. This approach is continually justified precisely because the world yields some understanding to it. It

is true that there are important conversations to be had about the role that power plays in such construction, but human interpretation is demonstrably and inescapably more than a deliverance of power.

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Storm's discussion of realism helps set the stage for how we can make greater sense of this. The realism/antirealism debate (i.e. whether we can know anything mind-independent, and a cluster of like queries) has been fraught with mutual projection, and our author brings clarity to the discussion to argue for a more nuanced grasp of what precisely we mean by "real." Often left hanging as a loose signifier, Storm argues that we only really get concrete in a discussion of reality if we know what we're contrasting "the real" with. In any case, the payoff is that the world *really* yields to many discourses, as each way of speaking about it generates insight and orientation. And yet, such plural realism renders an account of translation urgent. The book is especially insightful, therefore, in the discussion of the possibility of interpretation (one might even say persuasion)—showing that different "realities" can communicate with one another, even if "the other" always exceeds our approximate grasp.

In all of the above, Storm details a tension between modern and postmodern theory and seeks to transcend each with *metamodernism*, giving theory a different footing not by discovering perfect solutions, but rather by framing the questions (and therefore acquiring answers) that are demonstrably superior in their explanatory power and which also escape the inevitable antinomies of contemporary discourse. But, and this is perhaps the chief virtue of the book, Storm recognizes that this is no purely academic affair. The solution to the problem of wrongheaded theory cannot be *simply* more theory. Rather, behind theories are theorizers—persons who are not reducible to their interpretations and utterances. And to fail to see this directly is to fail to understand precisely how theory works. In point of fact, the question of value—indeed, the question of virtue (!)—is essential to freeing up progress in the human sciences. Epistemologically, this looks like a "way of repentance" that rests content in the humble and provisional knowing of finite pilgrims, rather than demanding artificially the lofty vantage of angels (the author does not quite put it that way). Pragmatically, this requires being self-conscious about the precise values that shape one's project, but not—as per the emphasis on humility—as a matter of declared insistence. Rather, bringing the question of values to our conscious awareness allows us to sharpen one another into greater wisdom.

The virtues of this book are many. To read it is an education in itself, and each of Storm's general judgments strikes this particular reader as full of precisely the kind of wisdom, creativity, concreteness, and (most preciously) openness of soul that wins through magnanimous persuasion. Responding to such a work in such a limited space leaves me with the difficult task of identifying a "main" line of response. Several contenders present themselves. On the one hand, I'd love to suggest that almost all of our author's ideas seem to have pre-modern precedent. To this reader, the "future of theory" looks very much like a new performance of an old chant in a somewhat different style. Nevertheless, truth is no team-sport. Interested readers *will* want to know that the philosophical writing of W. Norris Clarke, Stephen R. L. Clark, and our own panel's D. C.

Schindler, would go a long way toward correcting frequent projections upon pre-Renaissance thought (which is *not* to say Storm's). Nevertheless, it remains the case that any such return is still a fresh act of creation. Appropriated by the same muse, our circumstances are different, and the implications of an overlapping grammar will not be precisely the same as our intellectual ancestors. But, more importantly, the humanistic journey of thought since the Renaissance cannot be reduced to a detour.

> **WHO AMONG US IS WISE? IN A MOMENT OF GLOBALIZED EXISTENTIAL CRISIS, HOW DOES ONE DISTINGUISH CLARITY AND CULT?**

Many people who emphasize the recovery of pre-modern philosophy understand the whole trajectory of post-Renaissance thought as fraught with error and illusion such that philosophical maturity involves "starting over again" in some crucial respect (whether in the mode of corrected presuppositions or in the mode of different institutional commitments—outsourcing one's judgments to this or that hive-mind). Indeed, it is remarkable just how much philosophical output is retroactive justification (even if persuasive on the face of it) of what one is attached to for pre-discursive reasons. William Bartley diagnosed this as the modern tendency toward a "retreat to commitment." We all tend (in our own way) toward cultishness in knowledge, and it is especially here that the questions of wisdom and virtue come to the forefront. Let us consider this.

The subtitle of the book is *The Future of Theory*. In the same vein, here I want to ask what comes "after" metamodernism. Storm, as noted above, is not simply trying to replace bad theory with better theory. He is dealing with persons, and the solutions to our quandaries require growing in our values and our goals, and *therefore* in our vantage point. I agree. But I am left wondering who is adequate to the task. Who can discern what will aid humans toward maturity, factoring in all their weaknesses, and actually motivate the world of discourse to something beyond its contemporary self-consumptive impasse? We all know that this needs to be done. Some theorists are better at seeing the theoretical problems (our author excels here). A few can see the moral problems (our author is downright prophetic here). And we can even piece together what sort of ship is needed to get us sailing in the right direction (a humility sail, a clarity sail, etc). But a ship cannot move without wind. Knowing the way and moving through it are two different things. And I am left wondering how academic communities help "form persons" who take on this pilgrimage. In many respects, the current crisis is ultimately one of motivation.

This is not a trivial concern. No "way" is without its parodies and idols, and it is wisdom which discerns between what will end in the very flourishing that Storm finds orienting, and what only superficially gets us there through the kind of feigned aloofness that obscures its own hidden tyrannies. Put more simply, a lot of people think they are after human flourishing when they aren't.

And it is precisely here that I think we need to feel the pain. Who among us is wise? In a moment of globalized existential crisis, how does one distinguish clarity and cult? Hungry and agitating for orientation in a world of suffocating complexity, we are especially tempted toward projects which "tie it all together" for us. And it is here that I am cautious of any *mere* return to a previous arrangement, even one as venerable as that outlined by D. C. Schindler in these pages. Even if much of what Storm writes can be discovered in previous sources, these do not change our concrete intellectual situation. Moreover, such *mere* conservatisms do not actually escape the existential quandary of contemporary discourse, because (again) our quandary is more than theoretical.

A different account of the last half millennium is available, however. Despite many of the false binaries that we have needed to transcend, the shift in accent toward the human sciences reflects a shift of focus toward the concreteness of human life. And yet it is a shift authorized, in its own way, by the developing grasp of the centrality of persons in medieval thought. This shift brings its liabilities and characteristic tendencies to forgetfulness, but it also brings its fruit and vantage points. Dostoyevsky is not reducible to pieces that came before him. And yet the metamodern could also be called the philosophical grandchild of a trajectory contained in premodernity. In my judgment, our spiritual and intellectual conditions are best captured by C. S. Lewis in *Miracles*. Interpreting the decline of older philosophical grammar, Lewis writes that in our time,

> Plain men are being forced to bear burdens which plain men were never expected to bear before. We must get the truth for ourselves or go without it. There may be two explanations for this. It might be that humanity, in rebelling against tradition and authority, has made a ghastly mistake… On the other hand, it may be that the Power which rules our species is at this moment carrying out a daring experiment. Could it be intended that the whole mass of the people should now move forward and occupy for themselves those heights which were once reserved only for the sages?… If so, our present blunderings would be but growing pains. But let us make no mistake about our necessities. If we are content to go back and become humble plain men obeying a tradition, well. If we are ready to climb and struggle on till we become sages, better still. But the man who will neither obey wisdom in others nor adventure for her/himself is fatal. A society where the simple many obey the few seers can live: a society where all were seers could live even more fully. But a society where the mass is still simple and the seers are no longer attended to can achieve only superficiality, baseness, ugliness, and in the end extinction. On or back we must go: to stay here is death.

If going back is impossible, the choice between life and death is the choice between remaining as we are and dying or maturing and living. And yet the "way of repentance" this requires involves, I suspect, a greater death than we have fully internalized, for we are (all of us) more pathological, ideological, and reductive of others than we realize. And ironically, it is precisely because a search for common (universal) understanding is implied here that it is clear that we must continue to die. For late modern humans, it is precisely this tacit search that makes clear that none of us has arrived. All in some fog, who will lead us? Persons, we insist, ultimately follow other persons. Perhaps (like Levinas' Messiah) our needed exemplar is the sort that never arrives. But recognizing our need perhaps renders the search for one nodal point plausible—a metaphysical, moral, and temporal lighthouse that gathers all realities into a unity. Perhaps, moreover, it is possible to claim the centrality of some One without hubris or manipulation—indeed, precisely as freedom's own arrival.

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SYMPOSIUM

A Few Thoughts on Jason Josephson Storm's *Metamodernism:* The Life and Death of the Christian Use of "Worldview"

DERRICK PETERSON

Metamodernism, the most recent book by the increasingly prolific Jason Josephson Storm, has an uphill battle in front of it. Not only is the book, in his own words, difficult to summarize, Storm has decided to take on a rather sizable chunk of current modern and postmodern theory, and the result is intricate, inspiring, infuriating, and absolutely worthwhile. Once again—much as in his prior books, *The Invention of Religion in Japan* as well as *The Myth of Disenchantment*—Storm has proven himself one of the best-read scholars working in the humanities today. Nor is he simply a capable scholar—he has something to say.

It is difficult for me, a historical theologian by trade, to know exactly where and what to say about a book so capacious and deep and outside of many of my disciplinary specialties. So, I will turn to one topic: what is a takeaway for a Christian theologian? The choices will be vast, not all of an accord with one another, and certainly not all of an agreeable sort for the Christian. Yet I think one of the most valuable—though perhaps understated—aspects of what Storm has given us with *Metamodernism* is a sense of the urgent need to reevaluate the idea of Christianity (and its "competitors") as *worldviews* (as he says, "the concept of worldview is itself incoherent" [17; cf. 88, 166, 309-310]). To be clear: this reckoning is not explicitly Storm's intention, but I think he provides us as excellent an opportunity as any to start analyzing what has been taken for granted—especially

"WORLDVIEW" WAS THE PHILOSOPHICAL MAP DESCRIBING WHERE THE BATTLES FOR FUTURE HEARTS, SOULS, AND MINDS WOULD BE FOUGHT.

in an environment where sides appear so vocal, so clear-cut, so militantly uncrossable as they do in our conflicted world.

The conflict surrounding competing worldviews is not new. In 1933, Americans heard a sinister voice—that was even by then becoming all too familiar—assure the German people that "a new philosophy has impressed itself upon this [German] nation; a new *philosophy* [*Weltanschauung*] has saved the nation from lethargy, resignation, and despair. … there is no denying that this movement stands for ideas which must be better than the ideas of our opponents."[1] This word, *weltanschauung*—that is, worldview—set off alarms among American theologians, not just because it came from Adolf Hitler's lips. It struck a chord because to them it signaled that they had been right: a consensus had been slowly emerging since the late nineteenth century, especially from the vitalized front of Dutch Reformed theologians familiar with works of German Idealism and neo-Kantianism, that "worldview" was the philosophical map describing where the battles for future hearts, souls, and minds would be fought.[2] In other words, what would be needed in the coming days was not just a battle to take back Europe, and by extension the world—what was also needed was the production of a coherent and consistent intellectual front. What was needed was a *Christian worldview*.

The intended universality of the Christian message is not new, of course. As the theologian Robert Jenson once put it, Christian theologians claim to know the one God, and hence know the one basic "fact" of all of reality—in some sense merely restating the august *modus operandi* of someone like Thomas Aquinas' admonition that one must understand everything *sub ratione Dei*, or under its relationship to God. But Protestant—and then Catholic and Orthodox—thinking in terms of "worldview" changed the nature that this universality took. To be sure, as many scholars have told us, Storm included, the rise of the category "religion" as it is often understood today involved a move toward heavily favoring the conceptual,[3] a move toward belief[4] (and toward beliefs as systematically oppositional and zero sum), toward externalized propositions and encyclopedic ordering very often alien to what is being categorized,[5] and a variety of other changes that began to conceive of the world as a tableau of necessarily interconnected ideas.[6] "Deciphering an opponent's worldview meant unlocking their unifying theory of everything…exposing…the semi-conscious and unverifiable assumptions that shape a person's perception of reality."[7] While one could still plunder the Egyptians to use their gold for Christian thought, as the metaphor goes, worldview thinking

1. Adolf Hitler, "Hitler as an Orator: Full Translation of an Electioneering Speech, 'Vision of the Future German,'" *Manchester Guardian* (March 16, 1933), 12.

2. On this story of *worldview* and evangelicalism, David K. Naugle, *Worldview: The History of a Concept* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 2002); Molly Worthen, *The Apostles of Reason: The Crisis of Authority in American Evangelicalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

3. Brent Nongbri, *Before Religion: A History of a Modern Concept* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013); William Cavanaugh, *The Myth of Religious Violence: The Invention of a Modern Concept* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); Tomoko Masuzawa, *The Invention of World Religions: Or, How European Universalism was Preserved in the Language of Pluralism* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2012); Guy Stroumsa, *A Discovery of Religion in the Age of Reason* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010); Talal Asad, *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003); David Chidester, *Empire of Religion: Imperialism & Comparative Religion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014); Daniel Dubuisson, *The Western Construction of Religion: Myths, Knowledge, and Ideology* (Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003); Peter Harrison, '*Religion*' *and the Religions in the English Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

4. Ethan H. Shagan, *The Birth of Modern Belief: Faith and Judgment from the Middle Ages to the Enlightenment* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2018).

5. Alasdair MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Inquiry: Encyclopedia, Genealogy, and Tradition* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994).

6. This approach is now a hallmark of a great majority of Christian apologetics. For example, the immensely popular work of James W. Sire, *The Universe Next Door: A Basic Worldview Catalogue* (Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2020), which has now gone through several editions due to its constant demand. The worldview approach has been the calling card especially of Dutch Reformed thought, so-called "Presuppositionalism" of the work of thinkers like Cornelius Van Till, Herman Dooyeweerd, and especially the popularizing literature of this movement by Francis Schaefer.

7. Worthen, *Apostles of Reason*, 28.

loaded ideas with an oppositional intensity that demanded certain necessary outcomes, associations, intentions, and borders in ways that may not have been evident or even extant previously.[8]

Interestingly enough, while evangelicals are often behind the curve in terms of interacting—let alone embodying—currents in academia, in the case of worldview oriented thinking neo-evangelicals "were not intellectual outliers or drowsy fundamentalists playing cultural catch-up. They were members of the conservative ideological vanguard."[9] Ironically, though, this meant they embodied much of the vanguard's weaknesses as well. Emerging movements against "worldview"-first thinking among Christians in turn also embodied the dialectic of which Storm speaks regarding modernism and postmodernism. To decry worldview was in some sense to continue to embody its ideals, to move between Storm's well-chosen representative categorical dualisms: realism and antirealism, meaning and nihilism, fact and value, and so forth, while merely turning these things upon themselves. Worldviews became relative, or context-sensitive, deconstructing themselves—and yet in many ways, this attempted deconstruction maintained the same priorities as the older worldview paradigm—only now in the mode of critique.[10]

Or, to give another example, the realism-anti-realism dialectic has analogies in the struggles of post-liberalism (as articulated in the works of George Lindbeck, Hans Frei, and Stanley Hauerwas), where doctrinal and theological ideas shifted from a sense of world-referentiality to church-community referentiality.[11] The problem of God became the problem of the church, its language, its world-absorbing capabilities.[12] Post-liberal theory and its non-foundational epistemology, in other words, is worldview theory sans reference, whereby the world quite literally has become coextensive with the grammatical strictures of the church.[13] This worldview approach not only shapes contemporary Christianity but is also very often the mode in which the Christian tradition is approached and resourced.[14]

Storm has provided for us a book that is difficult to summarize, but I believe it provides an opportunity for Christians to seriously reconsider the structures of our presuppositions, to retrieve things we have lost or neglected, and soldier forward. Books such as Charles Taylor's *A Secular Age* and James K. A. Smith's recent series of books including *You Are What You Love* have begun to retrieve aspects neglected under worldview-oriented thinking, like bodily reasoning, the "gut-feeling" level of "social imaginaries" or the long

8. Of course, this is not *necessarily* part of worldview-oriented thinking. Much like criticism of Arthur Lovejoy's "History of Ideas" approach, critiques of worldview can often tend toward caricature that do not credit what many intend to do (consistently or not) with worldview. However, given the unavoidable legacy of the concept's birth in German idealism, it will tend to skew in the direction of ideal abstraction, especially when unaided. It also—ironically enough given its fervent use in apologetics—has not been proven that "worldview" is really a coherent or truly analytically useful concept, as like the concept religion, there does not seem to be an agreement on what it constitutes except in the broadest sense of "everything a person believes."

9. Worthen, *Apostles of Reason*, 28. Of course in many ways this had been the case for good chunks of history, when, say, Baconianism—or more precisely what Scottish Common Sense Realism had made of Lord Bacon—had reigned supreme for so long, especially in America. See, e.g. Mark Noll, *America's God: From Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), esp. 93-113.

10. For a good summary of some of these initial post-conservative, even "post-modern" Christian critiques, see: James Davison Hunter, *To Change the World: The Irony, Tragedy, & Possibility of Christianity in the Late Modern World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 1-195. Cf. also Ephraim Radner, *A Brutal Unity: The Spiritual Politics of the Christian Church* (Texas: Baylor University Press, 2012). Even in more thoroughgoing and considered critiques, like that of Stanley Hauerwas, in many ways such have still taken on the form of that which they critiqued—in this instance the modern secular state—but in the negative, as has been demonstrated by Nathan Kerr, *Christ, History, and Apocalyptic: The Politics of Christian Mission* (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2008), 93-126.

11. Of course, it can be argued that at its best it was exactly this dialectic that was trying to be transcended, but in practice, the referentiality of Christian doctrine often took a hit in post-liberalism, which positioned itself in ways that could easily be mistaken for ecclesiological variations on anti-realism. Most curious of all, as Storm points out, following the recent scholarship of, for example, Michael Friedman, *Reconsidering Logical Positivism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), much of what is taken as "post-modern" and overcoming positivism, was itself the brainchild of the much-misunderstood positivism itself. See also John H. Zammito, *A Nice Derangement of Epistemes: Post-Positivism in the Study of Science from Quine to Latour* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004).

12. Cf. for example John Allen Knight, *Liberalism versus Postliberalism: The Great Divide in Twentieth Century Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

13. One might note the perceptive critique of Francesca Aran Murphy, *God is Not a Story: Realism Revisited* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007) is, however observant, still moving within a realism-antirealism dialectic whereby she is trying to move the pointer firmly back into the realist camp rather than transcending the problematics in the first place.

14. For example, see John Inglis, *Spheres of Philosophical Inquiry and the Historiography of Medieval Philosophy* (Leiden: Brill, 1998); and Leo Catana, *The Historiographical Concept 'System of Philosophy': Its Origin, Nature, Influence, and Legitimacy* (Leiden: Brill, 2008). One can also note again the similarities and differences of Christian precursors with, e.g. how scholasticism treated Greek philosophy in the opinion of Pierre Hadot, *What is Ancient Philosophy?* trans. Michael Chase (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University, 2004).

tradition of Christian explorations in the affective dimension of cultural liturgies.

Unfortunately, much of the interaction with the world of work outside Christianity very often remained at superficial—or, at the very least, extremely predictable—levels in works concentrated on using the optics of worldview.[15] Neither "superficial" nor "predictable" are meant as name-calling. Rather what I mean is that worldview orientations tend to absolutize certain given categories—say, epistemology, ethics, or ideas of progress, rights, etc.—and then locate how certain thinkers or movements or texts contribute to these typical philosophical categories that cumulatively form a worldview. Unfortunately, this can lead to treating works abstractly, as mere grist for the mill of worldview generation and completion. Further, it can seriously hamper our ability to detect transitions and alterations where, for example, it is not evident that something like "theodicy" constitutes a perennial category of "Christian worldview" that is equivalent to "the problem of evil," but in fact locates a contextually bound mutation in which the very nature, standards, and goals of inquiry have changed.[16]

The negation of negation that Storm provides here has given us an initial set of tools that demand exploration. Not only might they allow us to dissolve some of the more stubborn and recalcitrant aspects of what are thought to be demanded by Christianity as "worldview." Many of these tools also may allow us to keep the best aspects of what has been gained through generations of wisdom but position them in less explicitly adversarial ways.[17] Worldview has a tendency to absolutize and systematize in ways that escalate problems unhelpfully because nearly everything is elevated to necessary consequences or deductive starting points in a semi-timeless manner as if we are calling for the realms of Platonic forms to do battle. If, rather, we utilize some of the more mobile categories suggested by Storm (without necessarily agreeing or adopting wholesale), theology can be done (to steal a title from Steven Shapin) more as if "it was produced by people with bodies, situated in time, space, culture, and society, and struggling for credibility and authority"[18] or, that is, to once again attend to the more sapiential focus of the wisdom tradition of Christian thought and practice.[19]

Derrick Peterson is a Ph.D candidate in history, and author of Flat Earths and Fake Footnotes: The Strange Tale of How The Conflict of Science and Christianity Was Written Into History *(Cascade 2021).*

15. One example of this is the often frantic attempt to overcome the apparent nihilism of "post-structuralism" or "deconstructionist" post-modern "worldviews." This approach causes us to neglect the fact that such "worldviews" are themselves artificial constructs built by the American academy and foisted upon French thinkers (for example) who in no way identified with such groupings or with the characteristics supposedly demanded of their purported "postmodernity." See for example Johannes Angermuller, *Why There Is No Postructuralism In France* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015).

16. This is argued in Kenneth Surin, *Theology and the Problem of Evil* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2004) and Terence W. Tilley, *The Evils of Theodicy* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2000). Moreover, the now standard textbook divisions of rationalists and empiricists tend likewise to cause us to ignore the fact that both "parties" are not part of different worldviews *per se*, but are rather manifestations of deeper theological and confessional commitments to understanding the Christian fall narrative, and unpacking what capacities were lost by our original parents. For example, see Peter Harrison, *The Fall of Man and the Foundations of Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

17. As just one example, moving past "worldview" theory in historical inquiry has allowed us to see how Darwinism and evolutionary theory, far from settled atheistic *worldviews*, were actually quite often actively influenced by theology. See, as just a few examples: John Hedley Brooke, "The Relationship Between Darwin's Science and His Religion," in John Durant, ed. *Darwinism and Divinity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 40-75; Chris Cosans, "Was Darwin a Creationist?" *Perspectives in Biology and Medicine* 48 (2005): 362-371; Robert J. Richards, "Theological Foundations of Darwin's Theory of Evolution," in P.H. Theerman and K.H. Parshall, eds., *Experiencing Nature* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1997), 61-79; Stephen Dilley, "Charles Darwin's Use of Theology in the Origin of Species," *British Society for the History of Science* (2011), 1-28; Richard England, "Natural Selection, Teleology, and the Logos," *Osiris* 16 (2001), 270-287; Momme von Sydow, "Charles Darwin: A Christian Undermining Christianity?" in David M. Knight and Matthew D. Eddy, eds., *Science and Beliefs: From Natural Philosophy to Natural Science, 1700-1900* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2005), 141-156; Paul Nelson, "The Role of Theology In Current Evolutionary Reasoning," *Biology and Philosophy* 11 (1996): 493-517; Abigail Lustig, "Natural Atheology," in Abigail Lustig, Robert J. Richards and Michael Ruse, eds., *Darwinian Heresies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 69-83.

18. Steven Shapin, *Never Pure: Historical Studies of Science as if it was Produced by People with Bodies, Situated in Time, Space, Culture, and Society, and Struggling for Credibility and Authority* 2nd ed. (Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010).

19. James W. Sire's recent work, *Naming the Elephant: Worldview as a Concept* 2nd ed. (Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2015), has begun to incorporate many of these insights into his use of worldview, which I am happy to say in my opinion has made some pleasing progress in the right direction.

SYMPOSIUM

After Metamodern Progenitors and Progeny

JASON ĀNANDA JOSEPHSON STORM

I want to begin by thanking Onsi Kamel for organizing this and the three respondents for taking the time to read and react to my monograph. Each contributor has been so thoughtful and generous in their characterizations of my project that I have very little to debate. I'm glad that Joseph Minich finds the notion of process social kinds inspiring. I agree with Derrick Peterson about the limitations of the notion of "worldview," and I learned quite a bit from reading his elaborations on the subject. Finally, I especially appreciate the suggestions and supportive remarks of a scholar of D. C. Schindler's stature. I feel fortunate to have such sympathetic and attentive reviewers.

For the sake of discussion, however, I want to respond to two different issues this forum brings up: first, about the project's relationship to the past (or perhaps originality) and second, about the future. Playfully put, I want to explore the tension between the *progenitors* and *progeny* of a philosophical work. By doing so I hope to touch upon some more fundamental theoretical issues about the nature of knowledge and influence.

First, both Minich and Schindler reference what they see as premodern progenitors of the project. While Minich suggests that "our author's ideas seem to have pre-modern precedent," he nonetheless recognizes that "any such return is still a fresh act of creation." Schindler expresses a greater concern about "in what sense the approach to theory Storm sketches out in this book is in fact new and revolutionary." I take these to be both questions about the role of novelty in theory formation. As someone who has done a good deal of research tracing out the origins and evolution of various theoretical formulations (e.g., "the myth of disenchantment"), far be it from me to reject attempts at historicization.

While it isn't exactly what Minich and Schindler are doing, I am broadly suspicious of the search for progenitors as an intellectual move. To explain, there is a big difference between tracing the formation of a particular philosophical theme and attempting to proclaim a particular individual to be the originator of a particular grand episteme or artistic movement. In the latter case, it is *de rigueur* in certain circles to

talk about anticipations of trends before they were cool. I do not just mean the obligatory references to MC5 and The Stooges when talking about influences on early punk rock or the discussion of the French Synthwave revival before The Weeknd's "Blinding Lights" popularized the genre, but the desire to find the constellation of characteristics that define a current movement in the form of a distant progenitor. This can mean, for punk, the discovery of older largely unknown bands like Detroit's Death or Peru's Los Saicos or the pure fabrication of groups like Gekirin 逆鱗, whom director Nakamura Yoshihiro portrays as an early Japanese progenitor to Western punk. The scholarly equivalent of this is the celebration of Alexander von Humboldt as the first environmentalist or the identification of Nietzsche or even Heraclitus as pioneers of the postmodern.[1]

If anything, these moves are widespread today because of both a competition over primacy and an emphasis on genealogy. On the one hand, scholars and mainstream pundits alike confer immense symbolic capital on those they identify as first. For instance, there are intense conflicts over whether Aristotle, Anaximander, Ibn Al-Haytham, or Roger Bacon was "the first scientist," even though this would seem impossible to adjudicate insofar as they rest in competing, typically unstated definitions of "scientist" (especially as the term itself was an anachronism to all four men) and because the sociological boundaries between scientist and non-scientist in the periods in question are virtually impossible to articulate clearly. Hence, the stakes of this declaration of primacy seem to be largely symbolic and rooted primarily in either scholarly self-promotion or more generously, because the scholar in question feels an especial affinity to the putative progenitor and wants to see their discipline embody or (continue to) embody something of the progenitor's ethos, at least as they interpret them. On the other hand, in many places Foucauldian genealogy has morphed into genetic fallacy, functioning as a kind of covert essentialism—the faults of an originator discredit a current movement by association. For instance, the rediscovery that John James Audubon was a racist slaveowner has caused various people to question whether birdwatching is inherently racist, even though there was a long history of birdwatching outside of North America, including influential African birders.[2]

IN MANY PLACES FOUCAULDIAN GENEALOGY HAS MORPHED INTO GENETIC FALLACY, FUNCTIONING AS A KIND OF COVERT ESSENTIALISM—THE FAULTS OF AN ORIGINATOR DISCREDIT A CURRENT MOVEMENT BY ASSOCIATION.

Against both of these accounts, I argue in *Metamodernism* that social kinds typically have gray areas and fuzzy boundaries. Also, people frequently talk past each other by having different property-clusters in mind for a given term. So, the identity of the first "scientist" will depend on the purposes of a particular project and, hopefully, clearly stated assumptions about the particular property-cluster and anchoring processes being described. Moreover, as I argued in *Metamodernism*, social kinds do not automatically inherit properties from their origins, but it is worth looking at particular instances and asking historically-relevant questions that can then be investigated empirically.

In summary, novelty is a task-dependent judgement. Indeed, if you are sufficiently vague about your criteria for membership, you can practically always make the case for an arbitrarily defined progenitor of a given social kind (e.g., Jonah Lehrer, *Proust Was a Neuroscientist*). Given that Metamodernism, at least as I use

1. For examples, see Nicolaas Rupke, "Humboldt and Metabiography." *German Life and Letters* 74, no. 3 (2021): 416-438; Joanne Waugh, "Heraclitus: The Postmodern Presocratic?" *The Monist* 74, no. 4 (1991): 605-623; and Cornel West, "Nietzsche's Prefiguration of Postmodern American Philosophy." *Boundary 2* 9/10 (1981): 241-269.

2. Nancy Joy Jacobs, *Birders of Africa: History of a Network* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016), although to be fair it is also about how the colonial encounter rendered those African birders invisible.

the term, is an interlocking set of complex theoretical interventions, identifying the first *metamodernista* is likely to either prove futile or at best highly selective.

The more fundamental question this brings up, however, is not one about premodern precedents, but about the very notion of *originality*. Academic reviews frequently suggest an opposition between "originality" or "discovery" and "synthesis" or "influence." The first is typically valorized while the latter is regularly disparaged. But I think this whole opposition is rooted in a mistaken notion of the autonomy of an individual scholar. It rests on the erroneous "great man" account of history, which obscures the complex social relations that make even individual progress possible. Many of the thinkers who have been mostly lauded for their originality (e.g., Descartes, Max Weber) were just particularly remiss in their citational practices, and subsequent scholars have done lots of work excavating their intellectual context and manifold influences. This should not be a surprise. To paraphrase, John Donne, no one is an island. Despite the myth of the isolated ego, as I have argued, knowledge is a social kind, relative to a particular community of inquirers. For instance, Ian Hacking observed about the Scientific Revolution that "it is the entire consilience of ideas, the seamless hanging together, that tells us that something wholly new is underfoot. Sometimes one can find almost the same sentence, in an earlier epoch, as one that is common in a later way of thinking: a precursor indeed!"[3]

Because I believe intellectual progress is a collective endeavor, I've made it a conscious program to read (and cite) widely. This makes it easier, rather than harder, to register some of my many influences (although, perhaps ironically, in the reviews of the book I've seen thus far, different reviewers tend to assimilate my project to very different progenitors). Against the conventional view, I think that originality is not in opposition to influence. The least original works are typically those which have the narrowest range of influences, for they are limited by less material to synthesize and draw on (e.g., if scholars model their work exclusively on Jacques Derrida, their work will read as at best a derivative imitation of his). Hence, my reading program. So I'm especially delighted when other scholars note some of my intellectual influences and elective affinities, and demonstrate wide reading proclivities of their own.

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Having said that all of that, I'm inclined to push back against most of Schindler's characterizations of specific forebearers. I agree that there have been many critiques of modernity that are not postmodern (for some of these, see my previous book), although not all are equally relevant to my current project and most do so in fundamentally different terms.[4] Moreover, while I'm far from the first philosopher to grapple with the "unity of identity and difference" (to give the Hegelian formulation), *analogy*—in the contemporary sense of the term—is at best a limited source of potential generalizations because we don't necessarily know which features are shared by the blended domains (e.g., the analogy between blood flowing through the veins and water flowing through a pipe is suggestive of flow dynamics, but misleading insofar as veins, unlike pipes, require expansion and contraction to function). But I imagine by "traditional notion of *analogy*," Schindler is referring to the medieval theological account of analogical reasoning and predication provided by Boethius and others. If so, my work couldn't be more different from the traditional fourfold "equivocation by design" (*similitudo, proportion, ab uno,* and *ab unum*) that rests in both a

3. Ian Hacking, *The Emergence of Probability* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

4. Jason Ānanda Josephson Storm, *The Myth of Disenchantment: Magic, Modernity and the Birth of the Human Sciences* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017).

dissimilar epistemology and a different ontology of being than the one I sketch in chapter one (with necessarily divergent notions of substance and accident, etcetera).[5] Moreover, in that chapter, I argue that there are some features of the world that depend on mind, but that they depend on mind in different ways (which I attempt to provisionally classify). I also suggest that "real" is a comparative notion which takes an unspoken contrast class. But this is a far cry from the Christian Neo-Platonism that Schindler sees as a forebear. Similarly, while I share Augustine's emphasis on humble knowledge, as I understand his epistemology, it starts with a complicated rejection of skepticism in favor of the certainty of particular forms of self-referential knowledge and formal mathematical structures. In contrast, I reject the possibility of certain knowledge altogether and suggest we need to deepen skepticism and turn it inside out.[6] So not very similar. There may be some similarities between my process ontology and twentieth century Thomistic metaphysics, but since I don't know that genre at all that would be new to me (and if so, thanks for the suggestion—I look forward to reading into it).

All that said, Schindler is quite right that my promotion of virtue ethics and eudaimonia is more or less a revival project. It shares with this journal a call of *ad fontes* in its attempt to recover classical sources of ethical models, and in so doing it was in part inspired by the Catholic tradition that he references. I would be dissembling if I did not admit the vast influence of the work of the Catholic political theorist Alasdair MacIntyre in particular on my ethical views. To be sure, I modify this particular ethical project by way of both non-European traditions and cautions drawn from critical theory. But insofar as the ethical chapter is the beating heart of my project, I'm happy to take the Catholic (and classical Protestant) traditions as allies and work together to produce a world more conducive to virtue and flourishing.

In summary, I'm generally suspicious of the fetishization of founders and I think of originality in terms of a multiplicity rather than a unity of influences. So if Minich and Schindler's interests are interpreted not primarily as genealogical concerns or anticipatory intellectual developments but as attempts to find allies and affinities wherever possible; then in that case, I fully support expanding what we tend to treat as separate discourses beyond their current bounds and putting them together in generative ways.

ALTHOUGH THERE ARE MANY THINGS IN THE PAST WE ARE IN DANGER OF LOSING, WE CANNOT MERELY GO RETREAT TO SOME LOST (ILLUSORY) GOLDEN AGE.

To conclude, I want to briefly gesture at Minich's question about what comes after Metamodernism. I fully agree that "a lot of people think they are after human flourishing when they aren't"; that there is a real question about "how academic communities [could] help 'form persons' who take on this pilgrimage"; and that "in many respects, the current crisis is ultimately one of motivation."

It is understandable that, faced with global pandemic, anthropogenic climate change, economic turbulence, and political polarization, many people seem to have lost their capacity to imagine better futures. We as a society have no problem picturing the end of the world—dystopias and future apocalypses are abundant in contemporary films, novels, and even political speeches—but we seem to have given up on imagining utopias. This is a problem because, as numerous political theorists have observed, it is hard to organize meaningful change around cynicism or nihilism. Although there are many things in the past we are in danger of losing, we cannot merely go retreat to some lost (illusory) golden age. We will never solve the intertwined catastrophes of the present moment if we do not exercise our capacity to imagine better

5. Domenic D'Ettore, *Analogy after Aquinas* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2018), 3-9.

6. Christopher Kirwan, *Augustine* (New York: Routledge, 1989), 15-34.

futures. So it seems to me that, in these apparently dystopian times, it is even more important to chart constructive visions.

It is clear that the American academy, as it now stands, is unsuitable to the task. It has largely abandoned the idea of producing moral transformation and human flourishing in favor of misleading gestures at the job market, vague notions of cultural progress, and/or anemic accounts of "critical thinking." We cannot solve the crisis merely at the level of ideas. We must confront head-on adjunctification, inequality, and hyperspecialization. We must work toward decolonization, inclusion, and the revitalization of values. We must take philosophy to the streets and even to the stars. But none of these is enough. The educational establishment isn't the only crumbling institution. The whole system needs a radical reformation.

Metamodernism has been an attempt to trigger such on at least the terrain of philosophy. In that respect, the book was itself conceived as a kind of philosophical therapeutics that leads through the disintegration of concepts and deconstructive vigilance to a reconstructive capability directed at multi-species flourishing.

But I'll own that it embodies an inherent tension between processual knowledge and future guidance. The process social ontology I describe implies not only humility toward knowledge but a lack of ethical certainty in the face of changing moral norms. As I argue, the only knowledge that endures indefinitely is the recognition that knowledge itself is provisional and constantly changing. Similarly, ethics needs to be grounded not in a particular static ideal, but rather in the recognition of our own flaws, finitude, limitedness, or one might even venture fallenness. Faced with the impossibility of perfection, the only kind of flourishing that will weather the ages is the ability to change, to become. That is to say, flourishing not as product but process. Yet, even so, we must in our own way struggle for something more, we must keep our eyes on the prize or perhaps aspire toward (in Minich's paraphrases of Levinas) an "exemplar [of] the sort that never arrives."

All that is to say, the emulation of moral paragons is itself valuable, but if we are going to transform our collective lives, we need not followers so much as heroes. That is to say we need diverse spiritual progeny who, embracing humble knowledge despite a mutual recognition of limitedness, are willing to struggle together to build a better world.

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A solis ortus cardine

BY SEDULIUS

TRANSLATED BY E. J. HUTCHINSON

A solis ortus cardine
ad usque terrae limitem
Christum canamus principem
natum Maria virgine.[1]

Beatus auctor saeculi
servile corpus induit,
ut carne carnem liberans
non perderet quod condidit.

Clausae puellae viscera
caelestis intrat gratia;
venter puellae baiulat
secreta quae non noverat.

Domus pudici pectoris
templum repente fit Dei;
intacta nesciens virum
verbo creavit filium.

Enixa est puerpera,
quem Gabrihel praedixerat,
quem matris alvo gestiens
clausus Iohannes senserat.

Afar from rising of the sun
Unto the limit of the earth,
The Christ, our prince, now let us sing—
His holy Mary-virgined birth.

Behold: the author of the world,
Though blessed, is clothed in slave's attire,
In order flesh by flesh to free
And save his creatures from the mire.

Concealed within the maiden's womb,
The grace of heaven enters in;
Her belly does not know it bears
The secret saving us from sin.

Domained in Mary's modesty,
God makes a temple of her breast.
How strange! Untouched, the girl brought forth
Her Son, the Word-created guest.

Ere long her labor bore the King
Whom Gabriel had once foretold,
Whom John's prenatal preaching had
Before proclaimed with leaping bold.

1. The Latin text is taken from A.S. Walpole, *Early Latin Hymns* (Cambridge University Press, 1922), 151-58.

***F**aeno iacere pertulit,*
praesepe non abhorruit,
parvoque lacte pastus est,
per quem nec ales esurit.

For, sleeping, he did not despise
To take the prickling straw as bed;
A mother's milk sustained the babe
By whom the birds of heav'n are fed.

***G**audet chorus caelestium*
et angeli canunt Deum,
palamque fit pastoribus
pastor, creator omnium.

"**G**ood tidings!" chant celestial choirs
Of angels as God's praises ring.
To shepherds now is manifest
The Shepherd who made everything.

***H**ostis Herodis impie,*
Christum venire quid times?
non eripit mortalia,
qui regna dat caelestia.

How, Herod, can your hostile mind
Greet his arrival with dismay?
He gives eternal realms and does
Not grasp at kingdoms of a day.

***I**bant magi qua venerant*
stellam sequentes praeviam;
lumen requirunt lumine,
Deum fatentur munere.

Incensed conversely Magi came,
Judea's star their mystic guide.
By light they seek the light; their gift
Declares that God with man abides.

***K**aterva matrum personat*
conlisa deflens pignora
quorum tyrannus milia
Christo sacravit victimam.

Knave tyrant, do you hear the sound
Of mothers weeping for their dead,
The battered brood of baby boys
Whose sacrificial blood you shed?

***L**avacra puri gurgitis*
caelestis agnus attigit;
peccata qui mundi tulit
nos abluendo sustulit.

Let down into the Jordan's flood,
The Lamb of heaven made it pure—
The Lamb who took away our sins
With Worded water as the cure.

***M**iraculis dedit fidem*
habere se Deum patrem,
infirma sanans corpora
et suscitans cadavera.

Miraculous deeds fathered faith
His Father was not man but God,
As sickly bodies found their strength
And corpses rose up at his nod.

***N**ovum genus potentiae!*
aquae rubescunt hydriae,
vinumque iussa fundere
mutavit unda originem.

New kind of power! Water jars
Suddenly blush and change their hue.
At Christ's command, metamorphosed,
Unwatered wine the servants drew.

***O**rat salutem servulo*
nixus genu centurio;
credentis ardor plurimus
exstinxit ignes febrium.

On bended knee, the captain begged
The Lord to grant health to his slave;
The ardent burning of belief
Snuffed out the fire the fever craved.

***P**etrus per undas ambulat*
Christi levatus dextera;
natura quam negaverat,
fides paravit semitam.

Pretending water was like rock
Stout Peter walked upon the sea;
Upheld by Christ's right hand, his faith
Made paths denied naturally.

***Q**uarta die iam fetidus*
vitam recepit Lazarus,
mortisque liber vinculis
factus superstes est sibi.

Quartered four days now, Lazarus,
A rotting corpse, recovered life,
And, freed from fetters moribund,
Survived his death and graveyard strife.

***R**ivos cruoris torridi*
contacta vestis obstruit;
fletu rigante supplicis
arent fluenta sanguinis.

Red rivulets of ceaseless blood
Mere contact with Christ's clothing dammed,
The sanguine flow made desiccate
By tearful faith's extended hand.

***S**olutus omni corpore,*
iussus repente surgere,
suis vicissim gressibus
aeger vehebat lectulum.

Sold out by slack recusant limbs,
Commanded suddenly to rise,
The paralytic stood and walked,
His dormant bed borne off as prize.

***T**unc ille Iudas carnifex*
ausus magistrum tradere
pacem ferebat osculo,
quam non habebat pectore.

Then hangman Judas, by design,
Unfeeling, with a kiss betrayed
His master, simulating peace—
"Disciple" just a part he played.

***V**erax datur fallacibus,*
pium flagellat impius,
crucique fixus innocens
coniunctus est latronibus.

Veracity Itself by lies
Was given to ungodly men
And fastened, guiltless, to a cross
With scoundrels from a robbers' den.

***X**eromyrram post sabbatum*
quaedam ferebant compares,
quas adlocutus angelus
vivum sepulchro non tegi.

Xenian in their pious care,
The women brought myrrh to his tomb.
The angel told them he was gone;
He'd burst forth living from death's womb.

***Y**mnis venite dulcibus,*
omnes canamus subditum
Christi triumpho tartarum,
qui nos redemit venditus.

Ye faithful, come, and let us sing
With sweetest hymns Christ's victory,
Who, sold for silver, sacking hell,
Bought us back from sin's penalty.

***Z**elum draconis invidi*
et os leonis pessimi
calcavit unicus Dei,
seseque caelis reddidit.

Zealous for blood, the serpent's head
and lion's mouth, devouring, God's
Only-Begotten under foot
Has crushed and back to heaven trod.

ESSAYS

The Fourth Way: The Promise of the Spanish Reformation

ANDREW MESSMER

THE SUCCESS AND FAILURE OF PROTESTANTISM[1]

In many ways, the Reformation was a huge success. Most notably, the Church recovered the Bible as her ultimate authority for faith and practice, the doctrine of salvation as by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, and worship as centered on the Triune God alone. These and other Reformation truths were genuine rediscoveries of Scriptural and early Christian beliefs and practices and ought to be celebrated by Christians everywhere.

However, in other ways, the Reformation was a failure. I have written elsewhere that the failure of Protestantism has been our ecclesiology: we have failed to preserve the unity of the visible Church.[2] Paul's appeal to the Corinthians speaks to our context as well: "I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment" (1 Cor 1:10, ESV). Although we console ourselves with the fact that beneath our superficial denominational divisions lies a deeper and more important spiritual unity, we must take our divisions more seriously. Could Paul even have conceived of a state of Christianity in which Gospel-preaching churches do not have visible, cooperative unity, or worse, excluded one another from the Lord's Supper?

1. A prior version of this article was published in Evangelical Focus Europe. Permission was secured to publish a revised and updated version in *Ad Fontes*.

2. See my article "The Failure of the Reformation: Jesus, Socrates, and the Dilemma of Inferior Disciples", Evangelical Focus, 16 May 2020, https://evangelicalfocus.com/feature/5782/the-failure-of-protestantism-socrates-jesus-and-the-dilemma-of-inferior-disciples

In this brief article, I won't presume to solve a problem that has plagued Protestantism for half a millennium. However, I would like to address it from a new perspective, providing some hope that Protestantism doesn't have to be this way and showing that at least some Reformers had a vision to preserve unity despite doctrinal differences on secondary issues.

THE SPANISH REFORMERS ENVISIONED A "FOURTH WAY" FOR PROTESTANT ECCLESIOLOGY, ONE THAT TOOK THE MODERATE APPROACH OF MELANCHTHON, BUCER, AND ANGLICANISM, BUT WHICH WENT BEYOND THEM.

THE SIXTEENTH-CENTURY CONTEXT

If we go back to the sixteenth century, we see that there were three major Protestant groups. Arguably the most well-known were the Lutheran and Reformed traditions. They were constant sparring partners with one another and have left us with an enormous corpus of polemical works dedicated to convincing the other side of the remaining errors of their system. There were a few attempts to unite the two movements, such as the Colloquy of Marburg (1529) and the Wittenberg Concord (1536), and a few moderate theologians such as Philip Melanchthon and Martin Bucer who tried to build bridges, but these were isolated incidents and voices and never convinced the larger Lutheran and Reformed bases.

This is where the famous Anglican "third way" or *via media* came in. Since the nineteenth century, many have thought that Anglicanism was a *via media* between Protestantism and Catholicism, but this was how the Church of England was repackaged by High-Church Anglicans ("Anglo-Catholics") such as John Henry Newman, who wanted it to be more Roman Catholic.[3] In its original conception in the sixteenth century, although broadly fitting within the Reformed movement, Anglicanism was more of a *via media* between Lutheranism and the Reformed.[4] Anglicans were open to insights from both groups, and most moderate positions were not only welcomed in England but even invited to enter and contribute.

A fourth, and much smaller group of Protestants, the Anabaptists, typically did not unite with other Protestant movements, but rather sought an extensive and immediate reformation of the Church.[5] One wing of their movement, the so-called "spiritual Anabaptists", sought to bring their reformation about through violent means, which had the unfortunate consequence of sullying the entire Anabaptist movement and inviting outright rejection and persecution from Protestants and Catholics alike. For these reasons, Anabaptists typically have been happy to remain isolated from other Protestants and not seek broader unity. Due to their relatively small size, lack of sustained engagement with the other Protestant "ways", and hesitancy over whether or not "Protestant" is the best term to describe them, for the purposes of this essay I do not consider Anabaptism the "fourth way" for Protestants. Rather, this term will be reserved for the Spanish Protestant vision, to which we now turn.[6]

THE PROMISE OF THE SPANISH REFORMATION

It is within the context of a divided Protestantism that the little-known Spanish Reformation can be so helpful for us. The lives and works of the Spanish Reformers demonstrate that, while they were greatly indebted to Lutheran, Reformed, English, and Anabaptist influences—even joining their ranks and at times becoming their pastors—they never really saw

3. For example, cf. Diarmaid MacCulloch, "The Myth of the English Reformation," Journal of British Studies 30 no 1 (1991): 1–19.

4. What is more, they included insights from reformers from other backgrounds, such as the Italians Peter Martyr Vermigli and Bernardino Ochino.

5. Their view of Church–State relations made dialogue very difficult, and unity virtually impossible.

6. For example, cf. Walter Klaassen, *Anabaptism: Neither Catholic Nor Protestant* (Waterloo, Ontario: Conrad Press, 1973).

SPANISH PROTESTANTISM HAD THE MOST BIBLICAL, AND THEREFORE THE MOST CATHOLIC, VISION OF ANY GROUP OF THE REFORMATION.

themselves as card-carrying members of any of these groups. The Spaniards were comfortable everywhere and nowhere at the same time. The reason this was so, I would like to suggest, is that the Spanish Reformers envisioned a "fourth way" for Protestant ecclesiology, one that took the moderate approach of Melanchthon, Bucer, and Anglicanism, but which went beyond them to include significant portions of the Anabaptist vision. I would like to suggest that in the area of ecclesiology, Spanish Protestantism had the most biblical, and therefore the most catholic, vision of any group of the Reformation. Of course, in this brief article, I cannot provide an exhaustive account of the uniqueness of Spanish Protestant ecclesiology, but I can sketch a basic outline of Spanish distinctives. First, I will show how the Spanish Reformers adopted a *via media* approach between the Lutheran and Reformed camps, and then how they incorporated important portions of the Anabaptist vision without forfeiting their Protestantism.

THE *VIA MEDIA*

Inquisition documents from the important Spanish Protestant centers at Valladolid and Seville from the 1550s show that Protestants in both cities took an original approach to reform and were eclectic in their appropriation of broader Protestant thought. The reports show both Lutheran and Reformed components in their theology, with no apparent divisions between those who considered themselves Lutheran and others Reformed. Additionally, the reports evidence a broad range of interests, with a wide range of humanist, Lutheran, and Reformed books being smuggled and read by these groups. On traditionally divisive topics such as the Lord's Supper and the number of sacraments, Spaniards held either Lutheran- or Reformed-leaning views, but there is no indication that there was any conflict between them.

Francisco de Enzinas (1520–1552) lived with Philip Melanchthon during his seminary training at Wittenberg, and although he was more a linguist than a theologian (he was the first to translate the New Testament from Greek into Spanish), the fact that he translated both John Calvin's 1538 Catechism and Martin Luther's *Treatise on Christian Liberty*, and then published them together as one work, demonstrates that he was not a doctrinaire follower of either.

Enzinas' close friend Juan Díaz (c. 1500/1510–1546) quickly impressed and gained the confidence of John Calvin and Martin Bucer, the latter of whom took him as his personal secretary to the second Colloquy of Regensburg (1546) for the second round of the Empire-sponsored Catholic–Protestant dialogue. Although both men were Reformed, they arrived to defend the Lutheran Confession of Augsburg (1530), and were awaiting the arrival of the Lutheran Philip Melanchthon, who would lead the discussion for the Protestant position.

In his confession of faith, Casiodoro de Reina (c. 1520–1594) intentionally used ambiguous language in the chapter on the Lord's Supper, with some phrases sounding Lutheran and others Reformed. In two letters he wrote to Theodore Beza (1565, 1571), Reina stated his admiration for Martin Bucer and alluded to his support of the Wittenberg Concord, and at the end of his life, when he was received into the Lutheran church (1593), he again endorsed the Wittenberg Concord.[7] Perhaps most notably, immediately after publishing his Reformed

7. Adrian Saravia (c. 1530–1613), a Spanish-Flemish Protestant, also endorsed the Wittenberg Concord in his work *De Sacra Eucharistia.* However, although his father was a Spaniard and his life overlaps in many ways with those of Reina and Corro, Saravia appears to have seen himself as more Flemish than Spanish, as Paul Hauben argues (*Three Spanish Heretics and the Reformation* [Genève: Librairie Droz, 1976], 116–125).

confession of faith in Frankfurt (1577), defending a Reformed understanding of the Lord's Supper and subscribing to the Second Helvetic Confession in London (1578–1579), he became the pastor of the Lutheran church in Antwerp (1579–1584). While there, David Chytraeus suggested that he become the "superintendent" (i.e. bishop) of the Lutheran church in Antwerp, and his catechism (1580, 1583) was endorsed by leading Lutheran theologians such as Johann Marbach and Martin Chemnitz.

SPANISH PROTESTANTS SURPASSED A MERE *VIA MEDIA* APPROACH BY INCORPORATING IMPORTANT INSIGHTS FROM THE ANABAPTIST VISION, PARTICULARLY THEIR EMPHASIS ON IMITATING CHRIST'S LIFE, BROTHERLY LOVE, AND REFUSAL TO DENOUNCE BELIEVER'S BAPTISM.

Finally, Reina's close friend and fellow Reformed pastor, Antonio del Corro (1527–1591), wrote a letter to the Lutheran church in Antwerp in 1567 in which he pleaded with them not to let their commitment to Lutheranism overshadow their love toward their Reformed brothers. His idea was for both Reformed and Lutheran pastors to read aloud publicly a confession of faith and show both churches how much the two groups had in common, but unfortunately this never came to pass.[8] After a difficult experience with the Reformed church in London, Corro finally joined the Church of England (as would several other Spanish Reformers in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries).

In summary, we find A. Gordon Kinder's appraisal of Casiodoro de Reina to be true of many other Spanish Reformers as well: "Whilst remaining firmly on the Protestant side of the fence, he appears to have felt at home both in the Calvinist and the Lutheran folds, nor did he feel it necessary to reject the one to be in the other; and he avoided the extreme positions and hair-splitting arguments that threatened to divide both of them from within."[9]

THE "FOURTH WAY"

Thus far we have seen the *via media* of the Spanish Reformers between Geneva and Wittenberg. However, as we have noted, this is also how the Church of England has been historically characterized. We will now turn our attention to see how Spanish Protestants surpassed a mere *via media* approach by incorporating important insights from the Anabaptist vision, particularly their emphasis on imitating Christ's life, brotherly love, and refusal to denounce believer's baptism (without necessarily accepting it themselves).[10]

Juan de Valdés (c. 1490–1541), arguably Spain's first Reformer, is increasingly recognized as an important figure on spirituality, especially for his most famous works *Dialogue on Christian Doctrine and 110 Considerations.*[11] He attracted a large following in Naples, Italy, where his "circle" focused on simple Christianity: Bible reading, prayer, and imitating Christ. Although not a mystic, his emphasis on the spiritual life is undeniable. Valdés was shaped by fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Spanish *converso* spirituality, which overlaps significantly with Anabaptist spirituality.

In Casiodoro de Reina's confession of faith, the largest chapter is the one which treats the three marks of a true church and (unique to Reformed confessions)

8. As is usually the case in debates, each side blamed the other. For Antonio del Corro's perspective, cf. his *Epistre et amiable remonstrance d'un ministre de l'Évangile de nostre Redempteur Iesus Christ*… (Antwerp, 1567); trans. into English: *An epistle or godlie admonition, of a learned minister of the Gospel of our saviour Christ*… (London: Henry Bynneman, 1570). For Matthias Flacius's perspective, cf. Excusatio Matthiae Flaci Illyrici contra calumnias adversariorum… (n.p., 1568).

9. *Casiodoro de Reina: Spanish Reformer of the Sixteenth Century* (London: Tamesis Books Limited, 1975), 82.

10. Apparently, the only major piece of the Anabaptist vision that the Spanish reformers did not incorporate into their own was the separation of Church and State. On the contrary, they tended toward Erastianism, which placed the Christian monarch at the head of the Church.

11. *The Benefit of Christ,* another spiritual classic, was most likely written by his followers, and based on his teaching.

the seven marks of a true believer, which focus on Christian living. Finally, although his confession addresses the topic of baptism, his first draft was silent on the matter of believer's baptism vs. infant baptism, implying a reluctance to be dogmatic on the topic (similar to his approach on the Lord's Supper, as was shown above). After being challenged by other Reformed churches to add a statement in support of infant baptism, he added a restrained paragraph on the topic, stating that while it is not found in Scripture, he would nevertheless support it because of Church tradition and the idea of the covenant.[12]

SPANISH AUTHORS, WHEN THEY ADDRESS THE TOPIC OF FAITH, DON'T FOCUS SO MUCH ON FAITH IN ITS FUNCTION AS JUSTIFYING, BUT RATHER ON WHAT THEY CALL "TRUE" AND "LIVING" FAITH, BY WHICH THEY MEAN A FAITH THAT MANIFESTS ITSELF IN WORKS.

Antonio del Corro was a Geneva-approved pastor, but he refused to sign the Belgic Confession because it required him to condemn Anabaptists.[13] His focus was on right living and brotherly love, rather than on strict dogmatic adherence. His letter to the Lutheran pastors repeatedly stated that brotherly love was more important than any confession of faith, since, he reminded them, confessions were written by fallible men. In another letter to Casiodoro de Reina, Corro stated that he wanted to read works written by Anabaptist and mystic thinkers such as Kaspar Schwenkfeld, Valentin Krautwald, Andreas Osiander, Justus Velsius, and Jacopo Aconcio. He did not necessarily agree with their doctrine but was open to listening to their arguments. Importantly, however, in a letter dated July 3, 1571, he condemned the errors of some of the people mentioned in his prior letter, along with others such as Arius, Pelagius, and Papists. However, he did not specify the errors to which referred, thus making it hard to judge his relationship to them.

Finally, many Spanish authors, when they address the topic of faith, don't focus so much on faith in its function as justifying, but rather on what they call "true" and "living" faith, by which they mean a faith that manifests itself in works. In fact, I would go so far as to suggest that, generally speaking, the Spanish Reformers were more concerned with right Christian living than they were about the doctrine of justification by faith alone. They obviously accepted and defended the latter, but it simply wasn't their main concern. To state the issue in terms of key New Testament texts: although they believed in and defended Romans 3–4, they were more interested in James 2. What gripped their hearts was the fact that, thanks to the work of Christ on the cross, the Father had poured out the Spirit on his people so that they might live out God's image.[14]

Before concluding, it is important to note that the Spanish Reformers' openness to Anabaptist thought did not necessarily mean that they agreed with it themselves, but rather that they recognized Anabaptists as true believers and thus did not want to exclude them from the visible church. Nevertheless, they were at the very least open to incorporating elements of Anabaptist thought and spirituality where they were not opposed to the magisterial Reformation, and there is considerable overlap between the two, as is being increasingly recognized by scholars of the Spanish Reformation.[15]

12. It is also interesting to note that he rejected confirmation, infant baptism's complement.

13. Hauben, *Three Spanish Heretics,* 23.

14. For example, Juan de Valdés' surviving works emphasize Christian living as opposed to doctrinal precision (he had close fellowship with Roman Catholics and Protestants during his time in Naples) and Casiodoro de Reina's longest chapter in his confession of faith is dedicated to the seven marks of a true believer.

15. Manuel Díaz Pineda, *La reforma en España (Siglos XVI–XVII): Origen, naturaleza y creencias* (Barcelona: Editorial Clie, 2017), esp. Part 2, §4.2 and Part 4, §3.

CONCLUSION

The vision reconstructed above was not that of every Spanish Reformer. For example, Cipriano de Valera (c. 1532–after 1602) and Juan Aventrot (c. 1558–1633) were Reformed, and they took positions that would have excluded Lutherans and Anabaptists from fellowship.[16]

However, these voices represent the minority position among Spanish Reformers, and the basic argument of this essay remains true: Spanish Protestantism took a moderate position, or *via media*, between Lutherans and the Reformed, and it went even further in their embrace of important aspects of the Anabaptist vision. They were never open to heretical positions on key doctrinal matters, and most, if not all, expressly affirmed their allegiance to the major Christian creeds and councils of the first five centuries of the Church, completely in line with other Protestant groups of the time. But within this essential orthodoxy, they were willing to include all the major groups of the Reformation.[17] Being neither truly Lutheran, nor Reformed, nor Anglican, nor Anabaptist, their vision begs to be called something else, which I have suggested as the "fourth way."

Ironically, although Spain's "fourth way" was rejected by most groups in the sixteenth century, it seems to be what many are longing for in the twenty-first: from official ecumenical dialogues between denominational representatives, to the phenomenon of non-denominational churches, to adult Bible study fellowships that include all Christians regardless of denominational ties. Unfortunately, the Spanish Reformation cannot offer us a model of what this "fourth way" could look like at a practical level, since it was brutally suppressed in Spain, and there was never a large and stable enough group of expatriated Spaniards to implement their vision elsewhere in Europe. At best, it can be carefully reconstructed, but always with the caveat that it is hypothetical and speculative.[18] However, what it can offer us is hope—hope that Protestants don't have to endlessly divide up into ever-more denominations; hope that Lutherans, Reformed, Anglicans, and Anabaptists could restore visible ties; hope because there are exemplars within Protestantism's history for valuing brotherly love as much as truth; hope that Protestantism can be cured of its schisms and thus better reflect the "manifold wisdom of God" (Eph 3:10).[19]

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16. At the moment, I am unsure whether Juan Pérez de Pineda (c. early 16th cent–1567) was "clearly" Reformed, or rather went along to get along. For example, although he was always on good terms with Geneva, and even published catechisms that reflected Reformed structure and contents, his influence from Constantino de la Fuente (c. 1502–1559/60) and deafening silence on infant baptism must be taken into account. My thanks to Jon Nelson for pointing out some difficulties related to classifying Pineda.

17. Although not addressed in this essay, the influence of Sebastian Castellio's thought on Reina and Corro cannot be overlooked. Castellio was a famous advocate of the freedom of conscience, which likely would have affected Reina's and Corro's ecclesiology.

18. I plan to do this in a future article.

19. I would like to thank Jon Nelson and Steven Griffin for reading an earlier draft of this work and making helpful suggestions.

BOOKS AND ARTS

Bruce L. McCormack's *The Humility of the Eternal Son: Reformed Kenoticism and the Repair of Chalcedon*

REVIEWED BY J. DAVID MOSER

Bruce McCormack has led a distinguished career as a scholar of the theology of Karl Barth. His written work has primarily focused on sorting out what Barth meant, and he is perhaps best known today for his gradualist interpretation of Barth's doctrine of election. With this book, he turns to systematic theology; here we get McCormack's own views, not Barth's, though Barth is surely the key figure in the background. The first in a trilogy, *The Humility of the Eternal Son*[1] explores the doctrine of the person of Jesus Christ. The second will focus on the doctrine of God, and the third will address the atoning work of Christ and a revised account of penal substitution. By ordering the volumes this way, McCormack follows Barth: what we know of God is known only in the history of Jesus Christ. Theology can know nothing about God without going through that history: "Nothing will be said of the immanent life of God that does not find a firm and clear root in the economy" (19). Christology then is the entry point for his systematic theology, an entry point that requires we reject all forms of "classical metaphysics" and conceptions of divine impassibility, simplicity, and related doctrines (except, interestingly, divine immutability).

McCormack proposes a Reformed kenotic Christology. "Kenosis" is the Greek term for the Son's 'self-emptying' in the Christ-hymn in Philippians 2:6-11. A kenotic Christology can take various forms, but in the modern period, especially among Lutheran theologians, it often refers to the claim that the Son

1. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021. xi + 316 pp. $39.99.

empties himself of his divinity by becoming incarnate. Reformed theologians have not typically been proponents of kenotic Christology for many reasons. Crucially, McCormack holds that kenosis does not mean "depotentiation" or "divestment" of divinity as it did for some Lutherans. Rather, it refers to the eternal Son's "ontological receptivity" (19, 263, *inter alia*). The Son, or the Logos, does not give up his divinity in the act of kenosis, but is disposed to be effected by the man Jesus Christ and his human history. The electing God is always disposed for incarnation, and the second person of the Trinity therefore is disposed not only to be incarnate but to be really influenced in some way by that act.

MCCORMACK PROPOSES A REFORMED KENOTIC CHRISTOLOGY.

McCormack thinks this proposal resolves several long-standing problems in ancient conciliar teaching on Christ. For him, the Definition of Faith of the Council of Chalcedon (451 AD) is not only incomplete but requires correction (14). It rests on a fundamental logical problem. The problem is generated by two "pressures." The first pressure comes from the council's commitment to a single subject of the incarnation, the Logos, and a soteriology of deification. Both of these lead to "instrumentalization" of the man Jesus Christ.[2] And such instrumentalization entails that the man Jesus is not free like we are and that he is merely a passive recipient of divine influence from the Logos. The second pressure is commitment to divine impassibility. This doctrine also entails that the man Jesus's life is instrumentalized; the Logos "acts through and even upon his human 'nature'" (29). Thus, deification and impassibility are both undesirable and need to be rejected.

These two pressures lead to the fundamental logical problem with Chalcedon (although, I'll admit, I'm still not entirely sure how). And that is this: the divine Logos is the subject of the "person of the union" (31). But if the Logos is the subject, so McCormack argues, then "Jesus contributes nothing to the constitution of the 'person'" (31). Why? McCormack thinks it is obvious: human properties cannot be attributed to a divine and impassible Logos. He leaves this premise largely unexplained, as far as I can tell. But McCormack thinks that it's the basic problem underlying Chalcedon and the Christological tradition of the ancient Church.

In a historical chapter on the legacy of Chalcedon, McCormack argues that the Church Fathers from Origen to Cyril of Alexandria and the Chalcedonian Definition claimed that the impassible Logos is the subject of the incarnation. But in the eighth century, John of Damascus realized that human properties can't be realistically applied to an impassible Logos. He employed the notion of "composite hypostasis" gained from the sixth century thinker Leontius of Byzantium to solve the problem. On McCormack's reading, John attributes human predicates to "Christ", or "the God-human in his divine-human unity" (59), and not the eternal Logos. When he is concerned with deification, John swaps out this language for the earlier Logos Christology. But when he wants to get serious about applying human predicates to Christ, he turns to this idea of "the God-human" as the subject. But McCormack thinks that the Damascene can't have it both ways. It's best to give up on the idea of the impassible Logos and opt for the "God-human" as the subject of the Gospels.

This reading of ancient Christology leads into McCormack's constructive proposal. We must reject the divine Logos as the subject and replace it with a "composite hypostasis" composed of the eternal Logos and the human Jesus. After two chapters arguing that a "God-human in his divine-human unity" is the subject of description in the Synoptics, Paul, Hebrews, and John, and not an eternal Logos, McCormack argues, drawing on Barth, that the eternal Son is always disposed

2. This is how McCormack describes "instrumentalization." Orthodox patristic theologians like John Damascene and Thomas Aquinas after him do not think that the man Jesus Christ is an instrument; that was Nestorius's language. They think that Christ's human nature was the instrument of his divinity, which is a different claim. On this ancient doctrine see my article "The Flesh of the Logos, *Instrumentum divinitatis*: Retrieving an Ancient Christological Doctrine", *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 23, no. 3 (2021): 313-332.

for a relation of ontological receptivity (253). The Son has an "eternal determination" for incarnation, so that he makes himself ontologically receptive to the man Jesus of Nazareth's act of being (252). The Logos takes "all that Jesus did and experienced…up into his own life" (258). This receptivity grounds the realistic predication of human predicates to the eternal Son that we've been looking for.

IF THE INCARNATION TERMINATES IN A "HYPOSTASIS" COMPOSED OF THE LOGOS AND THE MAN JESUS, THEN HOW DOES MCCORMACK THINK ABOUT THE CONCEPT OF "HYPOSTATIC UNION"?

If the incarnation terminates in a "hypostasis" composed of the Logos and the man Jesus, then how does McCormack think about the concept of "hypostatic union"? On his view, "hypostatic union" and "hypostasis" are neutral metaphysical terms, unlike "nature" and "substance." Hypostasis refers to a concrete existent. It is like the term "existence", which is not a predicate that adds a feature to a thing, and thus it is metaphysically neutral (255). McCormack still thinks "hypostasis" belongs to the language of classical metaphysics he is concerned to reject everywhere else, but he thinks we can keep this term precisely because of this neutrality (see 282). "Nature" and "substance", however, must be rejected.

What should Reformed catholics make of this proposal, especially those of us who think that the coherence of our faith with the faith of the ancient Church is not only highly desirable but indispensable? McCormack has no time for Reformed catholics, "who are often more 'catholic' than the Catholics" (273). We treat conciliar creeds and definitions as "irreformable" (293), and anyone who does that has forsaken Protestant identity. I object to this claim about Reformed theological identity that really proceeds without an argument. I think that there is a good Reformed argument for the irreformability of the teaching on God and Christ of the seven ecumenical councils, but I'll leave that aside for now.

For the sake of argument, however, suppose that we reject the Chalcedonian Definition and compare McCormack's proposal to the grammar of Scripture alone. For McCormack, two options are in play: (1) we can hold that the eternal Logos becomes incarnate, or (2) the man Jesus is united to the Logos so that the Logos exists in an ontologically receptive relation with him. But if we go with McCormack's proposal, (2), then we are faced with a problem of coherence with the way the Bible speaks about Christ. Scripture regularly predicates divine things of the human being Jesus. For example, Paul says that the man Jesus is "God, blessed forever" (Rom. 9:5). It also assigns human predicates, including actions and sufferings, to God. In a standard example in the tradition, "the Lord of glory was crucified" (1 Cor. 2:8).

Scripture insists in these sentences that the Logos and the man Jesus are really one and the same person: the same subject receives divine and human predicates. I suggest that this biblical way of speaking is one reason that the Church's teaching on Christ at Chalcedon went the way it did. With Cyril, the Council Fathers at Chalcedon profess faith in "one and the same Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son."[3] "One and the same" is Cyril's language, and it is language of numerical identity: subject *a* is one and the same as subject *b* if and only if subject *a* is identical to subject *b*. In this statement, Chalcedon equates Jesus and the Logos: they are the same person. It also distinguishes the two natures, or kinds, in which this person exists, and this distinction is "never abolished" in Christ.

It is this biblical way of speaking that Cyril and Chalcedon try to unpack that McCormack's proposal cannot explain. If the hypostatic union consists in the

3. Council of Chalcedon, "Definition of Faith", in Henrich Denzinger, *Enchiridion symbolorum definitionum et declarationum de rebus fidei et morum*, ed. Peter Hünermann (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2012), §302.

eternal Son's receptive relation to the man Jesus, then we do not have one hypostasis, or concrete existence, but two: we can count Jesus and the Logos. This account of the union cannot underlie the predication of human attributes to the Logos, or divine attributes to Jesus, as Scripture does. It would make no sense to say that "the Lord of glory was crucified"; we would be limited to saying "the man Jesus is crucified." The Logos may be affected by Jesus's death, but the Logos is not the subject of that death.

And it will not do to say, as McCormack does, that the "God-human in his divine human unity" is the subject of this death. He claims that the "God-human" is one complex hypostasis composed of Jesus and the Logos (282). He regularly speaks of a distinct Jesus from the eternal Logos after the union. At a basic level, however, this violates the law of identity: two hypostases can't be a single hypostasis. And when there are two "things," we can't apply the predicates of one subject to another one. But as we saw, Scripture does just this; therefore, the Logos and Jesus must be the same person.

Reformed catholics will do better to go with the wisdom of the ancient Church and say that the subject of the incarnation is God himself, the eternal Son, the Logos: "The Word (*logos*) became flesh and dwelled among us" (John 1:14). The solution to the problems in this book is a long and steady training in the refined language of the tradition, especially the distinction of concrete and abstract terms (how language for persons and natures work) as well as reduplicative propositions as they appear in medieval theologians like Aquinas.[4] These refined ways of speaking about the incarnation go back to the ancient teaching of the Church which is, I would suggest, firmly rooted in Scripture. The coherence of our speech about Christ with Scripture is really what we need to seek in the end; it is a shame, therefore, that this book cannot offer us what we need.

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4. See my article "Tools for Interpreting Christ's Saving Mysteries in Scripture: Aquinas on Reduplicative Propositions in Christology", *Scottish Journal of Theology* 73 (2020): 285-94.

BOOKS AND ARTS

Rediscovering Political Friendship: An Incredibly Poorly Timed Book

COLIN REDEMER

Had you fallen into a Rip-Van-Winkle-esque sleep about 20 years ago only to wake up now, what, of all the vast swaths of change which progress hath wrought, would most surprise you about America? The ubiquitous screens everyone taps? The lack of troops in countries invaded in response to terrorist attacks which, as you'd gone to sleep, were fresh in your mind? Or maybe it would be some bespoke developments in the boudoir...

I suspect the answer is none of the above. Rather, the greatest shock would be the ways in which what was a relatively unified country, with a shared story of its past and shared aspirations for its future, has descended into a cold but real civil war. Yet here we are. It is in the midst of this situation that Paul W. Ludwig has published his book *Rediscovering Political Friendship: Aristotle's Theory and Modern Identity, Community, and Equality* by Cambridge University Press. As the title suggests, the book is an attempt to deploy Aristotle's thought as something of a cure to the perceived ills of contemporary liberalism, populism, nationalism and other "isms" that have supposedly caused so much division (and broken friendship) in twenty-first century America. We could call it an attempt by one scholar to do the best of things in the worst of times–but, given everything, I'd not fault a reader for calling it hopelessly optimistic.

Regardless of the context in which it finds itself, Ludwig's book is admirable for doing two things which are both difficult and rare. First, he makes clear a distinction which is too often glossed over by readers of Aristotle: there is a significant difference between friendship proper and the subset of friendship that is called "civic friendship". In Aristotle's work, civic friendship is discussed briefly in the *Ethics* and then developed and expanded upon in the *Politics*. Neither, however, treats it exhaustively—one must put the two together to learn that civic friendship is a particular

type of what Aristotle calls the "friendship of usefulness"; it is a useful friendship based on shared sentiments about the regime in which two people dwell and rooted in the task of figuring out how to continue dwelling there. Ludwig's book helpfully highlights Aristotle's distinction, and treats readers to hard-won insights arising from it, such as how friendship is related to a settling down from anger, and how it contains a seriousness modulated by our thumotic tendencies.[1]

Ludwig's second admirable achievement is that he puts ancient texts in cogent conversation with modern—which is to say, liberal—thought. This, too, is harder than it seems, for to do it well an author must conjure forth the spirits of philosophers long dead and have them converse with modern men. Only this way can the great conversation continue on to its end. Ludwig proves a trustworthy conjurer; he has a grasp of Aristotle, and knows whom to put him in conversation with among the moderns in order to produce a fruitful dialogue. A reader who persists is treated to a conversation so wide ranging few will be able to keep up with it all, even though all will be edified by parts. For example, readers will witness a plausible vision of the outlines of modern identity politics in Aristotle, made possible by sharing in a reading of Aristotle's theory of recognition with Charles Taylor and Hegel.

Yet despite these positives, there is one criticism I have of the book: Ludwig writes scared. And indeed he should be—these are dangerous times, and he handles some dangerous topics. But his fear shows in the stark contrast between how he writes about theory in the abstract and how he writes about civic friendship as practiced in our tense political moment. On the theoretical level, his thinking is close, daring even, as the subject matter ranges far and wide. But on the practical level, the level in which we act and in which civic friendship is profoundly needed, he is apologetic and plainly selective about what he will meditate on or even approach. He writes with circumspection (which is not, of course, a vice in itself). Such silences are potentially more telling than text and are not to be missed, particularly given the subject matter of the work. Ludwig may be more aware of the tenuous nature of our current civic life than he lets on. Therein may lie a further lesson for attentive readers who are, by nature, also trustworthy and not cruel.

And yet, having said this, the conversation developed here by Ludwig succeeds on one level *because* he is selective. In limiting himself to a discussion of Aristotle's civic friendship, he allows for the ancients' conversation with the low, but stable, foundations of modernity to carry on.

In setting the arbitrary limitation of focusing the ancient perspective of the book on Aristotle's concept of *civic* friendship, Ludwig shows up to the fight with a hand tied behind his back. Aristotle knew politics must serve some end beyond itself; he knew there were bigger intellectual fish to fry and he went about spending a very great deal of time frying them. And perhaps most significantly, avoiding conversation about the possible need for a higher end prevents us from reading Aristotle closely enough to ask whether, in the end, Aristotle believed himself. If the low but apparently stable foundations of our modern age are not, in fact, stable from the start, then even employing The Philosopher as a new cornerstone may not save them. Civic friendship is only a part of Aristotle's philosophy. As is the regime. But Aristotle was not trying to merely theorize a way to keep a regime stable; he was a man in full, reaching out to know, and not to know the part but the whole. He knew anything short of attaining that whole would be a tragic, if perhaps human, end, for himself and for mankind. Let us hope that a scholar of the learning and profundity of Paul W. Ludwig follows the example set by Aristotle in his next book–which I eagerly await.

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1. It is disputable whether Ludwig is correct that this means philia is *not* also a desire. (49-50)

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