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Wordtrade Reviews: Writing the Holy Word

Contents

Editorial Appraisals:

Some qualified reviewers offer their own brief evaluation of the book. Otherwise, most of our content represents the authors'-editors' own words as a preview to their approach to the subject, their style and point-of-view. <>

KARL BARTH: SPIRITUAL WRITINGS edited by Ashley Cocksworth , W. Travis McMaken, Foreword by George Hunsinger [Classics of Western Spirituality, Paulist Press, 9780809106547]

For Karl Barth, all dogmatic work is spiritual. Thus, like Aquinas and other renowned theologians, Barth did not write an independent spiritual theology, but integrated spirituality into his dogmatic work. Nevertheless, specific texts within Barth's corpus are dedicated to spiritual matters and they form the basis of the material in this volume. The selections draw widely from Barth's commentary on Romans, Church Dogmatics, sermons, lectures, speeches, seminars, and his own prayer life. They illumine for researchers, students, and the general reader the distinctiveness of Barth's theology of Christian spirituality and the important contribution he makes to the wider traditions of Christian spirituality. To augment the primary sources, this volume also contains an introductory essay that comments on the selection of texts, sets Barth in his historical context, charts the development of his thought, and indicates the significance of spirituality to his theology (including drawing out the distinctively christological shape of his spiritual theology). Each of the subsequent four sections will contain briefer introductions and a contextualizing introduction for each source.

This volume includes an introductory essay that comments on the selection of texts, sets Barth in his historical context, charts the development of his thought, and indicates the significance of spirituality to his theology.

Review

"The work of Karl Barth has never been regarded as a resource of first resort for those interested in writings on spirituality. Yet as the editors of this volume abundantly demonstrate, to fail to consider the spiritual riches present in his corpus of work is to miss out on a wonderful vision of the Christian life. For Barth, the pilgrim journey of the believer is called to be Word centred, Spirit empowered, prayer driven, and world focused, a life in covenant partnership with God. In light of the inspiring texts so judiciously curated and gathered here, it will simply no longer be possible to think of Barth as anything other than a deeply spiritual writer." —Paul T. Nimmo, King's Chair of Systematic Theology, University of Aberdeen

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Foreword by George Hunsinger

Not only in Earth's sermons, where one would expect it, but in the Dogmatics as well, there are countless passages that breathe the most positive kind of affirmation of the goodness and wonder and power of God's overwhelming love. —Robert McAfee Brown

If I may be permitted to begin on a personal note, let me say that I prefer to read theologians who preach sermons as opposed to those who do not. Theologians who preach on a regular basis tend to stay closer in their writings to the biblical text and to the life of the church. As they reflect on Christian doctrine, they are less likely to introduce alien norms or to become caught up in lofty abstractions, though of course there are exceptions to this rule. At the same time, theologians who have served in the pastorate also tend to be persons of prayer. When it comes to the master theologian of the twentieth century, Karl Barth, who started out in the pastorate and who never studied for a doctorate, three things were always essential: prayer, preaching, and Scripture. Throughout his life they formed a threefold cord that was not easily broken.

As is clear from the last volumes of his sermons, which were delivered in the Basel prison and feature in this volume, preaching and prayer are inseparable for Barth in a particular way. He never allows his sermons to stand alone. Each one is accompanied by an opening prayer and a closing prayer, and both are substantial. They are as carefully crafted as the sermon itself. Although the words of the sermon are the human words of the preacher, Barth is convinced that preaching is in vain unless the voice that comes through them is the living voice of Christ. Faithful preaching can take place only in communion with him, and under his lordship. That is why the prayer is no less essential to the task of preaching than the sermon itself.

Earth's spirituality is a Word-oriented spirituality. Barth is convinced that God does not come to us, nor do we come to God, except through the mediation of Christ, who is the Word of God made flesh. The incarnate Word, crucified and risen, does not encounter us today apart from the secondary means of Scripture and proclamation. Christ's spiritual presence to us is always dependent, whether directly or indirectly, on the Word of God as attested in Holy Scripture and proclaimed in Christian witness. Here Barth agrees with Luther: "The soul can do without anything except the Word of God, and where the Word of God is missing there is no help at all for the soul." For Barth, the soul in itself has no access to God. The threefold Word—incarnate, written, and proclaimed—is essential to our spiritual well-being, because it is the appointed means by which God encounters us and claims us for himself.

Spirituality for Barth (a word he does not often use) is not a strenuous matter of "ascending" and "transcending" the allurements of this world. Nor is it a matter of introspection, asceticism, and self-mortification. Nor does it involve a mystical dispensing with concepts, images, signs, and words. The soul as such, whether created or fallen, offers no point of contact with God. For Barth, the road to spirituality runs, as it were, not through the soul (whether aided or unaided), but through the ear. The Word of God is Wholly Other, beyond anything we can think or imagine. This Word is entirely at God's disposal. We apprehend it not by our best efforts but by the humble ear. The ear is the receptive organ, the spiritual faculty, the divinely ordained sense for acknowledging the miracle of grace that breaks in from above. For Barth, as for Luther and Calvin, the sovereignty of the Word, in Scripture and proclamation, finds its counterpart in the sovereignty of the ear. Spirituality always means that we walk by faith—not by peak experiences or by sight. Faith in Christ comes not through arcane practices but through attentive listening. Fides ex auditu.

According to the Barmen Declaration, as written mainly by Barth, "Jesus Christ, as he is attested for us in Holy Scripture, is the one Word of God whom we have to hear and whom we have to trust and obey in life and in death:' The incarnate Christ is therefore the place where God encounters us—where God

gives himself to be heard and seen—or not at all. In a critical comment on Augustine's mystical ascent with his mother as recounted famously in Book 9 of his Confessions, Barth wrote,

> If we really soar up into these heights, and really reduce all concepts, images, words and signs to silence, and really think we can enter into the pure transcendence of God, it simply means that we wilfully hurry past God, who descends in his revelation into this world of ours. Instead of finding him where he himself has sought us—namely, in his objectivity—we seek him where he is not to be found, since he on his side seeks us in his Word. (CD II/1, 11; rev.)

The reality of our spiritual life, for Barth, stands or falls with God's prior self-revelation. In revealing himself God presents himself to us concretely in an earthly medium. He is thereby objectively present to us in a double sense. In his Word he presents himself as an object to be perceived by us. And by his Holy Spirit he makes us accessible to himself, capable of knowing and worshiping him as the triune God that he is. Real human spirituality is concerned with the revelation of this triune God—as given from the Father through the Son and in the Spirit. It knows this God not only in his intimate relationship with us, but also in his abiding distinction from us. Barth separates himself from all practices that see spirituality as the union of humanity with God, but that do not sufficiently understand it as based on a knowledge of God that is objective and revealed. The ascetic spirituality of mystical ascent and peak experiences, Barth fears, tends to blur the distinction between the knower and the known (CD II/1, 12).

In short, Word and Spirit are inseparable for Barth, with the priority belonging to the Word. It is only by means of the Word—and not without it or beyond it—that we are conformed to the image of God's Son (Rom 8:29). Reformational spirituality, as received and renewed by Barth, is that of an ever greater immersion, by the individual and by the community, in Scripture. The index volume to Earth's dogmatics, with its hundreds upon hundreds of biblical references, is a testimony to his idea of spirituality, because for him spirituality is nothing if not grounded in the life-long grappling with Scripture. Its essence is captured in the famous prayer: "Blessed Lord, who caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning: Grant us so to hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which you have given us in our Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever." This important volume, which gathers and arranges texts from across Earth's entire work, serves to highlight the Word-oriented spirituality that he taught and practiced throughout his life.

Dogmatics as Spirituality: Karl Barth's Spiritual Writings

Karl Barth was born in Basel in 1886 and died in his hometown in 1968. Widely heralded as one of the most influential Protestant theologians of the twentieth century, on many matters the reputation of this Swiss Reformed theologian precedes him. Earth's impact on the development of modern theology is commensurate with the immensity of his theological output. The Church Dogmatics alone stands unfinished at thirteen part-volumes and spans over nine thousand pages—twice as long as Thomas Aquinas's Summa Theologise and many times the length of John Calvin's Institutes. Then there is at least as much again in the form of occasional books, lectures, biblical commentary, sermons, confirmation addresses, seminars, papers, and letters published in the Gesamtausgabe (Collected Works)—much of which has been translated into English and some of which are major works in their own right, such as his commentaries on Paul's letter to the Romans and the lectures he gave on the occasion of his retirement from the University of Basel.

While Barth is known for many things, he is rarely recognized for his spiritual writings. His contributions in the area of Christian spirituality remain largely unexamined in the secondary commentary his theology continues to attract. However, in a set of essays marking the centenary of Earth's birth, Stephen Sykes posed the "strange thought that we might, in the long run, be able to treat this formidable Calvinist dogmatician as a spiritual writer." The aim of this volume, and the readings it collates and curates, is to make the idea of Barth as spiritual writer seem a little less strange.

That it might still seem strange to read this formidable dogmatician as a spiritual writer is a state of affairs largely of Earth's own making. Barth has a curious ambivalence toward the topic of spirituality, with many of the issues and questions inherent to the spiritual traditions—especially those concerning spiritual experience, sensation, and interiority—failing to grab much of his attention. Even a cursory reading of his writings reveals that the word spirituality is not much part of his theological lexicon. In fact, no single entry on spirituality appears in the index of the English translation of the Church Dogmatics. Barth showed little interest in providing a distinct treatment of spirituality. Nor is it in his nature to make clear to his reader when he is actually speaking of the theme. Instead, Earth's engagement with the theme of spirituality has something of a "capillary" quality to it. It is tightly woven into his dogmatics, permeating his theology and reaching into all sorts of doctrinal topics and practical issues. As a result, spirituality is everywhere and nowhere in Barth's writings.

It is not only the lack of explicit engagement with the theme of spirituality that makes it unusual to treat Barth as a spiritual writer. It is also because when he uses the word, he usually does so only to critique it. Earth's greatest fear was that a concentration on the spiritual life would put the Christian on a slippery slope to the "subjectivism" against which he spent his life rallying. His anxieties with the term spirituality run deep into the structure of his theological sensibility. Indeed, they are bound up with some of the critiques that defined his life's work: his worry that the primacy of religious experience would lead down a cul-de-sac of the worst sorts of interiority he detected in Schleiermacher and German Pietism; his nervousness around the works righteousness that he felt some branches of the spiritual traditions encourage; and his hostility toward an unguarded "mysticism" that he felt flew in the face of that most Barthian of concerns—the primacy of grace.' It is not unusual when reading Earth's theology to find a general concept of spirituality getting caught in the crossfire of these and other critiques.

Although Earth's critiques rarely land squarely enough to gain a clear sense of exactly what it is about spirituality that he finds so problematic, there are a few occasions when he provides more focused critique of certain strands of the Christian spiritual traditions. For example, in his writings on human freedom undertaken as part of the ethics of creation, he scathingly and swiftly rejects the Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius of Loyola as performing "a useful function as a means of psychical hygiene," but having "nothing whatever to do with the prayer required of us" (CD III/4, 97). Whatever spiritual practice might mean, Barth insists it "begins where this kind of exercise leaves off" (CD III/4, 98). Sometime later, in the final fragments of the ethics of reconciliation, Barth substantiates these misgivings by locating them within a broader critique of works righteousness.

> From this standpoint, the art of liturgical worship, ordered and shaped by historical models and aesthetic ideals, although it has again come to be highly rated today, is an enterprise that is by no means free from suspicion. The same applies to a systematically constructed theory and practice of individual spiritual formation along the lines of the Exercises of Ignatius as these are

> still followed today both in and beyond Roman Catholic circles. The good that there might be in such attempts—and who is so bold as to rule out at once the possibility of good?—can perhaps be claimed as good from the Christian standpoint only in spite of their character as techniques, not because of it. Perspicacious friends of Christian liturgy and mysticism (including the so-called "little" Theresa of Lisieux) have not usually concealed this either from themselves or others. Spiritual life...begins at the very point where spiritual skill ends. (ChrL, 79)

Even this still heavy-handed rejection of an important strand of the Christian spiritual tradition is not typical of his engagement with the theme of spirituality more generally. By and large, the canonical figures of Christian spirituality do not appear on Earth's theological radar. He makes short shrift of figures such as Meister Eckhart, the author of The Cloud of Unknowing, Therese de Lisieux, Thomas a Kempis, John of the Cross, and Teresa of Avila. He might reference someone like Ignatius of Loyola, but he attaches little dogmatic importance to such names. He might approvingly cite Bernard of Clairvaux's mysticism, but only so far as he saw him as a precursor of his beloved Calvin (see CD III/4, 59). When Barth turns his attention to these figures, his engagement is rarely, if ever, undertaken with anything like the depth, sophistication, and textual attentiveness that characterizes his interaction with other figures within the Christian tradition with whom he disagreed.

One reason for Earth's lack of interest in the spiritual lives and writings of these figures has to do with his Christology. If Barth is known for one thing, it is the role Christology plays across his theological thinking; and spirituality is no exception to this christological rule. The objective basis for his theology of spirituality is union with Christ—it undergirds his notion of Christ the true pray-er, his dogmatic handling of sanctification, his epistemology, his doctrine of participation, and much else.' Indeed, as Adam Neder notices, when speaking of union with Christ, Barth is not opposed to "describing this union, this dying and rising with Christ, as mystical." So Barth: "The passivity and even death of man in face of the divine act, undoubtably mean that a mystical vocabulary has already appeared. We should not object to it, for this vocabulary can hardly be avoided at this point" (CD I/2, 222). However, while Barth might on occasion borrow from mystical theology in this way, ultimately his conception of the spiritual life is grounded in the life of Jesus Christ. To put it crudely, Barth leaves the impression that he does not need the saints because he has Christ. Above all else, it is the life, teaching, and ongoing ministry of Jesus Christ that provides the content of spirituality. As David F. Ford explains, "The spirituality of the Church Dogmatics is therefore mainly an exposition of ways in which Christian life should correspond to Jesus Christ's history."

Christology brings both distinctiveness and vulnerability to Earth's take on spirituality, however. Some of Earth's critics have found in his writings an unnecessarily constricted christocentrism that when applied to spirituality prevents his account of the Christian life from being adequately shaped by events and histories post Christum, such as the lives of the individual saints. In the following quotation, we meet Barth responding to the charge of "christological constriction" in dialogue with Hans Urs von Balthasar, for whom the lives of the canonized dead were a unique source of theological and spiritual inspiration.

> Balthasar himself has written a small series of other notable books, on Theresa of Lisieux, Elisabeth of Dijon and Reinhold Schneider. And if I understand aright their theological content, it seems plain to me that he too (like Bultmann, but with infinitely richer material) sees... a whole field of possible and actual representations of the history of Jesus Christ, the repetitions or reenactments of His being and activity by the saints or by those who achieve some measure of sanctity. And as the author sees and represents them these have taken place and do take place

> in history post Christum and in our own time with such significance, such positive and stimulating force, that the One whose being and activity is supposedly reproduced obviously fades into the background as compared with His saints. I now have an inkling of something which at first I could not understand: what is meant by the "christological constriction" which my expositor and critic urged against me in terms of mild rebuke. But we must bring against him the counter-question, whether in all the spiritual splendor of the saints who are supposed to represent and repeat Him Jesus Christ has not ceased—not in theory but in practice—to be the object and origin of Christian faith....If so, it unfortunately means that this promising new beginning in Roman Catholic theology is in danger of returning to, or it may be has never left, the well-worn track on which the doctrine of justification is absorbed into that of sanctification—understood as the pious work of self-sanctification which man can undertake and accomplish in his own strength. (CD IV/1, 768)

Beyond the lack of engagement with canonical sources, a further reason for the strangeness of Sykes's proposal to read Barth as a "spiritual writer" is that Barth is clearly not writing in an explicitly spiritual register. Now and again, he cites liturgical sources such as hymns and draws from the rich well of Calvin's spiritual writings. But it is generally unusual to find Barth attempting the kind of explicit integration of doxology and theology found in some of his contemporaries, such as Balthasar, Adrienne von Speyr, Thomas Merton, and Karl Rahner. Despite all Barth learned from a figure such as Anselm of Canterbury, he chose not to imitate the dialogical style of the Proslogion. Reading Barth's Church Dogmatics is not, then, like reading Augustine's Confessions in the way Augustine deliberately moves in and out of explicit praise to God. And, for that matter, it does not feel much like reading the Institutes in the way Calvin includes long passages of devotional language alongside his doctrinal prose and explicitly positions his work as a pursuit of piety. The literary intentions of the Institutes, Calvin famously explained in the preface to the 1536 edition, were "solely to transmit certain rudiments by which those who are touched with any zeal for religion might be shaped to true godliness."

Another difference between Earth's writings and more obviously spiritual writings is that Barth expends much energy trying to write himself out of the Church Dogmatics in an urgent effort to achieve the objectivity he feels is incumbent upon the theologian to speak properly of God. Barth's primary concern was never to integrate his own experience, spiritual or otherwise, into his theological writings in the way, say, Merton (who died on the same day as Barth) sought intentionally and explicitly to narrate his own experience of God precisely through his writing. Barth saw himself as too sternly an objective thinker for that. Because of this, it is difficult, if not impossible, to extract from the Church Dogmatics much of a sense of the particular practices that shaped Earth's own spiritual life. Had it not been abandoned almost immediately, the autobiography he set out to write in 1966 might have gone some way to fill in the gaps left by his formal dogmatic writing in our understanding of the actual shape of Barth's spiritual life. And while the autobiographical fragments posthumously collated from letters, publications, and other writings reveal so much about Earth's everyday life and work, they give away little about his spiritual practice.

From the fragments we have we know that Barth never "risked" extemporary prayer in public worship and that he only very cautiously published some of the countless prayers he wrote for formal worship. We know that Barth considered himself to be a better preacher than leader of worship. And we can assume that Earth's spiritual life was constantly in via, always changing as it played catch up, as it were, with the shifts and changes in his theology. A good example of this is the mellowing of his critique of more Roman Catholic forms of spiritual practice that occurred around the same time that his critiques

of more formal aspects of Catholic dogmatics began to soften, embracing even the Ave Maria during one spell in a hospital. From Busch's account of Barth's death, we also know that Nelly, his wife, found Barth "as though asleep, with his hands gently folded from his evening prayers;' suggesting that daily prayer was part of his everyday spiritual life. Indeed, as reticent as Barth was to disclose much of his personal religious experience, it is scarcely in doubt that this man prayed: he prayed in the evening, he prayed before and after preaching, he prayed before lectures, he prayed before meals, he even prayed for the pope. Prayer is the single most important aspect of his spiritual life and of his vocation as a Christian theologian, as we shall see. Over the course of his life, Barth came to understand prayer as not simply a thing that is done, but the thing through which all things are done. Prayer is the "underlying note and basis of all human activity" (CD 111/4, 89). Extending the meaning of prayer in this way places Barth in a long tradition of Christian spirituality that can be summarized by what Bonaventure calls the "broadest sense" of prayer, which means "every good deed." In this sense, there is nothing remarkable about prayer. It is an entirely ordinary activity requiring no skill or expertise. Yet, in another sense, Earth's theology of spirituality suggests that in this most ordinary of Christian activities the pray-er participates in nothing less than the prayer of the praying Son. "Jesus Christ is properly and really the One who prays" (CD III/4, 94).

For Barth, prayer also went hand in hand with preaching. Following his ordination in the cathedral of Berne in 1908, Barth spent the years immediately following his university education in ordained ministry, first in Geneva and then in the small town of Safenwil for ten years from 1911. As Barth's time was taken up almost entirely with pastoral work (especially relief work with the poor), it is very likely that the principal means through which Barth worked out his spirituality was through his preaching ministry. Barth understood preaching to be a primary means of spiritual formation for both the congregation and the preacher.

The scene of his deathbed, narrated by Busch, reveals another aspect of Barth's everyday spirituality. On the morning of December 10, 1968, Nelly discovered Barth "with a record.. .playing the Mozart with which she had wanted to waken him" Barth's love of Mozart is well documented. But the practice of listening to the music of Mozart at the beginning of the day can be interpreted as more than a pastime: it was probably the closest Barth came to a sort of contemplative rhythm to the day.

These scattered examples hardly amount to a complete picture of Barth's own spiritual life. However, as strange as it sounded to Sykes a century after Barth was born, and despite Barth not explicitly writing a Christian spirituality or disclosing much about his personal spiritual life, there remains in Barth's writings a distinctive contribution to the traditions of Christian spirituality. Barth was too much of a church theologian, too deeply immersed in the practices of the church, to do away with the category of spirituality altogether. In his address to the World Student Christian Federation in Strasbourg in 1960, Barth readily admits that "there is such a thing as Christian spiritual life," which "is a life in action in which man serves the purpose of God." Here we start to gain a sense of the positive shape of Barth's account of the spiritual life. First, the Christian spiritual life, if it is to count for anything, has to do with the active life—it is "a life in action." Second, spirituality has to do with God, in which "man serves the purpose of God" These features should be held in mind as we now take Sykes at his word and think about what it would mean to "treat this formidable Calvinist dogmatician as a spiritual writer." <>

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS AND THE BEATITUDES: BIBLICAL STUDIES AND ETHICS FOR REAL LIFE by Yiu Sing Lúcás Chan, Foreword by Daniel J. Harrington, S.J., and James F. Keenan, S.J. [A Sheed & Ward Book, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 9781442215535]

The Ten Commandments and the Beatitudes are often considered significant texts for the Christian moral life. However, most interpretations of these passages either focus on the original meaning of the text or how the texts should impact ordinary living today.

In **THE TEN COMMANDMENTS AND THE BEATITUDES** Yiu Sing Lúcás Chan brings together biblical studies and Christian ethics to look at these foundational texts in a new way. For each passage Chan asks both what the texts meant and what they mean today. He helps readers to carefully study the text's original meaning, then interpret the text within a sound ethical framework.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS AND THE BEATITUDES is an excellent introduction to key concepts in biblical studies and Christian ethics that combines sound study with warmth and wisdom.

Review

Chan, a Jesuit from Hong Kong, seeks to bring together biblical studies and Christian ethics through the vehicle of Christian virtue ethics, and illustrates his approach with reference to the Ten Commandments and the Beatitudes. After an eleven-page prologue, Chan develops his schema for bridging biblical studies and Christian ethics. Then through the lens of virtue ethics, he examines each of the Ten Commandments according to Exod 20:2-17, and each of the Beatitudes in Mt 5:3-12. For each of the Commandments and the Beatitudes, he starts with the original meaning of the text and explores its significance for contemporary Christian moral living through a hermeneutics of virtue ethics. At the end of the book he discusses the possible reception of the core Christian virtues of the Ten Commandments and the Beatitudes for Confucian society out of his conviction that interfaith or cross-cultural ethics begins with very specific texts and needs to be both text-based and interpretive. J. F. Keenan and D. J. Harrington have provided a three-page foreword. — *New Testament Abstracts*

This is an important contribution to Catholic and Christian ethics that works to bridge the key sources of Scripture and systematic ethical reflection. Too often scholars either explore the biblical perspectives on ethics alone or take a more philosophical approach to ethics, but not the two together. Chan, who is on the faculty of Trinity College in Dublin, focuses on two key biblical texts that have had enormous influence on Christian ethics—the Decalogue and the Beatitudes. He probes these biblical sources through the lens of "virtue" ethics, an approach to ethical reflection that has to come to the forefront in recent years. This approach does not focus just on identifying moral principles but also considers the issues of character formation, Christian practices, and habits of virtue. Chan wants not only to bring sound biblical exegesis to these key biblical texts but to consider their practical meaning for an ethical Christian life. — *The Bible Today*

In **THE TEN COMMANDMENTS AND THE BEATITUDES: BIBLICAL STUDIES AND ETHICS FOR REAL LIFE**, Yiu Sing Lúcás Chan, a Jesuit from Hong Kong who trained at Boston College, seeks to build bridges between the two disciplines with the help of Christian virtue ethics. The key questions of virtue ethics are, Who am I? What is my goal? and How do I achieve that goal? Done in the Christian key, we are children of God in search of eternal happiness with God through Christ. The cultivation of the appropriate virtues, attitudes and dispositions is the major task of Christian virtue ethics. — *America: The Jesuit Review of Faith & Culture*

The work is thoroughly an outcome of a scholarly work. The effort that the author has rendered to bring out such an excellent work is praiseworthy. . . . The work is a landmark to bridge the gap between biblical studies and moral theology. The work will be really an asset to the scriptural based ethics. — *Bible Bhashyam: An Indian Biblical Quarterly*

In this fine study Yiu Sing Lúcás Chan focuses on the Decalogue and the Beatitudes as formative of virtuous community and character. It makes a significant contribution to the important conversation about the relation of Scripture and Christian Ethics not only because these Biblical passages surely count among the most important and influential biblical passages for Christian Ethics but also because of its innovative use of the virtue tradition as the mode of exposition. Moreover, the epilogue comparing his exposition to the Confucian tradition is a brief but important contribution to comparative ethics. It's a good book, and I welcome it. -- Allen Verhey, Duke Divinity School

Lucas Chan skillfully brings together biblical exegesis and ethical theory in this excellent book. He is a bridge builder across cultures, east and west, and confessional differences, Catholic and Protestant. Yet the truly masterful achievement of Chan's work is the ability to cross over and back between biblical scholars and moral theologians to develop a biblical ethic that is insightful and wise. -- Kenneth R. Himes, OFM, Boston College

Lúcás Chan combines responsible exegesis with sophisticated ethical theory in a way that is all too rare in studies of biblical ethics. Rooted in Catholic tradition, he draws on Calvin as well as Aquinas and even interacts with Confucianism. This is a stimulating and important contribution to the study of biblical values. -- John J. Collins, Holmes Professor of Old Testament, Yale University

This book constitutes a major step forward in the blending of biblical studies and ethics. Moreover, it brings together scholarly research, wisdom, and practical insights for our daily lives. It offers treasures for any reader seeking paths for moral and spiritual growth. -- Margaret A. Farley, Gilbert L. Stark Professor of Christian Ethics, Yale University Divinity School

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One of the most widely quoted directives from the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965) was the hope that Catholic moral theology "should draw more fully on the teaching of Holy Scripture" (Optatam totius 16). We believe that the work of our former student and friend, Yiu Sing Lúcás Chan, represents a milestone toward the fulfillment of that hope. He has immersed himself both in the best of modern biblical scholarship relevant to ethics and in the virtue ethics approach to Christian moral theology. And he has applied his method concretely to two of the most important texts in the Christian Bible. Of course, Chan's **THE TEN COMMANDMENTS AND THE BEATITUDES: BIBLICAL STUDIES AND ETHICS FOR REAL LIFE** is very ecumenical in its indebtedness and engagement of Protestant biblical theologians and theological ethicists, and rightly so. The Catholic participation in the field of biblical ethics is a fairly recent development. In fact, one could say that Catholic involvement in this scholarship began nearly one hundred years ago almost to the day.

The story was told ten years ago on the occasion of the one hundredth anniversary of the Pontifical Biblical Commission, by then Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger. It states that on June 29, 1912, a Vatican congregation issued a decree condemning a claim by a biblical theologian, Friedrich Wilhelm Maier, who had written an essay on the synoptic gospels in which he sustained the so-called two-source theory. The

essay appeared in a commentary edited by Fritz Tillmann, a successful and influential biblical theologian who had written three biblical studies dealing with Jesus's own self-understanding and his future coming.

The decree ordered that the commentary be banned and that both Maier and Tillmann be forbidden to work ever again as biblical theologians. They were, however, given the option of changing theological disciplines: Maier became a prison chaplain, Tillmann a moral theologian.

Tillmann's first book in theological ethics appeared seven years later; it was on the community in the preaching of Jesus. His most significant academic achievement was published in 1934 on the notion of the disciple of Christ. The book was a tremendous success: the concept of discipleship in Catholic theological ethics was completely new and it was quickly appropriated. In 1937 he published a more accessible text for laypeople, Die Meister Ruft. This work had an even greater impact on theological discourse. It used the triple love command and developed a virtue-based ethics for living out the biblical charge to love God, self, and neighbor. In 1961, the book was translated into English: The Master Calls.

A second Catholic breakthrough into biblically based theological ethics happened about thirty years ago when the theological ethicist William C. Spohn penned a very popular handbook: What Are They Saying about Scripture and Ethics? (1984). It highlighted how more and more theologians applied biblical scholarship to practical living.

In his study, Spohn noticed that theologians were working with different presuppositions, ^ and so he articulated six different models that outlined these different approaches to applying the Bible to ordinary ethical life. The first was the robust Protestant Divine Command, reminiscent of the work of Karl Barth and Dietrich Bonhoeffer, while the second was a barely relevant Scripture as a reminder, which reflected Karl Rahner's and Bruno Schüller's use of the Bible. The third was the fairly recent liberationist approach, made famous by Gustavo Gutiérrez and appropriated by feminists like Letty Russell and Phyllis Trible. The fourth was a response to God's revelation that focused, as H. Richard Niebuhr did, on what God does in the world. Ironically, the fifth, a call to discipleship, made no reference to Tillmann but reflected on the initiatives of Stanley Hauerwas, Sallie McFague, and John Howard Yoder. The last one captured Spohn's own preference, a Gospel response to love and an ordering of the affections.

Spohn's lack of familiarity with Tillmann is noteworthy, since Tillmann brought together the last two models, discipleship and love, by using the virtues. This omission becomes even more interesting when considering that Spohn put the two together in his own remarkable book, Go and Do Likewise: Jesus and Ethics (1999). There Spohn argues that virtue ethics is the most promising interpretive key for receiving the Scriptures, hearing the call of discipleship, and living out the love command.

Spohn's initiatives led to other developments—notably, a greater frequency of teaching collaboration between biblical theologians and theological ethicists. Practicing what he preached, Spohn taught a biblical ethics course with the exegete John Donahue. Similarly, we began teaching together, arguing the need for the two competencies of biblical exegesis and ethical interpretation, while agreeing to rely on virtue ethics as the appropriate hermeneutics of interpretation. In one of those courses, Yiu Sing Lúcás Chan agreed to be our teaching assistant.

Chan's book, we think, marks the third major breakthrough by a Catholic contributor to the field of biblical ethics. Chan takes the work of Spohn and Donahue, together with ours, and makes it normative. But he also weaves in the proposal by the Protestant theologian Allen Verhey, a trained exegete and

ethicist, who frames these claims throughout his writings arguing that the work of blending exegesis and ethical interpretation is something of a performance.

What makes Chan's work so foundational is its two achievements. First, despite the claims of Spohn, Donahue, and Verhey, the majority of people writing in biblical ethics ignore the twofold tasks: in most instances, ethicists do not do exegesis when they attempt biblical ethics, and Scripture scholars have little or no hermeneutics to their ethical application. Each side assumes or ignores the competency that they lack. Chan raises these scholars up and demonstrates that without exegesis and ethical interpretation, these scholars' works fall quite short of the true demands of biblical ethics. His work is thus a manifesto for the double competencies of a biblically based ethics.

Second, he not only makes the argument, he also performs it! By linking the Ten Commandments with the Beatitudes, Chan takes the most fundamental ethical texts of each Testament and subjects them to the same analytic method. Inasmuch as the Decalogue embodies the norms for moral action in light of our created nature and the Beatitudes embody those traits for disciples in the light of Jesus Christ, Chan provides us with a fairly comprehensive "performance" of the moral expectations of the Christian Scriptures.

In these hundred years since the condemnation of Maier and Tillmann, we have come a long way. Now, as we begin the next centenary of our work, Yiu Sing Lúcás Chan provides us with a foundation as well as a tangible exposé of what we need as we go forward in our study of the Scriptures and in our application of those texts for an ethics of real life. —Daniel J. Harrington, S.J. and James F. Keenan, S.J.

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For centuries the use of Scripture1 in Christian ethics has differentiated Protestants from Catholics. The Reformers turned to Scripture as the primary source of moralwisdom; Catholics reiterated, instead, their dependency on tradition. The Second Vatican Council, however, admonished Catholic moral theologians to turn to Scripture: "Special care should be given to the perfecting of moral theology. Its scientific presentation should draw more fully on the teaching of Holy Scripture."

In the second half of the twentieth century, the Roman Catholic Church began to catch up. Given that Catholic ethics now turns favorably to the Bible for its sources, where should we turn concretely in the Bible for moral guidance? What specific scriptural texts are foundational to our Christian moral living nowadays?

Within the Catholic tradition, the 1993 encyclical on the Christian moral life, Veritatis Splendor, established the Decalogue and the Sermon on the Mount as the two pillars of Christian morality: the former is central to every other precept, while the latter is "the magna carta of Gospel morality" (##12, 13, 15). Eberhard Schockenhoff adopts these claims of the encyclical and turns to these two texts for his own argument on the relevance of natural law as a methodological approach in theological ethics.

The most recent document from the Vatican's Pontifical Biblical Commission, The Bible and Morality: Biblical Roots of Christian Conduct, aims to situate Christian morality in the larger context of biblical morality and shows how the Bible provides criteria for moral progress. It again specifies the Decalogue in Exodus 20:2–17 and the Beatitudes in Matthew 5:3–12 in the Sermon on the Mount as the two biblical texts that best illustrate the fundamental criteria for judging moral actions. They are convinced

that these two texts are the characteristic expressions of biblical morality found in the Hebrew Bible5 and the New Testament, respectively; they add that the latter radicalizes the values promoted by the former.

While welcoming their claims, I note that there are other important reasons for turning to these two specific texts for moral guidance.

The Ten Commandments

Without any doubt, one of the Bible's most widely known texts is the Ten Commandments. Surveys show that most movie viewers in North America would associate the phrase "Ten Commandments" with Cecil DeMille's 1956 classic of the same name. Across the world, Polish director Krzysztof Kiešlowski's Decalogue of the mid-1980s has drawn even greater attention. Many film critics and moral theologians alike comment that the success of the series "has also aroused a new interest in the Ten Commandments.

Apart from its familiarity in the contemporary Western world, the text has actually been known to other cultures for many centuries already. For example, the first Roman Catholic catechism published in China, [Catholic Doctrine], written by the Italian Jesuit missionary Mateo Ricci in the early seventeenth century, attends to the Ten Commandments. The efforts of Jesuit missionaries coupled with the moral chaos of that period (the late Ming and early Qing dynasties) helped make the Decalogue known and needed by Chinese society.

The Ten Commandments not only enjoy global popularity and familiarity, they also have a special place in most societies. In the contemporary United States, for instance, the Decalogue is sometimes perceived as a "cultural icon."

Still, the Ten Commandments occupy an even more significant place throughout the history of Judaism and Christianity. In the first place, the Decalogue has a unique character among all the Hebrew Scriptures: it is the only law in the Torah (the first five books of the Hebrew Bible) that seems to be the direct address of YHWH to the people and was kept in the Ark of the Covenant. It is separated from the rest of the law and does not prescribe any concrete penalties as other laws do. The text is repeated twice, and parallels can be found elsewhere in the Torah. Moreover, the terse form of the text encourages memorization and calls for appropriation.

This call for appropriation leads into a second point concerning the Decalogue's religious and moral significance for Judaism. According to the Mishnah (the first written Rabbinic redaction of the oral traditions), the Decalogue was read with the Shema (Deuteronomy 6:4–9) in the temple during worship. Later, the people of Israel celebrated the "feast of Giving the Torah" in which they renewed the oath to keep the Ten Commandments. Additionally, the first-century Jewish philosopher Philo of Alexandria claimed that all of the laws are simply detailed elaborations of the Decalogue. Indeed, the Ten Commandments played a special role in the moral life of the law-binding ancient Jewish people by claiming a superior status among other mitzvot (biblical laws/commandments).

For various reasons, the Decalogue lost its uniqueness and moral significance in subsequent generations. Nonetheless, many pious Jews to this day include the Ten Commandments in their morning prayer.

The Decalogue has become a crucial part in the life of Christians for many centuries, particularly in catechetical instruction and guiding moral living. As early as the second century, the Decalogue was employed in catechetical work along with excerpts from the Sermon on the Mount to form a code of ethics. The early Church Fathers like Tertullian perceived the Decalogue as a kind of universal moral law for all humankind.

During the Middle Ages, Thomas Aquinas compiled a lengthy collection of his catechetical instructions on the Decalogue. The fifteenth-century Catholic theologian Jeande Charlier de Gerson also named the Ten Commandments "the rock of Christian Ethics." On the eve of and during the Reformation period, the Decalogue replaced the seven deadly sins (and the penitential manuals) to become the mostimportant instrument for moral teaching. Martin Luther andJohn Calvin made the Ten Commandments the foundation of their moral instruction. Among Catholics the Council of Trent similarly incorporated into itscatechism the Decalogue as the core basis of moral instruction.

In modern times, the Ten Commandments were inscribed on the walls of the apse in many nineteenth-century Episcopal churches as a reminder of God's exhortation to the congregation. They were to be read once a month during the prayer service in these churches.

Contemporary Christian theology similarly privileges the Decalogue. For example, the Catechism of the Catholic Church dedicates more than half of the entire morals section to the Ten Commandments (CCC ##2052–2557). It states clearly that "the Ten Commandments have occupied a predominant place in the catechesis of baptismal candidates and the faithful" (CCC #2065). Within the discipline of biblical studies, many point out that the above-mentioned unique characters of the Decalogue add weight to its significance as a moral foundation in general and in the study of biblical ethics in particular. The Decalogue is "a comprehensive framework and ground for the ethics of the Old Testament or indeed of the Bible as a whole." The Pontifical Biblical Commission similarly claims that the Ten Commandments possess a foundational character on both the literary and theological levels that best serves to illustrate the conformity of moral reflection with the Bible. On the part of Christian ethicists, some even stress that "the recovery of the commandments is crucial for our survival as a people called Christian in the face of today's challenges."

The Beatitudes

The Beatitudes likewise enjoys popularity, although more so within Christian traditions than without. This popularity derives from its being a part of the Sermon on the Mount, the first of the great Matthean discourses, and a compilation of a series of Jesus's sayings arranged topically and edited by the Evangelist. Matthew 5–7 has been "continually the subject of re-interpretation by Christians throughout the ages ... [and] one can even speak of a 'history of interpretation' of the Sermon." Hans Dieter Betz even claims that neither a complete history of interpretation nor a complete bibliography on Matthew 5–7 is possible. Daniel Harrington, in a similar way, comments that this history of interpretation of the Sermon is a miniature history of Christianity.

The Beatitudes is "historically the best-known and most-valued portion of the Sermon." Many theologians have produced their own commentaries on the text: Gregory of Nyssa in thefourth century interpreted the eight beatitudes as "stages in the ascent of the soul ... constituting the steps of the mystical ladder." Later, John Chrysostom understood the text (and the overall Sermon on the Mount) "as the foundational speech . .. that constitutes the life of all Christians" and provides the building blocks

for a life of virtue. Among the scholastics, Aquinas also perceived it as "the touchstone of Christ's teaching in the Sermon on the Mount," just as the Decalogue contains "the essence of the moral precepts of the Mosaic Law."

Such interest in the Beatitudes is not limited to the theologians of the past, though. Many modern Christian theologians, from Richard Niebuhr to Bernard Häring, from liberationist to feminist theologians, and from Catholic to Protestant scholars, have either employed the text in their writings or actually examined the teaching of the text.

The popularity of and interest in this text points to another reason for choosing the Beatitudes—that is, the importance of Matthew 5:3–12 in contemporary Christian theology. For example, Häring is convinced that the Christian life is in essence a manifestation of the Beatitudes and thus invites readers to meditate and reflect on the personal and social implications of the text. Indeed, more and more theologians turn to the Beatitudes for inspiration in writings related to Christian spirituality.

Still, as in the case of the Decalogue, the Beatitudes plays a very significant role in the field of theological ethics (and in virtue ethics in particular). Servais Pinckaers argued that the Beatitudes is relevant to our contemporary Christian moral life at both personal and social levels, for it reads like "a summary of human life crossed with questions and contradictions." One writer adds that the Beatitudes makes us attentive to those human problems, invites us to find meanings in them, reminds us that our human conditions are full of God's promise, and thus affirms our deepest longing for such promise. Susan Parsons further notes that in recent years many theological ethicists are interested in seeing "how [the Sermon] might come alive once more in teaching the discipline of Christian ethics."

Moreover, the Beatitudes is a source for discussion of the Christian virtues demanded by Jesus Christ. It clearly extols eight corresponding virtues for the Christian moral life. Even the Pontifical Biblical Commission specifically stresses the fundamental dispositions and virtues found in the Beatitudes and states that a faithful Christian life is one that is animated by these virtues.

In the area of biblical studies, Ulrich Luz claims that the Sermon provides "[a] guiding principle by which that community is to measure its own works." The Beatitudes is therefore written for and spoken to the people of God in the twenty-first century as well. Indeed, Matthew 5:3–12 is important to the quest for the meaning of the kingdom of God, which is the presupposition of our entire Christian life. Besides, the contemporary and growing use of social-historical criticism within the discipline of biblical studies confirms that the Beatitudes(and the Sermon on the Mount as a whole) is concerned about notonlytheindividualmoralR&Llifebutalsotherelevanceofcommunities of discipleship as well as the claims of social justice.

The third and final reason for underscoring the Beatitudes is a cross-cultural one. There is a growing literature in studying and comparing the Beatitudes with counterparts found in other religions such as Hinduism, Islam, and Buddhism, especially in the area of moral virtues. While a comparison between the Beatitudes and Confucianism is lacking, the whole concept of "blessed" and "happiness" in Matthew 5:3–12 is closely related to the understanding of "prosperity" within the Confucian society. Also, Confucian ethics is more and more widely accepted as a virtue-based ethics. These characteristics could be a platform for engaging such cross-cultural dialogue between Christianity and Confucianism, a point that I develop at the end of this book.

Approach and Structure of the Book

By and large, the reasons above ought to convince us to take these two biblical texts as primary texts for engaging the Bible and morality. However, what are the moral teachings of these two texts, and how can we interpret their meanings for contemporary moral living?

Unfortunately, neither the major Christian figures of the past nor the Pontifical Biblical Commission nor those who are engaged in biblical ethics have offered us a satisfactory presentation of the interpretation of the texts for contemporary ethical living. Either we find an exegetical treatment of the texts (exegesis is the critical study of the original meaning of the text) or we get an ethical application or interpretation of them, but we rarely get both. Similarly, biblical theologians do not use much ethical framework, while theological ethicists do little actual exegesis. Even those recent attempts to better bridge Scripture with Christian ethics have stressed either the importance of the scriptural text or the importance of ethical hermeneutics (hermeneutics is the interpretation of the text in order to determine its meaning for today), but not both.

Insofar as methodology is concerned, however, there is an emerging consensus among contemporary scholars to bridge the gap between biblical studies and moral theology. This emerging consensus has two aspects. The first is the view that the tasks of exegesis and interpretation are almost inseparable in the area of Scripture and ethics. I find Allen Verhey's insight on Scripture being a "scripted script" very helpful in portraying and understanding this aspect. On the one hand, this text has been written (what Verhey calls "scripted") in a particular time by a particular writer. As such, it needs to be exegeted. On the other hand, it is a "script" to be performed by an actor, and the performance itself becomes the interpretation of it. As such, it needs to be interpreted. Scripture as a "scripted script" thus highlights the reality that the two tasks are tightly related, and one cannot engage in one task without the other at the same time.

This view leads to a subsequent and second aspect: the growing collaboration between biblical scholars and theological ethicists in doing Scripture based ethics, especially in terms of writing and teaching. For instance, the late ethicist William Spohn team-taught with Scripture scholar John Donahue; more recently, ethicist James Keenan has been teaching (and writing) with biblical theologian Daniel Harrington.

This consensus points to my methodological claim that one needs to take the Bible seriously by careful exegesis and to build its findings upon a sound ethical framework or hermeneutics. It is only by first acquiring a more accurate understanding of the original meaning of the text that one can obtain a more complete and consistent interpretation of the text for today. As a Christian theological ethicist, I further propose that the hermeneutics of virtue ethics is a very worthy method. Why? First, in the past few decades, virtue ethics began to resurge and become a prominent alternative to principle-based ethics. It departs from principle-based ethics in that it deals with the character of individuals and their communities, and the practices that develop those characteristics and in turn express them.34 Second, in terms of the narratives and the overall ends of Scripture themselves, virtue ethics, above other alternatives, is the most congruent and the most able to bear the weight of interpretation. Third, as Spohn explained, it is a matter of necessity—it is simply not possible to explore Christian moral life without its being built upon some form of moral philosophy.

Subsequently, in Part I, I discuss this two-step schema in bridging biblical studies and Christian ethics. Chapter 1 looks at this emerging consensus. Chapter 2 offers a contemporary understanding of the hermeneutics of virtue ethics, with special attention to the goods of virtue—namely, (1) practices and habits, (2) dispositions and character, (3) exemplars, and (4) community and communal identity. I conclude by reflecting on the relevance of virtue in reading Scripture.

In Part II, I employ this schema to treat the Decalogue. There are two versions of the Ten Commandments in the Hebrew Bible—namely, the accounts in Exodus 20:2–17 and Deuteronomy 5:6–21. Here I focus on the Exodus account, although the Deuteronomy account will be cross-referenced when necessary. The reason for choosing Exodus 20:2–17 is based on the view that, as will be discussed later, the Exodus account comes from an older source than that of the Deuteronomy edition. Moreover, the redactor of Exodus describes the Sinai event in a direct, first-person manner, while the Deuteronomy account is presented by its redactor as a recounting of the event. Readers, Christians and non-Christians alike, tend to relate to the Exodus account whenever the Ten Commandments are mentioned. It is a matter of familiarity.

For each of the commandments, I exegete them and, through a hermeneutics of virtue ethics, interpret them for contemporary Christian moral living. Subsequently, each of the chapters on the commandments contains two major parts, starting with the original meaning of the scriptural text.

Before doing so, I begin with a look at how the Decalogue as a whole was interpreted throughout history by major Christian thinkers as well as by some contemporary writers. After this review, I attend to certain critical exegetical issues of the text, like the numbering of the Ten Commandments by different traditions.

In doing hermeneutics, I do not simply propose corresponding virtue(s) for each of the commandments, but rather examine the virtuous life in light of the foundational questions of virtue ethics: Who are we? Who ought we to become? And finally, how do we get there? My answers to these three questions form the second half of each chapter. Therefore, to the first question, I reflect upon our own self-understanding within the larger society. The second question guides us to understand the concrete meaning and content of each proposed virtue in terms of moral formation. In other words, what does it mean to be a particular kind of virtuous person in light of each of the commandments? The last question leads us to explore the practices of these virtues, as well as to identify certain moral exemplars (predominantly) within the Christian tradition, beginning with Jesus, who is the exemplar par excellence. By practicing the virtuous acts and by imitating these models, we can partially achieve the goal of becoming a virtuous person. In sum, I develop a moral character that is in line with each and all of the Ten Commandments.

Throughout, I reflect upon the social and communal dimension of each virtue, for two reasons. First, the discussion of the goods of virtue indicates that there is a communal aspect in the virtuous life. By interpreting the commandments through the hermeneutics of virtue ethics, we realize that the author invites us to be a particular virtuous faith community. Second, the Decalogue itself has a social characteristic: it addresses the entire Israelite community and conveys the terms for right relationship to God and toward others. It points to the social dimension of its ethical implications.

It is important to note that I am not simply proposing certain human virtues but particularly religious virtues: the scriptural text is concerned in the first place with our being among the people of God.

In Part III, I treat the Beatitudes in Matthew 5:3–12 in the same manner. Here, the social characteristic of the Beatitudes is equally present: by perceiving the overall Sermon as a kingdom ethics that describes right relationship with God and with others, one may argue that the social dimension of the Beatitudes' ethical implications is implied in the broader meaning of discipleship—there is "a continuing social meaning of the inclusive call to discipleship and of merciful action."36 Moreover, discipleship goes beyond social citizenship, for "the community is invited to enter into a deeper kind of social relationship that is based on social justice and the priority of the poor."

Finally, a caveat: although I am writing as a Catholic theological ethicist and at times I turn to certain Catholic documents for insights, this book is ecumenical in orientation and is primarily written from the vantage point of theological ethics.

Moreover, I am from Hong Kong, a place deeply affected by Confucianism. Confucianism, like many major religions and traditions, goes to the texts in its search of ethical teachings—that is, its ethics is primarily the fruit of careful interpretation of its sacred texts. Throughout this book, in bridging biblical studies and Christian ethics, and in arguing for greater attentiveness on the part of the ethicists to scriptural texts, I am sure that my own Confucian background prompts me in this direction.

For this reason, at the end of the book I will discuss the possible reception of the core Christian virtues of the Ten Commandments and the Beatitudes by Confucian society. However, my discussion will be necessarily succinct: a detailed treatment will demand a separate book. Still, I am convinced that even a brief comparative exercise like this one not only demonstrates the possibility of interfaith and cross-cultural studies but also invites biblical scholars and theological ethicists to go beyond their own interdisciplinary studies. For doing interfaith or cross-cultural ethics begins not with analogous generalities but with very specific texts, and it needs to be both text based and interpretative.

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Renowned Confucian scholar Tu Wei-ming rightly claims that the relevance and impact of the Confucian tradition continues to be felt (though not fully) in many aspects of society in East Asia. I believe, however, that one reason why the tradition's relevance could be felt worldwide is because there is a certain affinity between Christian and Confucian virtues. Rather than make that case here, I shall simply reflect on the Ten Commandments and the Beatitudes to demonstrate that the two fundamental biblical texts for Christian morality actually highlight some of the same moral traits that Confucianism does. By way of concluding my work, then, I will name and describe parallel virtues promoted by texts of the Confucian tradition, especially classical writings of Confucius, Mencius, and Xunzi—the Analects (A), the Great Learning (GL), the Doctrine of the Mean (DM), the book of Mencius (M), and the writings of Xunzi.

Virtue Ethics as a Significant Component of Confucian Ethics

The ultimate goal of Confucian morality (and self-cultivation) is to form a union with the community as well as with Heaven and Earth (DM 22). Here the distinctiveness of Confucian ethics consists in two related aspects, namely, tao ("the Way") and te ("virtue"). The Way functions as a governing perspective and reference point for conforming one's moral life to the will of Heaven. One ethicist thus

perceives tao as a moral vision and the form of virtues. Te is commonly understood as "a kind of moral character trait which is obtained from oneself ... in the xing ('human nature') as a result of personal cultivation."

Those who focus on the te aspect of Confucian morality would certainly argue that virtue ethics is the implicit foundation behind Confucian ethics. First, Confucian literature states clearly that ethical education depends on the exemplification of the virtues (GL 1). It also bequeaths a large and complex virtue-related ethical vocabulary (e.g., A 9:29). Second, self-cultivation is an end in itself and results in the attainment of the cardinal virtue of jen ("humanity/benevolence"). Third, Confucian ethics also considers the four important goods of virtue, which are practices and habits, character and dispositions, exemplars, and communal identity. Fourth, Confucians stress certain key virtues as the ancient philosophers did, like jen, yi ("righteousness"), and li S ("ritual propriety").

As a whole, although Western philosophy and Confucianism may disagree on certain issues regarding virtue, I believe that it is appropriate to approach Confucian ethics from the perspective of virtue ethics, at least on the "thin" level.

Confucian Reception of The Virtues of The Decalogue

In this section I follow the outline of the Decalogue and offer ten teachings from Confucian ethics that highlight evident similarities to the Decalogue.

Revering (jing) Heaven

For Confucians, Heaven (tien) is understood as a source for self-transformation and at times functions as "a religious authority or absolute often theistic in its portrayal." The basic attitude toward tien is respect and fear (A 3:12; 16:8). Confucius suggested that living a virtuous life is the best prayer to Heaven and other deities (A 7:35). Moreover, we need to trust in Heaven, which alone understands us completely (A 14:35).

In A Discussion of Rites, Xunzi claimed that tien, being the basis of life, is the proper object in the practice of ritual propriety. Sincere generosity, reverent formality, and respectful reverence are therefore the proper attitude in performing rites. However, Confucian ritual does not view Heaven as a person or establish any personal relationship with it.

Respecting Heaven's Holiness

Confucius made it clear that the best way to respect gods is to give them reverence and yet keep a distance from them (e.g., A 6:22). Still, on a few occasions Confucius called upon and swore to Heaven and even expressed his deep emotions to it as Jesus did during his Passion and death on the cross (A 6:28; 11:9; cf. Matthew 26:39; 27:46). Xunzi, on the other hand, stressed that what makes Heaven different from us is its holiness. Based on this distinction, he taught that we should not attempt to interfere or compete with Heaven's work, to "play God," or to curse Heaven. Rather, we simply obey what Heaven dictates.

Treasuring the Sacred Temporal Space

The attitudes of Confucian figures toward rites reflect a certain similarity with Christian aspects of treasuring the sacred temporal space. First, Confucius acknowledged that all that we have depends on Heaven (e.g., A 12:5). Ceremonies and sacrificial rites are wonderful ways to express our gratitude to

Heaven, provided that they are done qualitatively and sincerely (A 3:4, 17). Second, for Xunzi rites are means of providing satisfaction to our senses and hence bring us joy. They are in accordance with the Way, and hence we should take appropriate time to carry them out. Third, rituals allow us to express emotions and care for others just as Christian works of mercy do. Finally, regular celebrations and rites by the community are beneficial.

Filial Piety (xiao)

Filial piety toward parents is probably the most well-known Confucian virtue in the West.10 The rationale for xiao is that parents are the immediate root of our lives. Xiao grounds the growth of the Way and cultivates our character (A 1:2; DM 20:7). The Analects illustrates the characteristics of filial piety, some of which are similar to our earlier exposition of the fourth commandment. It calls for adult children (2:5) to follow the rules of propriety with reverence and respect (2:7), to maintain attentiveness toward parents and solidarity with them and their feelings and emotions (4:21), to meet them with eagerness and joy (2:8), to offer them readiness and availability (2:6; 4:19), and to exercise gentleness and patience when correcting their mistakes (4:18). Finally, xiao continues even after one's parents have died (e.g., 1:11).

Mencius, from a different perspective, highlighted what is unfilial, such as "the neglect of parents through laziness . . . through indulgence in games ... and fondness for drinking" (M 4B:30). Among them, having no heir is the most serious failure (M 4A:26).

Respect for Life

Mencius claimed that human life is an important (but not an absolute) good (M 6A:10). Like Confucius, he also brought up the issues of war, killing, the death penalty (e.g., A 12:19; M 7B:4; 1B:7–8), and, specifically, the two aspects of the virtue of respect for life. Confucius was very aware of anger, hatred, and jealousy and hence taught that chün tzu (the gentleman) would learn to refrain from revenge even toward unrighteousness (DM 10:3). Xunzi further pointed out that hatred would lead us to obsession of the mind. Nonetheless, Confucius insisted that avoiding aggressiveness and resentment alone does not make a person jen; rather, we need to do good as well (A 14:1). This points to the promotion of the well-being of others: we should teach others, with respect and without negligence, to stand on their own feet just as we wish the same for ourselves (A 6:30; GL 10:16).

Reciprocity (shu)

Like other ancient societies, the Chinese perceived marriage as foundational to the building of an ordered society. Specifically, as an androcentric society, they expected the wife to obey her husband and acquire specific virtues in relation to her actions, speech, appearance, and skills. Thus, Mencius emphasized the living out of one's marriage according to those prescribed distinctions and reciprocal functions between husband and wife (M 3A:4). He also seemed to suggest that obedience is the basic virtue for married women (M 3B:2). Nevertheless, Mencius's emphasis on the distinction between husband and wife needs to be understood through the Confucian idea of mutual responsibility between two parties in a relationship and through the virtue of reciprocity that is actually the Golden Rule (A 15:24).

For Xunzi, marital relationships, like other human relationships, must be guided by the virtue of ritual propriety. It is by means of li that all our (sexual) desires are trained and satisfied.

Valuing the Property and Liberty of Others

Poverty was a pervasive reality during Confucius's time, and slavery and theft were prevalent (A 12:18). Surprisingly, none of the three thinkers talked about respect for others' property or liberty much, even though their emphasis on righteousness would seem to fit. Nevertheless, Confucius perceived stealing as a result of our disordered desires, especially those found in the leadership (A 12:18). Coveting and the actual act of stealing are thus inseparable. Mencius, on the other hand, employed stealing as an analogy to express his view on unrighteous actions (M 3B:8). Xunzi further suggested that li helps us cultivate the virtue of respect for others' property and liberty by taming the desire to take possession of what belongs to others.

Valuing the Reputation and Dignity of Others

In the Analects 13:18, Confucius said that it is justified for father and son to cover up each other's crimes. This controversial text gives the impression that he values one's reputation or familial relationship more than truthfulness and justice. Some defend Confucius, saying that he was concerned about familial responsibilities by asking whether giving evidence against one's own father/son is a sensible thing for a son/father to do in the first place. For Confucius, who definitely had an appreciation for a sense of justice, "legal justice is considered secondary to parental loyalty."

Elsewhere Confucius advised that we should speak cautiously and with sincerity (A 4:24; 16:10). When he claimed that chün tzu would encourage and help others realize their own goods, Confucius implied the use of good words by the gentleman as well (A 12:16).

Appropriate Interaction with Women

Confucius has long been charged with misogyny and sexism for his famous saying that "the women and the small men ... are difficult to deal with" (A 17:25). However, it is argued that Confucius was only making reference to concubines or female servants. He was simply complaining about "their ignorance of appropriate forms of social interaction" that are required by the society. Confucius also never implied that women could not achieve self-cultivation. Moreover, the oppression of women was actually influenced by other traditions. Therefore, the least we can say is that Confucian thinkers were not per se sexists nor did they perceive women as objects of lust.

Contentment and Simplicity

Confucius hinted that coveting is a characteristic of the "small man," who in contrast to chün tzu seeks fulfillment of appetite and comfort, desires material goods, and is preoccupied with profit (e.g., A 4:16). Xunzi alone explicitly discussed human desires. He insisted that desires lead one to obsession and delude our mind. They need to be tamed and satisfied by means of rites.

Regarding contentment, Confucius is revered for living it truthfully: he said that being able to regularly try out what has been learned or being visited by a friend who comes from afar is already a delight and a source of contentment (A 1:1). A lifestyle as simple as eating coarse rice and drinking plain water can equally bring contentment and joy (e.g., A 7:16).

Confucian Reception of The Virtues of The Beatitudes

Here I would like to highlight a congruency between the virtues outlined under the Christian beatitudes and Confucian ethics. As in the previous section, I will follow the set order of the eight beatitudes in Matthew.

Humility

The Doctrine of the Mean is often seen as an excellent commentary on the virtue of humility (e.g., 13:4).15 It portrays the humble person as one who "in a quiet and modest manner ... goes about the great task of self-realization." In the Analects, we find other texts that advocate the cultivation of humility (e.g., 6:15). Moreover, Xunzi's formulation of filial piety highlights a significant aspect of humility: xiao is the proper response toward one's parents, who make fullness of life possible. Filial piety thus attends to one's origin. It reveals and expresses one's fundamental stance of dependency toward the origin of one's life, towhom one can never fully repay the debt incurred. One thus hasto humble oneself before one's origin.

Solidarity

We find in the Analects a few narratives of mourning, such as Confucius's grief over the deathof his beloved disciple (11:9, 10). Here Confucius called for empathy with thesufferer (7:9). Mencius also commented that sensitivity and compassion toward the sufferer is an innate response of humankind (M 2A:6). Xunzi, on the other hand, claimed that mourning has a multilevel, sociocommunal, and practical purpose: it accommodates the emotions involved and extends the honor due, distinguishes the duties owed to different related people, and represents the ultimate principle of harmony and unity within a community.

Finally, although chün tzu alone fully understands the mystery of suffering and accepts it willingly, it is still the moral responsibility of each person to accompany and help others understand and ease their suffering.

Meekness

Confucius and Mencius talked about how the inferior and the superior should cultivate gentleness proper to their status. Regarding the poor and the oppressed, there exists a strong inclination toward anger and vengeance; they have difficulty in refraining from revenge toward unrighteousness (A 14:10; DM 10:3). Confucius thus not only talked about meekness but also lived it out—being benign, upright, courteous, temperate, and complaisant (A 1:10). He understood such a person would accept what happened to him without anger or revenge (A 6:3).

For the powerful and the rich, Confucius commented that it is not enough for them not to be arrogant (A 1:15). Rather, they should imitate chün tzu, who shows forbearance and gentleness in teaching those who are inferior (DM 10:3). Mencius, by commending the virtuous acts of sage King Shun, likewise pointed out that meekness is a virtue of the benevolent and the powerful (M 5A:3).

Obedience to and Discernment of the Mandate of Heaven

Confucian thinkers acknowledged the existence of the Mandate of Heaven and conceived it as a moral imperative, a specific personal mission, and an abiding commitment and responsibility.19 Confucius thus warned against disobeying the Mandate of Heaven (A 3:13). Instead, one must take time and effort to know and understand it (A 2:4; 20:3).

Mencius's view on one's response to the Mandate of Heaven was comparable to the Western understanding ofthe discernment of spirits: the acceptance of one's destiny should be conditional. One needs to discern carefully and only accept what is proper to one's destiny, which means following the Way alone (M 7A:2).

Curiously, Confucius did not believe that one should strive for something that is unattainable.

Benevolence (jen) and Kindness (en)

Jen, as a specific virtue of benevolence, is often compared to the Christian virtue of charity (M 7B:1).21 For Mencius, benevolence comes from human nature: it emerges from the heart of compassion and reaches out to the natural world (e.g., 2A:6, 1A:7). It is practiced differently according to the status of its objects, for instance, family members (7A:45).

With en the texts point to mercy and compassion to the least advantaged people in the society who are deprived of even the most basic human relationships (1B:5). Therefore, it is an important virtue of the leader and, like righteousness, is a guiding principle in government (e.g., 1A:1; 3A:3). Consequently, Mencius strongly advocated for a benevolent government that commits itself to the welfare of its people (e.g., 7A:14).

Loyalty/Conscientiousness (chung)

Chung renders a virtue close to that of integrity: it refers to one's action being loyal to one's own heart and conscience. Confucius was aware of the lack of integrity in many common people and hence compared them to small and cowardly men (DM 7; A, 17:12). It is thus very important to act in accordance with what one believes and vice versa (e.g., DM 13:4).

Confucius also advocated the examination of the self as Christian spirituality does. In the Analects, we learn that his disciple practiced self-examination frequently (1:4). It is a practice recommended for all. One scholar thus concludes that the entire process of self-cultivation implies the virtue of integrity, for self-cultivation is aimed at "attaining authenticity ... through conscientious study, critical self-examination, continual effort, and a willingness to change oneself."

Peacemaking

Confucius, like the ancient Greek philosophers, was concerned about the establishment of a well-ordered society that is based on good government. He rejected the idea of warfare as an effective means to this end. Rather, he perceived self-cultivation as the means to achieve peace and was convinced that peacemaking should begin with one's inner self (A 14:42, GL 0.4). Mencius further understood waging war and its related behaviors as a grave crime that should be punished (M 4A:14; 7B:4). Instead, one should acquire the virtues of benevolence and righteousness to achieve peace (M 7B:4). Xunzi again stressed that li is crucial for establishing order and peace. However, he did not reject the possibility of war for the sake of righteousness—it is a right thing to do when it is done out of love. In each instance, all three stress self-cultivation as the ground for good order.

Righteousness (yi)

Yi is often translated into righteousness or dutifulness. However, it should not be totally equated with fairness or justice understood in a Western philosophical context. For Confucius, yi is frequently paired up with the vice of excessive concern for profit—to denote fair distribution of wealth and the lack of greed (e.g., A 16:10). It also renders other meanings, such as the importance of doing what is right (DM 20:5). Here, one repays evil with justice (A 14:34). Thus, some scholars liken him with the prophets of the Old Testament.

Mencius similarly argued that profit cannot be the measurement for choosing or determining what is right (M 1A:1). He further connected the virtue of righteousness with the emotions of xiu ("shame") and wu ("dislike") to illustrate the psychological reason for choosing righteousness: one will not allow oneself to be disgraced by committing an unrighteous act (M 2A:6; 6A:6).

Courage (yong)

Confucius named yong as one of the three virtues that express one's inner moral force, and through which one attains the Way (DM 20:8). He also clarified that courage must be accompanied by yi and practiced for the sake of righteousness (A 17:23). Thus, sacrificing one's life for what is right is a courageous act (A 14:12).27 Mencius made a similar claim (M 2A:2), and in his famous analogy of choosing bear's palm over fish when one cannot have both, he further stressed that we should choose righteousness over life (M 6A:10).

In sum, the rigorous views of Confucius and Mencius about upholding righteousness run parallel to the Christian practice of martyrdom. Like the prophets of the Old Testament, they appealed to the authority of Heaven and fearlessly criticized those unrighteous rulers and the prestigious (M 7B:34). Finally, I agree with Lee Yearley that jing , being the appropriate virtue and gratuitous response to Heaven, can be compared to the Christian virtue of gratitude. <>

Writing Tamil Catholicism: Literature, Persuasion and Devotion in the Eighteenth Century by Margherita Trento [Series: Philological Encounters Monographs, Brill, 9789004511613] Open Access

In **Writing Tamil Catholicism: Literature, Persuasion and Devotion in the Eighteenth Century**, Margherita Trento explores the process by which the Jesuit missionary Costanzo Giuseppe Beschi (1680-1747), in collaboration with a group of local lay elites identified by their profession as catechists, chose Tamil poetry as the social and political language of Catholicism in eighteenth-century South India.

Trento analyzes a corpus of Tamil grammars and poems, chiefly Beschi's Tēmpāvaṇi, alongside archival documents to show how, by presenting themselves as poets and intellectuals, Catholic elites gained a persuasive voice as well as entrance into the learned society of the Tamil country and its networks of patronage.

CONTENTS

In the early decades of the eighteenth century, the Jesuit missionary Costanzo Giuseppe Beschi (1680–1747) and his local catechists would often travel the muddy roads of the Kaveri delta to preach and convert in the overwhelmingly Śaiva towns and villages of South India. They spent a good part of the 1730s on such missionary tours, tēcacañcāram or "circumambulations of the land" in Tamil. Once, for instance, they set off from their residence at Ēlākkuṟicci, walked without interruption for two days, and reached Vaittīsvaraṉkōyil, a small but important Śaiva village not far away from the more famous Chidambaram. Exhausted by the long walk, they decided to rest there for the night. While the sun was quickly setting on the horizon, and shadows and candlelight were finally offering some respite from the day's heat, they began to explore the alleys of the village. Almost immediately, Beschi noticed the great number of people flocking to the local temple with sumptuous offerings. Intrigued by their fervor, he approached a group of yogis who were standing separate from the crowd, and asked them about the temple. The yogis explained that it was dedicated to Viṉaitīrttāṉ, a form of Śiva as the remover of afflictions. Anyone plagued by disease, they added, like hunchbacks, the blind, and lame people, could come and pray there, and their ailment would vanish like darkness in front of the sun. Upon hearing their explanation, the missionary smirked, and replied right away with the following verse:

> vātakkālān tamakku maittuṉaṟku nīriḻivām
> pōtapperuvayiṟām puttiraṟku—mātaraiyil
> vantaviṉai tīrkka marunt' aṟiyāṉ vēḷūrāṉ
> entaviṉai tīrttāṉ ivaṉ?
> He himself has elephantiasis in his leg, his brother-in-law has diabetes, his son has a giant pot-belly—in short, Śiva doesn't know the remedy for his own family's diseases. What illness can be cured by someone like that?

With sharp wit, this verse ridicules Śiva's inability to cure the ailments of his own divine family, including Viṣṇu, the brother of his wife Mīnākṣi, and his own son Gaṇeśa. In order for these gods to be immediately recognizable, the negative attributes in the first two lines all have alternative yet simultaneous explanations. The first, vātakkālām, refers to Śiva's elephantiasis, but also describes one "whose leg (kāl) is under dispute ((vi)vātam)," thus bringing to mind the dance competition between Śiva and Kāḷi. On that occasion, the goddess lost because, out of modesty, she could not raise her leg as much as Śiva did. The second epithet refers to Viṣṇu and, besides indicating the diabetes resulting from his excessive love for sweets when in his Kṛṣṇa avatar, it also evokes the myth of the river Ganga (nīr) that originally flowed from his feet during his incarnation as Vāmana. The third attribute refers to Śiva's son Gaṇeśa, and while making fun of his pot (pōtam) belly, could also be saying that his belly is naturally (pōtu) big since his body is partially that of an elephant. The yogis who witnessed Beschi's literary exploit were so impressed by the verse, which displayed knowledge of their mythology as well as mastery over

the most refined literary techniques of Tamil (such as, in this case, sleśa or cilēṭai), that they converted en masse to the new religion he was preaching—or so the story goes.

The events of that evening in Vaittīsvaraṉkōyil encapsulate most of what this book will disentangle and articulate. We encounter there for the first time the actors that will animate the next chapters: Jesuit missionaries and Tamil catechists, Śaiva yogis and lay devotees. The episode alludes to their many entanglements, from the teacher-disciple relationship between Beschi and his collaborators, to the competition between the missionary and the yogis. It further implies a tension between estrangement and familiarity, especially in the role of the catechists vis-à-vis the yogis and lay devotees of Vaittīsvaraṉkōyil. After all, these men shared memories, languages, and sacred geographies long before the arrival of the missionaries. Yet this episode goes beyond the obvious movement of the mission to India, and shifts the focus to clashes and conversations between people, poems, and beliefs that happened on the roads and in the villages of South India. Observing our actors at such small-scale resolution, we find among their main concerns the salvation of bodies and souls, and the movements of spiritual as much as social life. Strikingly, these relationships and preoccupations are articulated in the story through the public performance of a refined Tamil verse.

The questions animating this book are precisely how and why Tamil poetry became at the turn the eighteenth century a language of choice for Catholicism in South India. There was no real Catholic poetry in Tamil before then. It appeared along with a community of readers, the catechists, and immediately afforded Catholics entry into debates, such as the one with the yogis, with all the authority that a good verse could afford. Costanzo Giuseppe Beschi was a central player in this process. With him, Tamil Catholics acquired their first poet-scholar (pulavar) and their first poems, and "Tamil Catholic literary activity got integrated to Tamil literary legacy." Everything about the verse he recited in Vaittīsvaraṉkōyil, from the rigid veṇpā meter to the impromptu recitation, from the polemical tones to the use of complex double entendres, speaks of his being at home in the world of Tamil poetry. Yet, Beschi and other missionaries in South India were rarely alone. Even when they did not have any Jesuit companion, they were surrounded by catechists, disciples, servants, and sometimes even slaves.

This book brings into focus the role of these other men, who were crucial for the life of the mission as much as for the preservation of its memory. We know about Beschi's performance that evening only because he was traveling with his disciples, and they kept the memory of his verse. They passed it on to their own sons and disciples until Muttucāmi Piḷḷai (d. 1840), a Tamil pulavar, a Catholic, and Beschi's first biographer, visited the villages of the Kaveri delta in 1822 and recorded it in writing.9 By then, Beschi had become for Christians in the region a saint and a hero, their own poet, and the champion of Tamil Catholic identity. He was especially important for lay Catholic élites, who from the late eighteenth century onwards often articulated their historical memory and local authority in relationship to his biography and his literary œuvre. Sources on these men, who were close to the missionaries and responsible for much of the social and cultural life of the mission from its inception, are scarce. Yet the contours of their role become clearer precisely in the early eighteenth century, with the emergence of a Catholic literary sphere, and with the controlled transfer of authority from the missionaries to their catechists both in the spiritual and in the literary realm. These are the two specific and related processes I map throughout the chapters of this book.

Genealogies of Tamil Catholicism

The Vaittīsvaraṉkōyil episode is also a window into larger concerns regarding the time, place, and modes through which Catholicism became a local religion in South India. When and how did the religious and literary exchanges we just observed, articulated via the language of Tamil poetry and mythology, first become conceivable? This study will show that, starting from the early eighteenth century, Christians wrote and read Tamil Catholic poetry in order to participate and claim a certain degree of authority in local social, political, and cultural life. In doing so, they brought about the inventio—both the discovery, and the invention—of Catholicism as local and vernacular, in other words, of Tamil Catholicism. This process unfolded in the context of the old Madurai mission, the Jesuit mission to the Tamil hinterland or Tamiḻakam. The mission was founded by Roberto Nobili (1577–1657) in 1606, and gradually suppressed in the mid-eighteenth century in concomitance with the suppression of the Society of Jesus, first in the domains of the Portuguese empire, and then globally in 1773.11 While there had been Christians in the region before this time, from the ancient Syrian Christian communities of Mylapore to the Paravar fishermen converted by Saint Francis Xavier (1506–1552) and other Jesuits on the southern Coromandel coast in the sixteenth century, the Madurai mission was the beginning of a sustained Catholic presence in the Tamil hinterland. It was also one of the great fields of Jesuit accommodation, insofar as missionaries in Madurai strived to adapt Christianity to Tamil social and cultural norms. But was it the beginning of Tamil Catholicism, and if so, how?

Ethnographers and anthropologists have been the first to notice and discuss vernacular Catholicism in Tamil Nadu. Mapping some of its centers, beliefs, and practices, they have brought to light the experiential and ritual worlds shared by Catholics and Hindus across the region. They have also examined the role of caste among Tamil Catholics, and the strategies that a universal religion like Christianity has used to cope with, integrate, and finally also subvert this paradigm of difference. Indeed, ritual and caste were vexatæ quæstiones from the inception of Catholic presence in the subcontinent, and hotly debated in the context of the Madurai mission. So, anthropologists have often pointed to the mission as a foundational moment for Tamil Catholicism, yet they have rarely engaged with the genealogical trajectories leading from the mission to the present. The pioneering work by Susan Bayly has been among the rare attempts to offer an ethno-historical account of Catholicism in South India considering processes of integration and transformation of this religion over the longue durée. However, Bayly's focus has been solely on syncretism, according to which Jesuit missionaries went native, thus allowing converts to freely read and integrate the new religion into preexisting systems of popular beliefs and practices. While local processes of assimilation did happen, the syncretic paradigm does not consider the concerns for orthodoxy and orthopraxis that were so central to the life of Christians and Hindus alike in the eighteenth century, and the many negotiations they required.

Historians studying the early modern Catholic Church and Catholic empires have tried to articulate some of those concerns. They have done so by focusing on accommodation, the strategy of radical social and cultural adaptation that many Jesuit missionaries working in China and India adopted from the sixteenth century onwards. Classical studies on the subject have insisted on the importance of accommodation as an epistemological tool for discerning religious from civil practices within Indian society. This opened up the missionary discourse to a polyphony of voices and cultures, allowing for continuities as opposed to changes. More recent articles by Paolo Aranha have reassessed the radical nature of Jesuit accommodation, reminding us that it always remained a strategy aimed at spiritual

warfare and conquest. Aranha further stressed how the adoption of local customs created confusion and tensions within the Church, resulting in controversies over the degree of accommodation to Tamil social norms that missionaries and their converts could afford without lapsing into paganism. The heart of the matter were caste-based habits, rules, and discrimination. The Church in the eighteenth century, much like anthropologists today, had a hard time deciding whether caste was a religious or civil institution. Still, notwithstanding their different stress on continuity, or change and conflict, these historians have analyzed accommodation as a European discourse, created for a European public, albeit assembled using different pieces of local knowledge.

But how did Tamil people, both local converts and their Hindu friends and neighbors, read and understand Christianity and the mission? What were the languages of Catholicism in South India at this time? These questions remain largely unaddressed. A possible answer lies, I think, in the history of literature produced in the Madurai mission, of its writers and readers, and of the places, times, and institutions where they operated. Catholic texts in Tamil have been studied so far mostly by Indian Christian scholars, eager to utilize them in debates on interreligious dialogue and inculturation, and ultimately to find ways to articulate their own local belonging. These engagements, often in the form of English translations, almost unanimously recognize Beschi as the first Tamil Catholic poet, on par with his Hindu contemporaries. Conversely, scholars of Tamil literature have seen Christian texts as external 'contributions' to Tamil rather than an integral part of its literary world, as suggested in the title of K. Meenakshisundaram's classical study. To this day, Christian literature in Tamil receives little attention, to the point of being almost excluded from the curriculum. Still, histories of Tamil literature cannot ignore Costanzo Giuseppe Beschi. They invariably mention him and his poem Tēmpāvaṇi at least in passing, as a turning point for Christian literature. So, Christian and non-Christian scholars alike agree that Beschi and the early eighteenth-century moment when he was active mark a crucial moment for the connection of Catholicism and Tamil literary culture.

Relying on this intuition, the book addresses the question posed by the present—what exactly is Tamil about Tamil Catholicism?—by taking as its main object of analysis the corpus of eighteenth-century missionary literature in Tamil, mostly by Beschi, and its attendant literary practices such as reading, writing, and grammatical reflection, and also copying, circulating, and preaching. As I will argue more in detail later in the Introduction, this historical moment was the beginning of a Catholic presence in the world of Tamil literature, and in the socio-political reality it articulated. One advantage of focusing on this process is that it avoids reproducing the viewpoint ingrained in accommodation. By making Jesuit accommodation the object of analysis, even when addressing it as a strategy to connect the global and the local, one is always leaning towards the missionary or imperial vision. South India is never the starting point, and always the destination. The focus on the history of Tamil Catholic literature and literary practices redresses the balance in two ways.

First, it posits Tamil, its speakers and readers, writers and listeners, as the cornerstone of reflection. Tamil literature, with its formal rules and the social world it implies and articulates, becomes the immediate context for understanding the activities of missionaries and catechists involved in the process of creating, reading, copying, and circulating Catholic literature in Tamil. From such grounded perspective, this study explores literary texts as contact zones affording a glimpse into relational practices articulated at different levels. Up front, texts create a space of encounter for the different

cultural elements that composed the Madurai mission, the Latin and Italian education of the missionaries/writers, and the aesthetic and moral worlds of their Tamil collaborators. Catholic literary texts, as points of contact and deposits of social relationships, further reveal to a discerning eye the world of social contracts within which they were negotiated.26 The agents involved were the missionaries, their catechists, and their different publics, but also the institutions and individuals who sustained the cultural activities of the mission, and the larger community of pulavars and learned men whose recognition Catholic texts sought to gain. In other words, the texts themselves offer the entry point into a histoire du litteraire, a social history of Catholic literature as integral part of Tamil literary culture in the eighteenth century.

The focus on the history of Tamil Catholic literature further allows for the mapping of social practices of reading connected with this corpus, in the footsteps of Anne Monius' investigation of Buddhist textual communities in Tamil South India. The focus on readership is dictated by the texts themselves. Tamil works written in the context of the Madurai mission are often dialogic in nature, and evoke and invoke their readers and listeners. Moreover, the archives of the mission offer clues as to how social and professional communities in the eighteenth-century, like the catechists, might have used these texts. In some cases, we can even trace individual acts of reading, pointing to the fact that Catholic literature accompanied all the stages of a catechist's life in the eighteenth-century. In addition, acts of reading and trajectories of circulation are sometimes recorded in the paratexts accompanying the manuscripts and printed editions of these texts, as I show at some length in Chapter Six. In reconstructing and giving space to such practices, and including them in the historical narrative, my aim has been to balance the viewpoint of accommodation with the 'tactics and games' of reading, as a creative strategy implying a differential engagement with, and accommodation of, Catholicism to eighteenth-century Tamiḻakam. So, the hermeneutic process mapped in this book is twofold. On the one hand, missionaries interpreted India in order to write Tamil poetry convincing enough to convert its people. On the other hand, Tamilians read Christian literature to understand, reject, or accept Catholicism, make it their own, and imagine how to live a Christian life in their multireligious world.

Microstoria and the Global in the Local

Within the larger framework of the Madurai mission, this study privileges small-scale analysis. It focuses on people and events in a few villages of the Kaveri delta region over three decades, and studies a polemical pamphlet, three spiritual manuals, a grammar, and two poems, in order to map the social and cultural life of the missionaries who wrote these texts and the catechists who read and circulated them. More specifically, the main setting comprises the villages of Ēlākkuṟicci and Āvūr from 1718, when missionaries first organized spiritual retreats for their catechists in those locations, until the early 1740s, when the demise of the local ally of the mission, the Mughal warlord Chanda Sahib, the removal of Beschi from the Madurai mission, and the publication of the papal bull Omnium Sollicitudinum condemning the Malabar Rites all shifted the priorities of the Society of Jesus away from the spiritual and literary training of the catechists. In this short yet critical period of time, Catholic literature entered the Tamil literary sphere, and catechists were its main intended readers. The role of these catechists was institutionalized at this very time as that of spiritual and cultural élites who shared most of the missionaries' tasks, from evangelizing to exorcism, and mediated between the mission and Catholic communities on the ground, which they managed.

This shift happened in peripheral spaces, with little-known actors that should be investigated on their own terms. Before turning to those, though, I should briefly clarify how these topics and concerns relate to emerging fields of inquiry that share a certain inclination towards a global, or rather connected, vision of early modernity. Relying upon the exceptional archives the Society of Jesus collected over the centuries and the efforts of many of its members to write the history of their order, scholars have turned in the last few decades to Jesuit missionaries as important agents in the making of an early modern world. The role of India in these processes and historiography has been recently articulated by Ines Županov.

Within this field, the works we already encountered by Paolo Aranha analyze Jesuit accommodation in connection with the controversy over the heterogenous set of local rites that missionaries authorized their converts to retain in South India, known as Malabar Rites. Aranha has shown how these included rituals of caste reproduction such as the upanayana, but also adaptations of the Catholic liturgy, like the avoidance of saliva during baptism, to comply with norms of purity and caste separation. After the apostolic legate Carlo Tomaso Maillard de Tournon (1668–1710) issued a first decree of condemnation of such rites in 1704, for over forty years Jesuits appealed repeatedly to Rome to have this decree revoked, or at least mitigated, fighting against their detractors within and outside the Catholic Church. However, the decree was eventually confirmed by the Papal bull Omnium Sollicitudinum that prohibited most Malabar Rites in 1744. One cannot underplay the complex dynamics and the impact of this Roman controversy on the Indian mission as much as on the global Church, then forced to reckon with issues of social and religious inclusion and exclusion. Most Jesuit missionaries in Madurai, including Beschi, followed the strategy of accommodation. They dressed and behaved like local teachers, practiced the Malabar Rites, and were involved in the Malabar Rites controversy in some capacity. They wrote letters to their superiors in Rome, kept in contact with intellectuals in Europe, and signed petitions in favor of their missionary strategy. In short, they took active part in the life of the global Church in the eighteenth century.

Besides, missionaries were one among many mobile groups traveling on the coasts of East Africa, South and Southeast Asia in this period, their presence in the subcontinent being almost coextensive with that of Portuguese officers and settlers on whose ships they reached Asia. The Madurai mission, albeit positioned outside colonial territories and jurisdiction, was still under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Portuguese Royal Patronage (padroado). Hence, the connection between Catholicism and the colonial project of the Portuguese crown is important for understanding the mission. Ananya Chakravarti has recently argued that precisely Jesuit accommodation and Catholic literature in local languages contributed to the creation of a Portuguese imperial imaginaire encompassing India as well as Brazil. It is through "accommodatio," she writes, that Jesuits came to place the "myriad locales of their acquaintance into the much broader conceptual geographies of the Portuguese empire and the universal church." In a similar vein, recent explorations of British colonialism in India have focused on the role of literature, and of agents such as converts, catechists, and village accountants, in negotiating the global empire at the local level, and the many types of violence involved in this process.

The history of eighteenth-century Catholic literature in Tamil could similarly be used to reflect on the local metamorphoses of the rhetorical and literary practices that Jesuit missionaries spread on a global scale.39 The works I just mentioned adopt variations of this approach, switching programmatically

between different scales of analysis, the jeux d' echelles theorized by Jacques Revel. While aware of this approach, in this book I have consciously chosen to adopt a different, perhaps more classically microhistorical, point of view.41 Rather than moving from specific Tamil locales to the larger political, religious, and intellectual worlds they intersected, and back in a looping movement, this study is firmly placed in provincial South India. The space where my actors—texts and men—move is limited, and I consider global processes and trajectories only insofar as they are present in that space.

In fact, though, larger horizons are often in sight, and regional centers like Thanjavur or Hyderabad, colonial cities like Pondicherry or Madras, and Rome as the center of the universal Church, all enter my narrative. This is because most of the actors in the following pages—missionaries, catechists, soldiers, or impostors—are exceptional. They often came to South India from elsewhere, dreamt about elsewhere, and sometimes reached elsewhere by an interplay of interest, chance, and aspirations. And yet, because of the unevenness of the archive, the biographical approach usually preferred by practitioners of microhistory does not throw equal amounts of light on all of them. Unsurprisingly, we know a lot more about missionaries and their lives than about their collaborators. Hence, while still following the individual trajectories of Jesuits like Beschi or his less famous colleague Carlo Michele Bertoldi (1662–1740), I turn to a microhistory of texts as collaborative projects, and of their locations, to show how the literary corpus and the practices at the core of my book are brimming with the tensions and movements of their time and place.

Conversely, perhaps in reaction to what I read as a contemporary anxiety to show how there was no early modern locality not already imbricated in the global, the consistency of the small scale in the book makes space for provincial concerns, and for a closer horizon than one would perhaps like to imagine for oneself today. I have consistently tried to preserve such autonomy of the local as an independent sphere of action and intelligibility. In order to zoom out, and gain new perspectives on the events I narrate, I have preferred to engage with a longer chronology rather than with a wider geography. Doing so has led me to tracing the continuities, ruptures, and more generally the consequences of the historical nodes I identify in the early eighteenth century as they unfolded in the following decades. I have followed these threads, albeit not systematically, up until the early nineteenth century. By looking at how early eighteenth-century people, texts, and practices have been reflected, remembered, and reenacted at later times I have come to conceive of the early eighteenth-century Madurai mission as a moment of literary, and thus social beginning. The pages to follow are an attempt to offer a history of that specific place and time, of the new things that happened there and then, and of the worlds they contributed to create.

The Beginnings of Catholic Literature in Tamil

The main argument of this book is that the beginning of Tamil Catholic literature dates to the first decades of the eighteenth century. Of course, Jesuit missionaries to South India wrote several texts in Tamil before that time, but the systematic accommodation of Christianity to the specific cultural sphere of the literary only began with Beschi. Hence, it is only from this moment that we can map practices of writing, reading, and circulation of Catholic texts as literature, and study their role for the emergence of a catechist élite in that perspective. Being part of the world of Tamil literature further provided Catholics, both missionaries and their catechists, with an entry point into the social and political world of eighteenth century Tamiḻakam, a world they inhabited then fully for the first time. The book will explore such processes in detail, but in order to substantiate these claims, the next sections offer a

concise history of literary practices in the Madurai mission—their development differing, in many ways, from that of accommodation practices.

Was Jesuit accommodation a literary strategy? Did it invariably imply literature? The answer largely depends on our definition of literature. A tendency towards communication was constitutive of accommodation, and bringing the message of salvation to the world entailed the translation of Christianity, its theology and vocabulary, into local social and cultural idioms. So Jesuit missionaries who practiced accommodation studied languages, wrote grammars of those languages, and used them to compose catechisms, theological treatises, sermons—in short, all the Catholic didactic and rhetorical genres of the period.44 In doing so, they enveloped the early modern globe in a dense fabric of analogies that made the translation of Catholic doctrines possible in languages as distant as Guaraní, Ethiopian, Tamil, and Chinese.45 Whether such texts could claim the status of literature in this early global, comparative realm largely governed by the rules of Latin literacy is a fascinating issue that brings into play ideas of rhetoric and eloquence as well as literature in this period. Yet the problem at the heart of this study is different; namely, could these texts be considered literature in the specific and wildly different literary spheres connected to the various languages they employed? Were Catholic catechisms in Tamil, Guaraní, or Chinese considered literary texts by the men learned in those languages? There are, of course, as many answers to these questions as there are languages.

As for Tamil, this leads us to descriptions and conceptualizations of the literary register of the language in the eighteenth century, its orthography, morphology, contents, prosody, genres, and so on. While contemporary Tamil literary histories might adopt a more inclusive definition, my interest lies in delineating the élite sphere of literature (ilakkiyam) that was recognized in the eighteenth century as the art practiced by learned men according to, or at least in dialogue with, the rules of grammar (ilakkaṇam). These were conservative rules upheld by a society of learned poets, the pulavars, and by a canon of normative texts that I discuss in Chapter Three. These rules describe a literary world that can be subsumed, with few exceptions, under the umbrella of poetry. Other types of texts, like grammatical sutras (nūṛpā) or commentaries (urai), were part of the world of refined language (centamiḻ), but ancillary to the writing and reading of poetry. Sascha Ebeling's study of nineteenth-century pulavars affords important insights into the literary practices and supporting institutions of this poetic world, which also apply to previous centuries. This learned sphere of ilakkiyam was moreover contiguous, and interacted with popular literature that only rarely found its way and recognition into grammar books, and was grounded in orality and performance. Catholic textual activities moved between these two levels, the learned and the popular. Still, my focus is on practices of "high" literacy and literature in the eighteenth century, because in this type of practices, and in this body of texts, are enclosed some of the social and cultural interactions I see as foundational in the process of transformation of Catholicism into a Tamil religion.

When exactly, then, did Jesuits start to write "proper" Tamil literature?

Writing before Accommodation

The first Jesuit missionary to write, and print, in Tamil was Henrique Henriques (1520–1600), a Catholic of Jewish origin who worked among the newly converted Paravar fishermen of the Coromandel coast in the second half of the sixteenth century. The conversion en masse of the Paravars was a strategic caste decision to create strong bonds with the Portuguese power, against competing trade groups on the

Coromandel coast. Henriques wrote in such a "pretercolonial" context, where accommodation was not really necessary. So, he wrote Tamil texts following European genres, including a confession manual (Confessionairo) printed in Cochin in 1580, where we read the following passage:

> (12v) itu tavira mutalāṅ kappīttuliṉ mukivilē eḻutiṉatu naṉrāy niṉaikka vēṇum atāvatu naṭapaṭiyiṉālē ceytatoḻcaṅkaḷ kompecārikkiṟataṉṟiyē vacaṉaṅkaḷiṉālēyum niṉaivukaḷiṉālēyum iccaikaḷiṉālēyuñ ceytatoḻcaṅkaḷ | kompecārikkavum | vēṇumpaṭiyē yātoru cāvāṉa toḻcam yātorutaraik koṇṭu ceyavittateṉkiluñ, ceyyattakkatākapputti coṉṉateṉkiluñ, ceytatuppiṟku ceytavaṉaik koṇṭāṭiṉateṉkiluñ, ceyyumuṉṉē tavirakkattakkatāka viṭamuṇṭāyirukkacceytē tavirātēyiruntateṉkilum, avaiyellāṅ | kompecārikka | vum vēṇum.
> Apart from this, one should think carefully about what was written at the end of the first chapter, namely that one does not only need to confess the sins committed through actions, but that one should also confess the sins committed through speech, thought, and desire. Accordingly, making someone commit any mortal sin, expressing a thought favorable to committing it, mocking a sinner after they committed the sin, failing to avoid sin when there was a way of avoiding it before someone committed it, all these instances need to be confessed.

Here begins a long list of questions on the potential sins to be confessed that includes this one:

> pēyaiyeṉkilum poḻutaiyeṉkilum nilavaiyeṉkilum pakavatikaḷaiyeṉkilum vēṟē yātoru paṭaippaiyeṉkilun tampirāṉaippōlē vaṇaṅkiṉatāy ācarittarāy uṇṭō.
> Has one worshipped and celebrated the demons, the sun, the moon, the goddesses or any other created thing as if they were God?

As apparent at a first glance for a reader acquainted with the Tamil language, Henriques's prose employs a colloquial morphology and syntax. To mention just a few pointed examples, we see in the passages cited above the verbal form vēṇum instead of the standard vēṇṭum, the ubiquitous use of emphatic -ē, and the form koṇṭu used as a postposition with the accusative, rather than as an adverbial participle (viṉaiyeccam). The text also incorporates lexical borrowings from Portuguese, like the verb confessar in the neologism kompecārittal. Županov has suggested that Henriques' language might be a transcription of the Tamil dialect spoken by the fishermen at that time.57 Yet, considering how the Confessionairo shows traces of a written culture among the Paravars, and how elsewhere Henriques talked about their sponsoring the printing of his books, I think this was probably some sort of written register.58 Not a literary register, clearly, but perhaps the language used by local accountants (kaṇakku piḷḷai) to record in writing the facts relevant to the life of their village.59 This speculation aside, the language and style of this passage show how this was a collection of injunctions far removed from, and not attempting to enter in conversation with, the domain of Tamil literature.

Social Accommodation in Madurai

Moving forward, Roberto Nobili , the founder of the Madurai mission, was the one to introduce the strategy of accommodation in seventeenth-century South India. Nobili worked in the city of Madurai, where he himself adopted, and encouraged among his converts, social, and ritual practices that attempted to reconcile Christianity with Brahmanical culture. In this context, Nobili criticized the use of previous translations and transliterations from Portuguese to render Christian ideas and keywords in Tamil, and suggested a new terminology largely derived from Sanskrit. In doing so he went against the view of his confrère Gonçalo Fernandes Trancoso (1541–1621), and indirectly against Henriques, whom

Fernandes admired and whose lexical choices he followed. But what about Nobili's Tamil texts, besides their Sanskritized vocabulary? Were they really that different from Henriques' works? The following passage from the Tūṣaṇa tikkāram ("Refutation of calumnies") offers an example of a prose text that the Jesuit wrote in the later period of his life. It is a sort of summa contra gentiles, a systematic treatise fighting the wrong ideas about Christianity circulating at his time:

> avvaṇṇamē, cīṣantāṉē poyyāṉa tēvarkaḷaip pacācukaḷ eṉṟu aṟintu meyyāṉa carvēcuraṉai iṉṉateṉṟu teḷintu paṇṇattakka pūcai vaḻipāṭukaḷai muḻuppattiyuḷḷa maṉatōṭu avaṉukkup paṇṇuvāṉ eṉkiṟatiṉāl, caṟkuruvāṉavar cīṣaṉukkup paṇṇiṉa ñāṉōpatēcam capalamāy āccuteṉṟu collappaṭum. eṉṟāl, carvēcuraṉ pērilē vicuvācamuḻḻavaṉai irācāvāṉavaṉ pārttup poyyāṉa tēvarkaḷai vaṇaṅkeṉṟu coṉṉāl attaṟuvāyilē puṇṇiyavāṉāy irukkiṟavaṉ poyyāṉa tēvarkaḷ pacācukaḷāyirukkiṟārkaḷ eṉṟum atukaḷai vaṇaṅkukiṟatiṉālē narakap pirāpti palikkum eṉṟum itu mutalāṉa tūṣaṇaṅkaḷaip poyyāṉa tēvarkaḷpērilē collak kaṭavāṉ. kaṭaiciyāy carvēcuraṉuṭaiya tostiram uṇṭākiṟatukkāṉālum, yātoru āttumāvāṉatu karaiyēṟukiṟatukkeṉkilum poyyāṉa tēvarkaḷait tūṣaṇikkiṟatukku atē taṟuvāyeṉṟu collakkaṭavōmoḻiya maṟṟappaṭiyalla. avvaṇṇamē kurōtam mutalāṉa paṟpala pāvaṅkaḷukku māttiram kāraṇamāy irukkiṟa viyartta tūṣaṇaṅkaḷaic caṟkuruvāṉavar mutalāṉa puṇṇiyavāṉkaḷāy irukkiṟa pērkaḷ varccikkak kaṭavārkaḷ. […] atēteṉṟāl, kuruvāṉavar pāvikaḷuṭaiya poyāṉa tēvaṉai akkiramamāyt tūṣaṇikkiṟatiṉāl pāviyāṉavaṉ kōpittukkoṇṭu meyyāṉa carvēcuraṉait tūṣaṇippāṉ. ippaṭippaṭṭa pācattukkup poyyāṉa tēvaṉ pērilē kuru coṉṉa akkiramamāṉatu kāraṇamāyirukkum eṉkiṟatukkuc cantēkappaṭat tēvaiyillai.
>
> Thus, the disciple himself will know that the false gods are really demons, will understand the nature of the true God, and with a mind filled with devotion will perform for him the appropriate worship and prayers, and because of this the instruction of the true teacher will be considered successful. Afterwards, if the king will order one who believes in God to worship the false gods, at this particular juncture the person should proclaim that the false gods are demons, that by adoring them one goes to Hell, and other similar abuses on the false gods, and he will obtain merit for that. For in the end, we can say that this and only this is the moment to abuse the false gods, either that God may be praised or that a soul may be saved.

Thus, the true teacher and the people who are virtuous must avoid those meaningless abuses that are the cause of anger and of many other sins. […] If you ask why, in case the teacher abuses inappropriately the false gods of the pagans, a pagan might get angry and abuse the true God. There is no doubt that the cause of such evil would be the inappropriate remarks of the teacher about the false gods.

Nobili's prose in this passage is a mix of colloquial forms, like āccutu instead of āyiṟṟu, and standard forms. Besides Sanskrit lexical items that were normally part of the Tamil language at that time, it includes examples of the Sanskrit-derived philosophical vocabulary introduced by Nobili, like the phrase viyartta tūṣaṇam, "meaningless abuses." Moreover, Nobili's prose is structured through repetitive expressions that likely belong to a spoken philosophical jargon, like maṟṟapaṭiyalla, "not otherwise." In the introduction to his edition of the Tūṣaṇa tikkāram, Savarimuthu Rajamanickam offered an extensive analysis of these usages, and I think he was mostly right in arguing that Nobili employed in his texts the spoken language of his interlocutors, who were learned Śaiva Brahmans. Yet it is possible that, like Henriques, Nobili also used a language that was already written down by those interlocutors for didactic

purposes. His texts might record a style of philosophical and theological teaching, a mix of Sanskrit and Tamil that circulated both orally and on palm leaves at his time. But again, this is just a conjecture, and beside the point. Even if one could argue that Nobili's prose has something in common with commentarial prose, this is not the proper language, nor subject matter, of Tamil literature.

The Literary Turn

After Nobili, several missionaries wrote little-known texts in Tamil that employed the same European genres, the same register, and the same vocabulary, with few variations. The literary activity of Costanzo Giuseppe Beschi represents at the same time the culmination, and a moment of rupture with respect to this tradition. For the first time in the history of Catholic textuality in Tamil, Beschi came to conceive of translation as a literary rather than just linguistic practice. In other words, Beschi was the first missionary to reflect on the indigenous categories of Tamil literature, including genre, meter, and register, and to ask whether these could express Catholic truths. His final answer was in the affirmative, as his own literary corpus shows. The book will explore this corpus in connection with Beschi's personal trajectory, and with the social and political context in which he lived and worked in the Kaveri delta region. For the moment, let us plunge directly into some verses from his poem Tēmpāvaṇi (translatable as "The Unfading Ornament" [tēmpā aṇi] or "The Bouquet of Sweet Song" [tēm pā aṇi]):

> mālka lantavā vaḷaraveṉ paṇiyiṉāṟ kaviñar
> nūlka lantavāy nuṉittatē ṉeṉattakuṅ kāmañ
> cālka lantapāc cāṟṟavuṅ kēṭpavuñ ceyvāy
> pālka lantakāṟ parukiya nañcumīṭ paritē.
> māl kalantu avā vaḷara eṉ paṇiyiṉāl kaviñar
> nūl kalanta vāy nuṉitta tēṉ eṉa takum kāmam
> cāl kalanta pā cāṟṟavum kēṭpavum ceyvāy
> pāl kalanta kāl parukiya nañcu mīṭpu aritē.
>
> So that lust mixed with confusion grows, through my workings you will make men compose and listen to verses filled with an abundance of lechery, like honey inside the mouth when it recites the books of the poets. It is difficult to reject the poison one has drunk, when it is mixed with milk.
>
> oruva ruñceyi ruraippavuṅ kēṭpavuñ ceytā
> liruva ruñceyi riṉṟiyu nāṇamē velvāy
> maruva rumpukar paḻakavē vaḻaṅkiya muṟaiyān
> teruva rumpuli cīṟiṉuñ ciṟuvarum veruvār.
> oruvarum ceyir uraippavum kēṭpavum ceytāl
> iruvarum ceyir iṉṟiyum nāṇamē velvāy
> maruvu arum pukar paḻakavē. vaḻaṅkiya muṟai ām
> teru varum puli cīṟiṉum ciṟuvarum veruvār.
>
> If you make one person speak about sin, and you make another one listen, not only will they both sin, but you will also destroy their shame, and crimes difficult to accept may become familiar. In the same way, children don't fear a tiger even when raging, if its walking in the streets has made them used to it.

These verses are part of a speech delivered by the king of demons (pēykku aracaṉ) to his minions, to inspire them to spread sin and crime on earth after the birth of Jesus has hindered for a moment their power and grip over human beings. It is immediately clear that this is nothing like what we have read so

far. For one, Beschi has written his poem in verse, using the sub-type (pāviṉam) called viruttam, popular in his time. His stanzas employ a literary register of the language, and draw on images that are part of the common Tamil (and Indic) repertoire, like the mixing of less noble substances with milk—here it is poison, but usually it is water. Moreover, the rhyme of the first stanza, which relies on the repetition of the participle kalanta preceded by a long syllable (notice the sequence māl-nūl-cāl-pāl), uses what was likely a standard set of variations playing with the idea of milk mixed with water. Similar sets were part of the pulavar's toolbox, and were especially useful when composing verses in the moment, as in the case of the standalone verse (taṉippāṭal) that opened this chapter. In short, these two stanzas show how Tamil poetry and its formal aspects already initiated a conversation, putting Christianity in relationship with a social world, that of the pulavars, the education it entailed, and an existing literary corpus.

I chose these verses also because they contain a meta-poetic statement on the social and political nature of poetry. They hint to why Beschi thought that writing good Tamil poetry was important, and how he envisioned poetry as a means for acting in the social and political world surrounding him. In the Madurai mission, Jesuits and Christians more generally could not rely on, let alone aspire to, local political power. In fact, they were more or less violently excluded from it. In such a context, poetry became at the same time a social and political field. Indeed, from roughly the beginning of the second millennium, Tamil poetry had been the language of politics in the region, its mastery enabling kings to exercise their rule, and poets to sing kings into being. Analogously, Christian poetry allowed Jesuits, starting with Beschi, and later local Christian poets, to gain social recognition and enter courtly networks of power, a topic that will be the focus of Chapter Three.

Still, like any other good missionary, Beschi saw "pagan" poetry as spreading false stories filled with horrible examples of moral depravity. This is the poison he refers to in the first stanza. He also understood that the same poetry was beautiful and refined, though, hence the comparisons with honey and milk. His spent his life working, as the proverbial goose, to separate milk and honey from poison, and to offer his Tamil converts and interlocutors beautiful poetry filled with good moral content. Poignantly, the second verse opens with a reflection on the social embeddedness of poetry and language. People recite poems, while other people listen to them. This performative setting captures well how poems were enjoyed in pre-colonial South India, and how poetry created communication, familiarity, and a universe of shared images, myths, and habits. That preexisting, familiar universe, tied together by non-Christian stories and rites, was something that missionaries like Beschi wished to tear apart—conversion entailed a fair amount of cultural and social disruption. But was conversion also forcibly a loss, and specifically a loss of poetry? Maybe not. Catholic poetry in Tamil could mend that fabric, Beschi seems to tell us with these verses, by offering a new, beautiful message in the old, beautiful vessel of Tamil classical poetry. When speakers and listeners would share this poetry, they would also create new social bonds.

Beyond Accommodation

This brief survey would be incomplete without at least one passage from an indigenous text of Catholic devotion. I have decided to include a passage from the Marikarutammāḷ ammāṉai, an anonymous ballad on Saint Margaret that was most likely written down in its present form in the early eighteenth century. There are many Christian ballads on the lives of saints, but this one on Saint Margaret, often associated with practices of exorcism, has been passed down in several manuscript and printed editions that show its popularity over the centuries. Moreover, even though the author and place of composition of the

ballad are unknown, some believe that the composer was a Muslim man who converted to Christianity, so this poem also points to a shared literary and social world between Muslims and Christians.78 While we have almost no information on such interactions outside of folklore and oral histories, both communities made extensive use of the popular genre of the ammāṉai or ballad, meant for oral performance.79 The following verses, in which Margaret addresses her pagan father after she converted to Christianity, were likely recited in front of a Christian audience, but using a genre, style and rhythm they shared with both their Muslim and Hindu neighbors:

> appārē ummuṭaiya ampuviyil tēvarkaḷtāṉ
> vaippāka peṇkaḷ vaittu makāmōkam ceytārkaḷ
> līlaiyi(l) stīrikaḷoṭu niṣṭūramākavētāṉ
> cīlai taṉai urintu tītumika ceytārkaḷ
> ceytārkaḷ peṇkaḷai cumantu tirintārkaḷ
> aiyō pala cātikaḷōṭu aḻintārkaḷ ampuviyil
> ampuviyil ummuṭaiya ākattiya tēvarkaḷai
> nampiṉāl mōṭcam uṇṭō nāṇamillā tēvarkaḷai
> tēvaṉpilli vañcaṉaikkum cittuvittai mōkiṉikkum
> avaṉitaṉil pollātavāka aṭiya tēvar allō.

O father! In your beautiful world, the gods themselves kept girls as concubines, and acted with lustful desire, they were cruel in their love-making with women, they stripped their sarees, they harassed them in many ways, and after doing that, they dragged them around! Alas! People of many castes have been corrupted in the beautiful world! In the beautiful world, by placing faith in these obstinate gods of yours, can there be salvation? These shameless gods, aren't they maliciously the sources on earth of the lies of sorcery, and the witches with their magic tricks?

The language of this text is poetical, but different from Beschi's learned poetry. The stanza form is the typical ammāṉai couplet (kaṉṉi), and the text is filled with colloquialisms, repetitions and other marks of oral literature, like the use of taṉ—here, avaṉitaṉil—to attach cases to words. The relationship between texts such as this ammāṉai and learned Catholic literature, first composed by missionaries and from the late eighteenth century by local Catholic pulavars too, is yet to be explored. Both literary corpora—Beschi's pioneering poems, and popular poems such as this one—developed around the same time, and Beschi authored an ammāṉai too. He must have realized that this was an important genre for many of his converts. The two worlds were in communication, and while missionary literature represents a step in the direction of Tamil Catholicism, this ammāṉai is without doubt a mature literary expression of that tamiḻ kiṟittavam. This popular domain is always in the background even when this book examines the negotiations implicit in learned missionary literature, and the boundaries between the two are often blurred.

Before heading towards the concluding sections of this Introduction, I would like to pause for a moment on the content and tone of the various passages we have read thus far. The Confessionairo is a normative text by definition, so pagan practices like worshipping pēys and goddesses appear there in a list of things "not to do." Perhaps more surprisingly, throughout the text Henriques rarely becomes openly polemical. His aim is to forbid certain practices, but he does not engage with them directly. We

find a similar non-aggressive mode in Nobili's text, where polemical attitudes towards Hindu gods are deemed counterproductive. Nobili's approach is pragmatic, since in the context of the powerful Hindu sects of Madurai, there was no motivation for missionaries and their converts to insult other people's gods, and thereby lose all opportunities to convince them by rational means. Nobili's passage might also imply that converts on the ground, especially catechists and other enthusiastic preachers, did insult local gods—and that the mission was not gaining much from it apart from occasional retaliations. This leads us back to the last two texts, Beschi's Tēmpāvaṇi verses and the passage from the Marikarutammāḷ ammāṉai. We find there more aggressive attitudes, combined with completely different textual fabrics. Beschi claims that local, i.e., Hindu texts are filled with the poison of lust, thus leading people to sin. Elsewhere in the Tēmpāvaṇi he lists those sins quite explicitly, as we will see, and they include sex, violence, and all kinds of immoral acts. Finally, the ammāṉai is by far the most polemical among the texts we read. Throughout the first half of the poem, the list of the evil actions performed by Margaret's father includes rape and sorcery, and in the passage above, Margaret is holding her father's Hindu gods responsible for such evil deeds. In short, after a little more than a century, we have come full circle: from Nobili's advice not to abuse local gods without reason, to an indigenous poetical text filled with aggressive passages targeting precisely local gods and spirits.

The reason for this shift is, I think, that the mastery over proper Tamil literature afforded Catholics a degree of cultural belonging, and thus allowed the mise-en-scène of local conflicts between Christianity and Hinduism. In other words, the polemical aspects of Catholic texts in Tamil increased with literary accommodation, and the new Catholic literature could be aggressive precisely because it operated within a space of interactions regulated by the discipline itself.82 By abiding by the rules of poetry, Beschi could afford to say much more than any of his predecessors. These aspects are even more accentuated in the ammāṉai, an indigenous work that probably served to establish local Catholicism in the performative, ritual, and social arenas, in opposition to competing religious practices. Both texts, the Tēmpāvaṇi and the ammāṉai, are aggressive because they were drawing the boundaries of the Catholic community at the time, albeit on two distinct cultural levels, the learned and the popular. Unlike previous texts such as Nobili's catechisms and treatises, mostly addressed to a public of non-Christians whom Nobili was trying to persuade of the rational superiority of the Catholic faith, Beschi and the anonymous author of the ammāṉai were addressing existing Catholic communities, and only secondarily other groups—even though impressing local Hindus and Muslims with his erudition and poetical genius was clearly among Beschi's goals.

To recapitulate, using a restrictive definition of literature based on historical Tamil understandings allows us to identify the moment when Christian texts first entered the world of Tamil literature in the eighteenth century. Until then, whatever was written in Tamil remained in the sphere of what Sheldon Pollock has called the documentary. Henriques, Nobili and their fellow missionaries wrote texts which served a purpose, explaining and converting, without any pretension to literariness. Tamil Catholic literature began with Beschi, as Tamil Christian scholars and histories of Tamil literature unanimously recognize. From that point onwards, the formal literary aspects of Catholic texts became crucial for understanding their social and political effects, their circulation and readership, an insight that will be crucial to the development of my argument throughout the book.

The Making of an Archive

This study is based on archival research in several countries, including India, Italy, France, Portugal, and the United Kingdom. While unfolding, this research has at the same time produced the archive of Tamil Catholicism, connecting fragmented records scattered among locations as diverse as the libraries of Church institutions in Rome, and the dusty cupboards of parish priests in remote villages of Tamil Nadu. Indeed, the existence of such an archive is a premise as well as an argument of the book, which can be seen as an exercise in reading its documents as a connected corpus, albeit in wildly different genres and languages, including Tamil, Italian, German, French, Latin, Portuguese, and English.

At the center of this archival constellation are two eighteenth-century texts of Catholic ilakkiyam, the Tēmpāvaṇi and Tirukkāvalūr kalampakam, along with a grammar of poetry written by Beschi and a number of prose manuals for the catechists of the Madurai mission. Most of these texts were printed in the nineteenth century, often by the Mission Press (in Tamil, Mātākkōvil Accukkūṭam) run by the Missions Étrangères in Pondicherry. These early editions, listed under each title in the Bibliography, often implied heavy interventions on the texts as they were circulating until then in manuscript form.84 The Mission Press had the project of mobilizing eighteenth-century Jesuit literature for the nineteenth-century mission, which sometimes motivated the editors to adapt the texts to their times. This has required going back to the manuscripts in order to access versions of the texts closer to what would have been available to an eighteenth-century reader. Once I was able to get a satisfying version of the texts, I have read them with all the tools at my disposal, including linguistic and literary analysis, but always with an eye to their historical significance. I discuss some of these strategies in greater detail in Chapter Five.

A second type of sources are Jesuit documents. Most important among them are the letters, both the annual letters missionaries sent to Rome with reports on the status of the mission, and the individual letters they sent to their General, their colleagues, and more rarely to their friends and family in Europe. There is a rather large corpus of methodological literature on how to read and counter-read these letters, which are often carefully crafted rhetorical pieces.86 The same applies to the Lettres édifiantes et curieuses, which were written and edited for publication beginning in 1701.87 Other types of Jesuit sources are the indipetæ, letters containing the requests of the young Jesuits to be sent as missionaries to the Indies; the Epistulæ generalium, letters of the Generals to members of the Society; and annual and triennial catalogs (Catalogi breves and triennales) including details about each Jesuit's career, and short evaluations of their character.

In certain sections of the book, I also use inquisitorial records and minutes of inquiries of the Congregations for the Causes of the Saints nowadays kept, respectively, in the archives of the Holy Office and in the Vatican Apostolic Archives (formerly the Vatican Secret Archives). Inquisitorial and, more in general, trial records were crucial to the development of the Italian microstoria, and have generated a wealth of studies concerned with methods of reading them in order to recover the subaltern voices they enclose—the most famous example of this strategy being Carlo Ginzburg's work on the miller Menocchio. I also sporadically complement these archives with Protestant sources in comparison with Catholic ones. Even though my command of the relevant languages is still rudimentary, this comparison opens important avenues of inquiry, which are beginning to receive from scholars the attention they deserve.

Yet another set of sources, which I analyze in Chapter Six to map the readership and circulation of the Tēmpāvaṇi, are the letters, genealogies and family histories written by Tamil catechists, mostly in Tamil. These sources are rare, and besides a handful of eighteenth-century letters by Rayanaykken, a Catholic catechist turned Lutheran, which were incorporated into Benjamin Schultze's (1689–1760) diaries, they have mostly been written down at the turn of the twentieth century. Yet they record the history of catechists and their families starting precisely from the early eighteenth century, thus corroborating my claim of a new (specifically literary) beginning of the mission at that time. They also allow for an important change of perspective, and they are invaluable to understand the role, motivations, and trajectories of Catholic catechists and cultural élites over the longue durée. I used in a similar way the two extant biographies of Costanzo Giuseppe Beschi, one written in the early nineteenth by Muttucāmi Piḷḷai, a pulavar and Tamil Catholic, and the other in the early twentieth century by Jesuit Léon Besse (1853–1919).92 As I show in Chapter Three, these biographies investigate the life of Beschi as much as they speak about his role, and the role of his memory, within the communities to which the two biographers belonged.

Finally, a trickier type of documents, for a textual scholar such as myself, have been the ethnographic materials and visual resources I collected over eighteen months of research and fieldwork in India between 2016 and 2018. These sources have been formative to the way I have come to conceive of this project. I spent much time reflecting upon what these monuments, often in ruins, tell us about the mission in the eighteenth century, and I hope some of the insights they have afforded me will shine through in the book. I have also made use of oral and local histories whenever they were helpful in corroborating or questioning other archives, and fleshing out my descriptions. The reader will notice that most of these materials appear in the footnotes, which tell a story that is parallel but integral to the main body of the book. Inspired by Nicholas Dirks, whose ethno-historical paradigm I still find productive, as well as by recent interdisciplinary studies by Guillermo Wilde and Davesh Soneji, this book begins a reflection on the relationship between history and ethnography that keeps shaping my historical practice.

Chapter Outline and Threads across the Chapters

This Introduction has spelled out the main assumptions, questions, and methodologies of the book. The rest of the work is divided into three parts, each of them comprised of two chapters. Part One, "Spiritual Institutions," explores the context of the emergence of Tamil Catholic literature, and focuses on the institutionalization of spiritual retreats for the catechists in the village of Āvūr. Within it, Chapter One offers an overview of the role of the catechists in the mission at the turn of the century, and then analyzes the function of the retreats in their recognition as a spiritual élite, as well as in shaping their relationship with the missionaries. This analysis is partially organized around the biography of Carlo Michele Bertoldi, who was the main promoter of the retreats. Bertoldi also wrote the first adaptation of Ignatius of Loyola's Spiritual Exercises into Tamil, known as Ñāṉamuyaṟci. Chapter Two centers around this text, and a small related corpus of spiritual manuals written to shape and discipline the catechists' Catholic selves in the context of the retreats. Through a close reading of these manuals, the chapter analyzes, on the one hand, the role missionaries envisioned for the catechists in the mission, and on the other hand, the concerns and tensions apparent in the relationship of the texts with their intended readers.

In Part Two, "Rhetorical Education," I investigate the parallel enterprise of the school of literary Tamil for catechists instituted by Costanzo Giuseppe Beschi in the village of Ēlākkuṟicci in 1730. Chapter Four is devoted to the analysis of the location of Beschi within the political context of the Kaveri delta region in the 1720s and 30s, and it reflects on the importance of his self-fashioning as pulavar and school-master in order to act in that arena. Chapter Five centers around the reading of the textbook Beschi produced for his school, the grammar Toṉṉūlviḷakkam. My analysis focuses on the treatment of the subject matter of poetry (poruḷ), in order to understand what Beschi thought good Catholic poetry in Tamil should be about, and illuminates the synthesis between Tamil literary culture and Latin and Italian humanism that was constitutive of the culture of the mission. Both Chapter Four and Five show how catechists at this time were configured as a cultural élite, and reflect on the role of literature in the positioning of the mission vis-à-vis political powers in the region, and competing missionary enterprises such as the Lutheran one.

Part Three of the book, "Catholic poetry in a Tamil world," focuses on Beschi's epic poem Tēmpāvaṇi, the masterpiece of eighteenth-century Tamil Christian literature. In Chapter Five, I analyze this poem in terms of its genre and style, and of the strategies through which it spoke to its eighteenth-century audience, against the background of the social and political contexts detailed in the previous chapters. Chapter Six is devoted to the history of the reception of the poem, which I recover through different sources, from the paratext accompanying manuscripts of the Tēmpāvaṇi to local caste histories mentioning its circulation in the late eighteenth century. In a sense, the whole book can be read as a microhistory of the birth and early life of this text, of the relationships in which it was embedded, and the ones it helped to create. Because texts, unlike human beings, sometimes live on for very long periods, the last chapter leads us up to the turn of the nineteenth century, when the Tēmpāvaṇi, along with the whole cultural and social capital that Catholic catechist élites had accrued in the eighteenth century, was about to be reconfigured to fit within the colonial order. This complex process cannot be covered in the present work, so in my conclusions I look back to eighteenth-century literary experiments from the perspective of their end, and evaluate them, before pointing to some future avenues of inquiry. <>

Inscrutable Malice: Theodicy, Eschatology, and the Biblical Sources of Moby-Dick by Jonathan A. Cook [Northern Illinois University Press, 9780875804644]

While Herman Melville's Moby-Dick has attained an iconic status in both American and world literatures, the pervasive influence of the Christian Bible, myth, and religious tradition has been overlooked in many contemporary readings of the novel. In Inscrutable Malice, Jonathan A. Cook expertly illuminates Melville's abiding preoccupation with the problem of evil and the dominant role of the Bible in shaping his best-known work.

Drawing on recent research in the fields of biblical studies, the history of religion, and comparative mythology, Cook provides a new interpretation of Moby-Dick that places Melville's creative adaptation of the Bible at the center of the novel. Cook identifies two ongoing concerns in the narrative in relation to their key biblical sources: the attempt to reconcile the goodness of God with the existence of evil, as

dramatized in the book of Job; and the discourse of the Christian end-times involving the final destruction of evil, as found in the apocalyptic books and eschatological passages of the Old and New Testaments. These biblical influences extend from the basic realms of plot, characterization, setting, and theme to the textual details of imagery, symbolism, figurative language, and rhetoric, all of which are shown to be shaped by paradigmatic scriptural models.

With his detailed reading of Moby-Dick in relation to its most important source text, Cook greatly expands the reader's understanding of the moral, religious, and mythical dimensions of the novel. Both accessible and erudite, Inscrutable Malice will appeal to scholars, students, and enthusiasts of Melville's classic whaling narrative.

Review

"Cook has accomplished the most precise, searching, and in-depth investigation of a subject whose importance cannot be overestimated for this particular author. Melville's `saturation' by the Bible has never before been explored with the exhaustive approach it warrants. This study's extensive documentation alone will serve readers as a valuable resource, and Cook's analysis of scripturally influenced subject matter in Melville's narrative is unprecedented in scope and detail." —Steven Olsen-Smith, Associate Professor of English at Boise State University and General Editor of Melville's Marginalia Online

"Moby-Dick has long been recognized as a landmark in American literary and religious history, but the goal of showing how these aspects of Melville's novel are related has proved elusive. Through an inspired combination of biblical scholarship, comparative religion, intellectual history, and aesthetics with Melville's own patterns of reading and intellectual inquiry, Jonathan Cook's study illuminates brilliantly Moby-Dick's status as both an exceptionally important artifact in religious history and a superb piece of literary art. Cook's wide-ranging review of the scholarship on Moby-Dick and his clear prose style contribute to making this essential reading for anyone seeking to understand America's most important novel, the religious context from which it emerged, and the history of intellectual engagement it has inspired." —Brian Pothers, Associate Professor of English at the University of Texas at El Paso and author of Melville's Mirrors: Literary Criticism and America's Most Elusive Author

In this study I seek to examine Moby-Dick in the context of the author's dramatization of the problem of evil, a subject of recurrent interest in Western culture and Judeo-Christian tradition. Framing Melville's fictional exploration of this vexed question was his immersion in the Bible, especially the text of the Old Testament from which he drew prototypes for the characters of Ahab, Ishmael, and the White Whale. I argue that the book of Job serves as the basis for the novel's representation of the question of theodicy—the attempt to reconcile the justice or goodness of God with the existence of evil—while Daniel, Revelation, and other apocalyptic passages of the Old and New Testaments provide a basis for the novel's pervasive use of eschatology, the divinely ordained "last things" in the life of the individual, community, and cosmos. I demonstrate that the figure of Job was a key source for the creation of Ahab, while the book of Job's portrait of the mythical chaos monster Leviathan served as the formative model for Moby Dick. Repeated allusions to apocalyptic passages of the Bible similarly act as recurrent paradigms for both dramatic action and thematic development in Ishmael's narrative. Just as the Bible, with its composite compositional history, is ultimately inconsistent in tracing the causes of suffering and evil in human life, so Melville in Moby-Dick depicts a comparable range of philosophical and psychological responses to the problem of evil that are ultimately rooted in biblical tradition.

In Chapter 1, I briefly review the history of criticism of Moby-Dick before examining the biblical sources for the issues of theodicy and eschatology that will guide the present study. As texts with foundational authority and multiple manifestations in Western tradition, the books of Job, Daniel, and Revelation—along with other related prophetic, historical, poetic, and apocalyptic texts—provide a wealth of thematic, structural, and linguistic prototypes for Melville's whaling novel. In this chapter, I accordingly trace the complex mythological roots of the dominant biblical paradigms in the novel. Thus, we find the prototype for Ahab's pursuit of the White Whale in the Hebrew god's conquest of the marine chaos monster Leviathan, an event borrowed from earlier Mesopotamian and Canaanite myth. Moreover, the novel's eschatological structures rely on other biblical traditions depicting end-time events, especially those found in the book of Revelation, in which the demonic agents of primordial evil are overthrown and God's heavenly kingdom established on earth. I then review the Old Testament historical models for Ishmael and Ahab, which will demonstrate Melville's strategic adaptation of these two well-known outcasts from Hebrew covenantal tradition.

Chapter 2 begins with a brief overview of the antebellum American religious scene and Melville's religious upbringing as they impinge on the novel, notably the influence of the dominant evangelical culture with its pervasive ideology of reform and the role of the small sects of Quakers and Shakers. I then track Ishmael's seriocomic initiation into the whaling profession, which draws extensively on the metaphors of pilgrimage found in the writings of St. Paul and John Bunyan, the underlying theological presences in this early section of the novel. Ishmael's initiation is typified by his richly comic, mock-apocalyptic encounter with the Polynesian cannibal Queequeg, whose friendship leads to redemptive acts of conversion and covenant in the narrative. In Father Mapple's sermon on Jonah and the enigmatic encounter with the sailor Elijah, moreover, Ishmael's initiation includes a prophetic foreshadowing of some of the key moral and eschatological issues that will concern him throughout his voyage on the Pequod. These issues provide a backdrop to the black humor that recurs throughout Ishmael's unsettling experience of New Bedford and Nantucket, which ends with his allegorical evocation of the heroic sailor Bulkington, whose presence at the helm of the Pequod provides a classical model for the pursuit of moral and philosophical truth amid the sublime biblical terrors of whaling.

In Chapter 3, I examine Ahab's symbolic identity as a Job figure bringing an indictment against divine justice in his quest for Moby Dick, a modern exemplar of the biblical Leviathan evoked at the end of God's speech from the whirlwind in the book of Job. Ahab's impassioned remarks in "The Quarter-Deck" on the malignity of the White Whale are thus shown to be a synthesis of various features of the outspoken complaints of Job. The immediately ensuing chapters of the novel then trace various aspects of Ahab's aggrieved Job-like identity, and aspects of the White Whale as the book of Job's mythical chaos monster. In order to fight this alleged embodiment of divine evil, Ahab makes a Faust-like pact with the devil in the person of the Parsee Fedallah, a version of "the satan" or "adversary" of the book of Job, who appears during the Pequods first chase of a whale. As an adherent of the Zoroastrian religion, Fedallah also typifies Ahab's embrace of the pagan idolatry that characterized the reign of the biblical King Ahab. The voyage of the Pequod is thus launched as an unholy apocalyptic quest to destroy the ultimate source of evil in the allegedly demonic whale, a divine agent or principal within the extended theological, mythological, and literary contexts of Joban theodicy as dramatized in the novel. This narrative sequence ends with the sighting of the Spirit Spout, a demonic version of the pillar of cloud that guided the Israelites in the Egyptian desert, and the uncanny appearance of the giant squid as another proleptic anticipation of the White Whale.

In Chapter 4, I survey issues of cetology, cosmology, and epistemology in Ishmael's encyclopedic and demythologizing attempt to examine the whale both as biological species and as source for the raw materials of a major nineteenth-century American industry. This section includes Ishmael's well-known exploration of "The Whiteness of the Whale," in which he envisages Moby Dick as an apocalyptic symbol of the natural sublime, hinting at the moral ambiguity of the divine nature. Elsewhere in Ishmael's seriocomic vision (informed by the work of a broad range of writers including Dante, Rabelais, Milton, Burton, Browne, Sterne, Carlyle, Irving, and others), the whale can be seen as an embodiment of cosmological ambiguity in both the creation and the creator, while the ongoing evocations of the whale's pursuit, capture, processing, and anatomical features provide a series of moral exempla enhanced by repeated allusions to biblical wisdom literature. Throughout his detailed cetological narration and disquisition, which includes representative scenes of Ishmael on the masthead, weaving mats, helping to chase whales, stripping blubber, squeezing sperm, and steering the ship, Ishmael embraces a skeptical epistemology that is consonant with the message of the books of Job, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes, and that further enhances the ironic critique of Saint Paul and Pauline Christianity, which began in the first narrative sequence of the novel. In this long sequence of chapters focusing on Ishmael's education into the wonders of the whale, then, we find this archetypal biblical species acting as a paradoxical embodiment of cosmological wisdom and a macrocosmic image of the natural creation.

In Chapter 5, I discuss the interplay of comedy and tragedy in several cetological episodes of Moby-Dick in tandem with recurrent themes and motifs relating to theodicy and eschatology. In a comic inversion of Ahab's identity as a type of the tragic Job, Ishmael is shown to be a parodic Job figure who, in his initiation into whaling, emerges as an embodiment of moral balance and comic resilience. In another comic sequence, the figure of Stubb acts as an agent of minstrel-show humor and multi-leveled satire in conjunction with the black cook, Fleece, whose well-known "sermon to the sharks" is traced to its New Testament source. I then examine Ahab's speech to the suspended whale's head in "the Sphynx" as an illustration of the captain's profound Job-like tragic insight, which coexists with an acute Oedipus-like moral blindness. Concluding this chapter is an examination of tragic and comic themes in two of the Peguods nine "gams" with other whaling vessels, the jeroboam and the Virgin. Ahab's hubris and moral

blindness in the gam with the jeroboam, as highlighted by the Shaker prophet Gabriel, is based on a well-known scene from the book of Daniel depicting the prophetic "writing on the wall" foretelling the fall of Belshazzar and his Babylonian kingdom. The encounter with the Virgin, on the other hand, is predicated on Christ's apocalyptic parable of the wise and foolish virgins, among other biblical prototypes.

In Chapter 6, I analyze the blend of hubris and heroism in the representation of Ahab in the last quarter of the novel, as well as in the depiction of ideas of mortality and immortality as conveyed by both Ahab and Ishmael in this narrative sequence. A series of dramatic scenes beginning with "The Doubloon" depicts Ahab's quest for godlike omniscience and omnipotence, which will ultimately help precipitate his fall, even as he continues to show the physical courage and moral stamina of the traditional epic hero. The supreme expression of Ahab's paradoxical blend of heroism and hubris is seen in "The Candles," which includes a remarkable synthesis of biblical and literary motifs ultimately based on Job's rhetorical attacks on the Old Testament divinity and on Gnostic traditions of an evil creator god. In addition to possessing a satanic and titanic pride, Ahab is simultaneously haunted by the deity's apparent indifference to suffering and death, as exemplified by the description of "The Dying Whale" as well as by a series of provocative metaphysical exchanges with the ship's carpenter and blacksmith, with whom he interacts in order to be fitted for a new whalebone leg. Yet as "The Whale-Watch" goes on to show, Ahab is deluded by Fedallah's prophecies about the killing of the White Whale into thinking that he is virtually immortal. A comparable concern with mortality and immortality also haunts Ishmael on his revelatory visit to the Arsacidean whale chapel—a seriocomic counterpart to Ahab's climactic encounter with the White Whale—during which Ishmael ponders the ultimate mysteries of the creation and its inextricable union of life and death. A similar concern is expressed as Ishmael witnesses the seeming impending death of Queequeg, whose carved coffin will end up serving as Ishmael's life preserver.

I begin Chapter 7 with a discussion of the mythic dimensions of Melville's basic plotline in Moby-Dick and Ahab's identity as an Old Testament tragic hero with typological resemblances to various figures of fallen pride. Within the novel's NewTestament aspects, Saint Paul's epistle to the Romans serves as a moral touchstone for the antithetical careers of Ishmael and Ahab in the narrative. The focus of the discussion then shifts to the pathos of Ahab's rueful conversation with Starbuck in "The Symphony" immediately preceding the encounter with Moby Dick, a conversation packed with multiple biblical and literary allusions and steeped in an aura of tragic fatalism. After examining the historical prototype for the conclusion of the novel in the sinking of the whaleship Essex in 1820, we turn to the climax of the narrative in Ahab's three-day chase of the White Whale, whose drama and imagery closely approximate the evocation of Leviathan in the book of Job as well as passages from Psalms and Isaiah. In this confrontation, which also draws on the imagery of the war in heaven in book 6 of Paradise Lost, the apocalyptic themes of the novel are further elaborated and brought to their catastrophic conclusion. The final three chapters of Melville's novel thus act as the climax to Ahab's tragedy in which Aristotelian elements of recognition and reversal, terror and pity, are highlighted. Following the sinking of the Peguod, Ishmael as the sole survivor is the inadvertent inheritor of Ahab's Joban mantle of suffering and is symbolically reborn from the wreck of the ship to a condition of tragic knowledge and enhanced biblical wisdom.

In the Epilogue I discuss the place of Moby-Dick in larger theological, philosophical, and cultural traditions of theodicy and eschatology. In effect, Melville dramatized the principal justifications for natural and moral evil found in the Bible—notably in Genesis, the Hebrew prophets, Job, Ecclesiastes,

the writings of Saint Paul, and Revelation—within various narrative and expository sequences of the text. By the same token, Moby-Dick as literary theodicy can be placed in a larger European tradition of concern with the problem of evil found in several major philosophers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The pervasive presence of the book of Job within Melville's novel is thereupon related to the Job-like circumstances of the novel's publication and its immediate aftermath, at which time Melville ironically seemed to relive the sufferings of the biblical patriarch. Finally, the novel's extensive use of apocalyptic eschatology is related to other mid- and late nineteenth-century works of American and European literature as well as to a general preoccupation with end-time events that continues into our own age in both fact and fiction.

In a letter to Sophia Hawthorne dated January 1852, Melville acknowledged the multilevel allegory that characterized Moby-Dick while also recognizing the astuteness of her husband, the dedicatee of the novel, in perceiving this feature in an earlier, now lost letter: "I had some vague idea while writing it, that the whole book was susceptible of an allegoric construction, & and also that parts of it were—but the speciality of many of the particular subordinate allegories, were first revealed to me, after reading Mr Hawthorn's letter, which, without citing any particular examples, yet intimated the part-&--parcel allegoricalness of the whole." The key source for Melville's "part & parcel" use of allegory in Moby-Dick was, of course, the Bible, whose composite theological form and iconic 1611 translation into English as the Authorized Version helped produce the polyvalence of form and meaning in Melville's novel. Like a number of other writers before and after him, Melville creatively assimilated the Christian Bible on multiple levels, from the overarching perspective of theme, plot, characterization, and symbolism to the textual details of language, style, imagery, and trope. Included in this assimilation, too, were the pervasive rhetorical devices of paradox, irony, and ambiguity, which helped structure the complex and sometimes contradictory moral and metaphysical worlds of Moby-Dick—a "wicked book, "the writing of which nevertheless made Melville feel "spotless as the lamb," as he famously told Hawthorne in a letter of November 1851, the month of the novel's American publication?

Viewed from a wider literary perspective, Melville's use of the Christian Bible in Moby-Dick conforms to what Stephen Prickett has called the Romantic "appropriation" of this central text of Western culture, which came to English and American readers after a previous double act of appropriation: "Just as the Bible has appropriated the concept of a book, so, for the English-speaking world, the Authorised Version has appropriated the notion of the Bible." For many writers of the Romantic era the Bible accordingly became a primary source of "cultural renewal, aesthetic value and literary inspiration.... Even more significantly, the Bible had, in the process, become a metatype, the representative literary form, and the paradigm by which other works were to be understood and judged." A writer highly attuned to the religious, intellectual, and artistic currents of his time, Melville shared in this embrace of the Bible as the ultimate "metatype" and model on which he could base his exploration of the nature and meaning of evil in Moby-Dick.

My principal goal in the present study, then, is to shed new light on the central influence of the Bible on Moby-Dick. As in his other works of fiction and poetry, Melville turned to this central text for an array of themes and motifs that helped shape the religious and philosophical questions infusing his imagination. I have drawn on a broad selection of recent scholarly work on the Bible, myth, and religion generally. At the same time I examine a wide variety of literary sources and influences in order to show how these combine with the biblical elements to form the densely allusive texture of idea while writing it, that the

whole book was susceptible of an allegoric construction, & and also that parts of it were—but the speciality of many of the particular subordinate allegories, were first revealed to me, after reading Mr Hawthorn's letter, which, without citing any particular examples, yet intimated the part-&--parcel allegoricalness of the whole." The key source for Melville's "part & parcel" use of allegory in Moby-Dick was, of course, the Bible, whose composite theological form and iconic 1611 translation into English as the Authorized Version helped produce the polyvalence of form and meaning in Melville's novel. Like a number of other writers before and after him, Melville creatively assimilated the Christian Bible on multiple levels, from the overarching perspective of theme, plot, characterization, and symbolism to the textual details of language, style, imagery, and trope. Included in this assimilation, too, were the pervasive rhetorical devices of paradox, irony, and ambiguity, which helped structure the complex and sometimes contradictory moral and metaphysical worlds of Moby-Dick—a "wicked book, "the writing of which nevertheless made Melville feel "spotless as the lamb," as he famously told Hawthorne in a letter of November 1851, the month of the novel's American publication?

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THE CATHOLIC BIBLE: PERSONAL STUDY EDITION, 3RD EDITION edited by Graziano Marcheschi and Biagio Mazza. THE NEW AMERICAN BIBLE, REVISED EDITION [Oxford University Press, 9780197516072]

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The purpose of **THE CATHOLIC BIBLE: PERSONAL STUDY EDITION** is to enable the reader to read the Scriptures with new understanding and depth. In writing and editing the study materials contained here, our primary aim has been to serve an audience of Roman Catholics. Some of the comments in the notes to the text, the Reference Articles, and the Reading Guides deliberately reflect Catholic experience and Catholic interests. However, the editors do not wish to exclude other Christian readers from the focus of this book. In most instances, the materials included here will be useful for all Christians who want to enter deeply into the mysteries and marvels of the Bible.

Introducing the Bible

Although it is bound under one cover and bears a single title, the Bible is not a single, unified book. It is, in fact, a collection of some 73 different works by different authors, using very different styles and perspectives, composed over a span of many centuries, and in three different languages (Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek). Most of the Old Testament (46 books) was written in Hebrew, but parts of the books of Daniel (2:4–7:28), Ezra (4:6–6:18; 7:12–26), and one verse from Jeremiah (10:11) were originally composed in Aramaic, a Middle Eastern language related to but different from Hebrew. Other Old Testament books, such as Tobit and the Wisdom of Solomon, were written in Greek. And all 27 of the New Testament books were composed in Greek.

The rich diversity of the Bible is one of its glories because it allows the story of God's people to be told from various perspectives. It also presents a challenge to the reader who should be aware of the different cultural, historical, and literary contexts of each biblical book. But there is a deeper unity to the Bible that binds together these individual pieces of literature. Through the many biblical books flows the continuing saga of God's love for Israel and for the Church. Each of the biblical authors, no matter how much separated in time, culture, and literary style, shares a conviction that God's presence is felt in human history and that God invites the human family to respond with faith and integrity.

The Writing of the Bible

As its diverse makeup implies, the Bible was not written at a single point in history. The events covered in the Old Testament span nearly 2,000 years of history, from the time of Abraham and the patriarchs (around 1800 B.C.) to the period of the Maccabean wars (140 B.C.). If one includes the epic accounts of the creation and prepatriarchal stories such as Noah and the flood, then the reach of the biblical saga goes back to the beginning of time. But the actual formulation of the biblical accounts, although making use of earlier stories and traditions, is confined to a narrower period of time, probably beginning with the monarchy (around 1000 B.C.) and concluding in the century before the birth of Christ.

The New Testament books were all written during the latter half of the first century A.D. The letters of Paul were probably the earliest New Testament works to be put in writing, dating mainly from the decade of the fifties. The sayings of Jesus and the many stories about his ministry circulated in the Christian community all during these early decades of the Church but were probably not put in writing until shortly after A.D. 70, with Mark the first Gospel to be written. Matthew, Luke (and his second

volume, the Acts of the Apostles), and John follow, with the compositions of their Gospels taking place sometime during the last quarter of the first century. The other non-Pauline letters and writings, including the book of Revelation or the Apocalypse, also date from this period.

Forming a "Bible" from Diverse Books: The Story of the Canon

The gathering of these diverse writings into a single collection or "book" (the literal meaning of the word "Bible") was itself a long-term and laborious process. The technical term for the authoritative list of books belonging in the Bible is "canon" (which means "measuring rod"). Both Judaism and Christianity had to make choices about which books to include and which books to exclude from their respective "Bibles." Judaism would not make any official decision about which books belonged to its "Bible" until the end of the first century A.D. But that does not mean it was without a Bible for so much of its history. There was little or no dispute about the major books of the Old Testament, books which were constantly used in Jewish liturgy and teaching. But there was debate about the inclusion of later and less central works such as Esther or Ecclesiasticus (the Wisdom of Jesus ben Sira).

Reading Guide

The Jewish or Hebrew canon ultimately recognizes 39 books, divided into three major categories:

1. The Law (sometimes referred to as the Pentateuch, or first five books of the Bible): Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy.
2. The Prophets: subdivided into the Former Prophets: Joshua, Judges, 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings; and the Latter Prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the Twelve (Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi).
3. The Writings: Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra-Nehemiah, 1 and 2 Chronicles.

As we shall explain below, not included in the official Jewish or Hebrew canon are seven other books that Roman Catholics (and Orthodox Christians) consider part of their Scriptures. Judaism reveres these books and considers them sacred, but they are not part of their canon or official list. These books are: Tobit, Judith, 1 and 2 Maccabees, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, and Baruch. There are also some additional passages in the books of Daniel and Esther.

The formation of the Christian canon also took place over a considerable period of time. In fact, the official Roman Catholic decision about the canon did not come until the Council of Trent in the sixteenth century, but by that time the choice of which writings were to be included in the Bible was well established. There were many sacred writings in the early decades of the Church that presumably could have been included in the Bible. We cannot always tell what criteria or decision-making processes were used to establish the canon. Some "gospels" evidently portrayed Jesus in a way unacceptable to the vast majority of Christians and so were not included. Other early writings, however, such as the Didache (Greek, "teaching")—a short handbook of moral behavior and church practice—seem perfectly acceptable in content and tone but nevertheless were not included. Probably the early Church considered a work's content, its authorship, and the frequency of its usage in the liturgy and teaching of the Churches as important criteria for judging if a sacred writing was inspired by God and worthy of inclusion in its official canon or Scriptures.

All Christians agree on the 27 books to be included in the New Testament. But there is a dispute about some of the books in the Old Testament. As noted above, Roman Catholics and Orthodox Christians

agree on the 46 books that make up the Old Testament (the Orthodox include additional books in their canon: 1 and 2 Esdras; the prayer of Manasseh; Psalm 151; 3 Maccabees). Judaism and Protestant Christians hold for the shorter list of 39 books sketched above; the remaining seven or more are designated as the apocryphal books.

The reason for this divergence is that earliest Christianity used an ancient Greek translation of the Old Testament (called the Septuagint) as its Bible. This Greek version of the Bible included 46 books. Since most of the early Christians were Greek-speaking, this is the Bible they preferred. But when Judaism officially set out to determine its canon at the end of the first century, it drew up a shorter list of 39 books: those written in Hebrew. In the Reformation period, Protestants went back to this shorter Hebrew canon, considering it more authentic.

Today, many of the doctrinal tensions that separated Catholics and Protestants have eased. Some Protestant editions of the Bible include the "apocryphal" (what Roman Catholics call "deuterocanonical") books in an appendix of their Bibles or in a special section between the Old and New Testaments. Following usual Catholic practice, the New American Bible integrates the deuterocanonical books into the order of the Old Testament canon. A table showing the different canons for each group—Jews, Protestant Christians, Catholic Christians, and Orthodox Christians—is on p. 1869.

The Diverse Literary Forms and Historical Value of the Bible

The broad span of biblical history, and the fact that the Bible is a collection of various books, helps to form its rich diversity. The reader of the Bible needs to be attentive not only to the historical context of a particular passage but to the varieties of literary forms and the specific style and intent of each biblical author. The prophetic oracles of Isaiah or Jeremiah are very different in literary style from the legal codes of Leviticus or the narratives of Exodus. The long lists of wise sayings in Proverbs are dramatically

different in tone, style, and theology from the sweeping liturgical poetry of the Psalms. So, too, do the parables of the Gospels differ greatly from the letters of Paul or the dramatic apocalyptic scenes in the book of Revelation. The notes and Reading Guides found in this Study Bible help the reader to understand more about these various literary forms and their implications for interpreting the meaning of a particular biblical passage.

The presence of various literary forms or means of expression in the Bible also complicates the issue of the historical value of the Bible. Some Christians, particularly fundamentalist Christians, fear that admitting the Bible contains poetry, stories, and other literary forms is somehow an attack on the veracity of the Bible and dilutes its witness to history. They prefer to regard the story of creation in Genesis, or the episode of Jonah's sojourn in the belly of a great fish, as literally true.

Roman Catholic teaching—and that of many other Christian denominations—sees no incompatibility between recognizing the truth of the biblical witness and the fact that it is expressed in many forms of literature characteristic of human communication. Credible witness to the truth of history is not confined to an objective reporting of the facts in the manner of a police report or a mere factual description of what happened. All reporting of history involves a degree of interpretation. And such means as poetry, hymns, stories, myths, and other literary forms can also communicate historical truth about past events and the perspectives of our ancestors.

Undoubtedly, both the Old and New Testaments contain many accurate historical facts and descriptions reflecting the times and events of biblical history. But the biblical writers also wanted to interpret the meaning of that history and present it unabashedly from their perspectives. Previous traditions are given new interpretations and adapted to the circumstances of a different generation. In most instances their intent was not to provide a historical archive for subsequent generations but to see in the events of this history the presence of God's grace, and to communicate that conviction to their readers. The Bible is a witness to the vitality of the people who lived its events and pondered their meaning in a spirit of faith.

Each biblical passage, therefore, must be evaluated on its own terms in attempting to distinguish between factual historical data and the theological and historical interpretation provided by the biblical writer.

The Transmission of the Biblical Text and its Modern Translations

Each modern reader of the Bible is in debt to countless numbers of people—Jewish and Christian—who faithfully handed on to the next generations the treasures of the Bible. For much of biblical history, such transmission of the biblical tradition was done orally, not in written form. Stories, sayings of great teachers and leaders, hymns, and poetry were lovingly memorized and handed down from parents to children, teacher to disciple, from leader of prayer to congregation and, thereby, formed the growing body of the biblical heritage.

In ancient (and some modern) cultures, oral transmission of important literature was not a casual, haphazard affair. For our modern culture, so dependent on written means of communicating information, it is hard to realize that in oral cultures subtle and often unspoken rules govern how information is shaped, retained, and transmitted from one person and one generation to another.

But as styles of writing and writing materials became more sophisticated in Israel, and when it had the social organization under the monarchy to have archives and develop an educated class of scribes, then undoubtedly some parts of the Bible were preserved in written form as well.

In the New Testament, much of the Gospel materials were first preserved in oral form. Sayings of Jesus, his parables, the stories about his healings, his conflicts with opponents, and the narrative of his Passion would have been preserved and transmitted in a variety of settings such as the liturgy, instruction within the home or small Christian communities, or, perhaps even more formally, in some early centers of Christian learning. But eventually these oral materials were gathered and put in written form by the evangelists. It is likely that the oral transmission of the biblical materials, both Old and New Testaments, continued to exist and be employed even after the biblical text had been put into writing.

Paul's letters and other New Testament texts such as the catholic epistles and the book of Revelation were composed or dictated into written form immediately, although, as the study materials will show, some of these letters may be composites of several different writings. Nevertheless, it is important to recognize that some writings in the Bible—the book of Ezekiel, the Letter to the Romans, and others—were written by one author in the form in which we have them. Many other books, however—Genesis or Isaiah, for example—were put together from various separate writings created over a lengthy period.

Regardless of whether a biblical book was written at one time by one author or over a period of time by several writers, no original manuscript of any biblical book exists. Copyists from one generation to the next transcribed the biblical materials and enabled them to be available for subsequent generations. The

earliest written manuscripts we have of some Old Testament biblical materials date from the first century B.C. These were part of the wealth of written materials discovered in 1948 on the northwest shore of the Dead Sea and thereafter named the "Dead Sea Scrolls." Most of the other surviving early written materials for both the Old and the New Testaments are papyrus fragments of biblical passages dating from the early second century A.D. and more complete manuscripts of the Bible on parchment from the third and fourth centuries A.D.

The hands of many copyists, with different personal interests and levels of skill, inevitably introduced some variations and errors into the numerous editions of the biblical text. Ancient translations (or versions) of manuscripts into other languages, such as Latin or Syriac or Coptic, could also introduce errors or varying interpretations not found in the original biblical language.

The science of textual criticism attempts to trace the relationships of ancient manuscripts to each other and to reestablish the most reliable form of the biblical text. The discovery of biblical texts among the Dead Sea Scrolls rolled back the age of extant biblical manuscripts several centuries. Surprisingly, although some variants exist, there is still remarkable correspondence between the state of the biblical text in the first century B.C. and the third or fourth century A.D.—testimony to the accuracy and care with which ancient peoples handed on the biblical tradition.

Besides recognizing that we do not have original manuscripts of the books of the Bible, we should also note that the biblical texts of the ancient Church did not have the neat format of our modern Bible. Division into the present system of chapters and verses was introduced only in the Middle Ages. Prior to that, demarcations between individual sentences and sections of a particular biblical book were much more casual and fluid.

The New American Bible Translation

Most modern translations, including that found in the New American Bible (NAB), are based on the most reliable texts of the Bible we have and are translated from the original biblical languages rather than using any intervening translations. Many previous Catholic translations had been based on the Vulgate, or Latin version of the Bible, first prepared by Jerome in the fifth century.

The translation of the NAB was a collaborative achievement of some 50 Catholic biblical scholars, determined to use the best of modern scholarship to bring a fresh and accurate translation of the Bible to the American Catholic community.

The first full edition of the New American Bible appeared in 1970. A revision of the New Testament appeared in 1986, and the NAB Revised Edition in 2011. It is this fully revised edition that is used in The Catholic Bible: Personal Study Edition. Every translation, no matter how accurate and faithful, falls short in attempting to communicate the subtlety and meaning of another language. All translators have to make decisions about the purpose and audience of their translation and the consequent principles they will use in translating the Bible from its original languages to a modern language such as American English. And, to some degree, every translation is a subtle interpretation of the biblical text.

The translators of the New American Bible wanted as much as possible to accurately reflect the nuance and form of biblical Hebrew and Greek, while recasting the language to make it compatible with the rules and style of modern English and in harmony with traditional Catholic interpretations of Scripture. The translators, however, wanted to avoid making the NAB a paraphrase or quasi-interpretation of the

biblical text. Some modern translations attempt this. While such paraphrases perhaps make the biblical texts more palatable to a modern audience, they also risk a high degree of subjectivity in recasting the contents of the Bible. The NAB translation is faithful to the biblical text and takes its place alongside rigorously literal translations such as the Revised Standard Version. This makes it particularly suitable for deeper study of the biblical message, as well as its use in prayer and liturgy.

Accuracy of translation from one language to another also involves issues that are more than linguistic. For instance, the editors of the revised New Testament translation had to struggle with the question of inclusive language. This is a sensitive issue in modern American culture and in the Catholic Church in particular. The translators adopted a compromise stance here. Where the original biblical language clearly intended a generic reference to human beings, the translation is careful to use inclusive language. Where the original text uses a gender-specific reference, however, such as many references to God through male pronouns, the translation does not attempt to use inclusive language.

Modern political issues can also cause difficulties for the translator. Such geographical terms as Israel or Palestine have highly charged meanings in the political arena of today's Middle East. But their appearance in the biblical translation of the New American Bible implies no endorsement of any modern political stance on these difficult issues. So, too, can modern religious sensitivities come into play. Judaism in all its modern forms, out of reverence, avoids the use of the name Yahweh for God. Readers in the synagogue, for example, will substitute Adonai (My Lord) wherever the divine name appears in the biblical text. The modern translator and commentator have to make a decision on whether to try to respect this understandable religious sensitivity.

It should be noted that the Reading Guides and major Reference Articles included in the Personal Study Edition attempt throughout to use inclusive language, and, wherever possible, to avoid offense to modern religious, cultural, or political sensitivities. The editors believed that such a spirit is in accord with both the biblical witness and sound Catholic tradition. Some use of the geographical terms Israel and Palestine was unavoidable in some of the Reading Guides, but no reference to modern geopolitical realities is intended.

Reading, Studying, and Praying the Scriptures

From the beginning of its existence, the Bible has been the object of intense study, prayerful reading, and even heated debate. The Bible is not meant to be a coffee-table book.

One could say that the Bible was formed in a context of prayer and reflection. The various biblical authors reflected on significant events in the life of Israel, of Jesus, and of the early Church. Their discovery of God's presence working within history gives the Bible its force. For all Christians the Bible has unique authority as writings inspired by God's Spirit working within the communities of Israel and the Church, and impelling the biblical writers to give expression in human words to their faith perspective. (For a Catholic view of biblical inspiration, see "The Bible in Catholic Life," RG 13.)

Judaism has always maintained a rich tradition of reflection on its Scriptures. The rabbis lovingly studied every detail of the biblical text and saw an infinite possibility of applications to everyday life. The Scriptures were reverenced as God's Word and took a central place within the prayer life of the synagogue. Christian tradition has had the same character. Until the late Middle Ages, almost all of the Church's theology and teaching was little more than an elaboration of the biblical text.

Some of this biblical focus was lost in the Catholic Church when philosophical analysis— always important—became over-dominant, and theological reflection could often be far distant in focus and spirit from our biblical foundations: While biblical symbols remained dominant in Catholic liturgical life and architecture, in

popular preaching and much popular piety, the Bible was a more distant echo. In the past 50 years, that trend has been radically reversed. The Second Vatican Council gave a strong impetus to a biblical renewal in every dimension of Catholicism (see "The Bible in Catholic Life," RG 13).

One can approach reading and study of the Bible from several vantage points.

The Historical Approach

One purpose in reading the Bible is to comb through the biblical books, seeking leads to the historical context of a given period or culture. While this is a legitimate historical enterprise, it does not correspond to the fundamentally religious character of the Bible. The Bible does have strong historical value; but its purpose is not simply to inform the reader about history but to probe the meaning of past history for the life of faith.

The Theological Approach

Another way of entering the biblical world is to seek what the Bible, or a particular biblical book, has to say on a specific doctrinal or moral issue. What, for example, does the Bible say about violence? Or what is the biblical perspective on justice? Because the Bible is such a rich and diverse body of literature, we soon discover that the Bible will yield many perspectives on such important issues. There is seldom a single biblical viewpoint on any specific theological or moral issue. Only by first understanding the context of each biblical period and biblical book, and then interrelating the Bible's varied approaches to profound questions of faith, can one weave together a biblical theology.

The Inspirational Approach

For most Christians, reading the Bible has a more modest, yet still important goal. They turn to the Scriptures for inspiration in living out their life of faith. Such inspiration can be gained in many different ways.

For some, the Scriptures are an important stimulant for prayer. The words of the Psalms, the challenge of the prophets, the compassionate mission of Jesus, the soaring words of Paul—all of these give form and expression to the longing of our own hearts as we seek the face of God.

Very often the biblical words are able to express the feelings and fears and hopes we could not put into words ourselves. And in reaching out to the Bible we unite ourselves with the faith of countless generations of Christians who found the same solace and strength in the Scriptures.

For others, probing the Scriptures either in private or with a group of Christians helps guide and illumine their daily lives. Study of the biblical text and discussion of its meaning with other thoughtful Christians can help us understand our own experience of faith and expand our perspective on what it means to be a believer in the modern world. This approach works best when the participant is not afraid to reflect on his or her own experience, and then relate that reflection to the ideas and images of the Bible. Very often the Bible opens its treasures when we bring to it questions and hopes that spring

from our life of faith. Then, in turn, the biblical message can give new insight and nourishment to our faith experience.

A profound sense of grief or loss, for example, might lead a Christian to read with new understanding the lament psalms of the Old Testament or the passion of Jesus. And these biblical passages, in turn, can bring new strength to the one who suffers.

Whatever approach one takes to reading and praying the Bible, it is important from a Catholic perspective that it not be done in isolation. The Bible is the Church's book, not a private library. Only in the context of the Church's faith and tradition as a whole can the full meaning of the Bible be discovered. Some Christians who isolate themselves from common sense and from the sound wisdom of the Church community can interpret the Scriptures in a bizarre and even destructive manner. That is why the effort to understand the biblical text in its context, to sound out its possible meaning with other thoughtful Christians, and to be open to the guidance of the Church and its teaching forms the best context for full integration of the Bible into our lives (on this see the 1993 statement of the Pontifical Biblical Commission, The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church, which fully endorses the use of modern biblical methods).

The Personal Study Edition is designed to open the beauty and power of the Bible to the reader. The editors and the Oxford University Press hope that the guides, articles, and other resources provided in this unique volume will serve you well as you step into the marvelous world of the Bible. By Donald Senior, C.P., Editor, The Catholic Study Bible (from which this essay is adapted) and Jean Marie Hiesberger, Editor, The Catholic Bible: Personal Study Edition

How to Use the Catholic Bible: Personal Study Edition

We have included much information and many study aids in the Catholic Bible: Personal Study Edition. These aids will help you to use this study Bible in a great variety of ways and settings. This outline suggests some ways of starting your studies and reflections, using the features contained in this book. As you read further, we hope you will discover other approaches for yourself.

If your goal is to read and reflect on a single biblical book or major passage of the Bible, the two key sections of the Study Bible to use are the biblical text itself and the Reading Guides. These work together to help you grasp the overall character of a biblical book, its main themes, and specific issues that arise in a particular passage. In turning to the Gospel of Luke, for example, you can work through the Reading Guide for Luke, including the Discussion/Reflection questions, and then turn to the Bible section on p. 1494 and read the Introduction given there. Now when you go through the gospel itself, your reading will be much richer and more meaningful. You will not only have a better understanding of what you read, but with the Discussion/Reflection questions in mind, you will be reading it while attuned to their challenges. Of course, footnotes and sidebars, where they exist, will help "unpack" the text as you go.

For Individual and Group Reading or Study

Whether you are using the Study Bible alone or in a group, learning about our "family history" in

RG the biblical story can be a rich and, in some cases, life-changing experience. And, of course, we believe that Christ is among us where two or three gather in his name. A group can be the instrument

of powerful insights helping us to make connections with our own story or applications to our life that we might miss otherwise. The Reading Guide is designed to walk us through the particular book of the Bible with a little background to "plow the ground" so that the seed of the scripture can take root in us more deeply and fruitfully.

The Reading Guide for each book follows a set pattern of three basic parts:

A section called "At a Glance" begins each guide with a kind of snapshot of the book to be read. It briefly addresses:

Who are the main players?

What should I look for?

When did this take place?

Where did these events occur?

Why was this book written?

What is the story?

Next comes a brief "walk through" the book, which gives important and helpful background information. This makes reading the actual biblical text much more understandable as well as meaningful.

Finally, the Reading Guide for each book ends with a set of discussion/reflection questions. These are meant for you to use after you have read and studied both the Reading Guide and the Bible text. These questions always follow the same three-part format, a format typically used with Catechumens and Candidates in the R.C.I.A. process:

- The first set of questions is Group Sharing/ Discussion. This set explores the Bible text itself, allowing for reviewing, digesting, and thinking about the story or the setting itself. Taking time for this step helps to synthesize and clarify what was read so that the next step will be easier and richer.
- The second set is In Our Lives. Here the questions push us to think about what might be called the "So what?" of reading the text. What is the lesson? What does it teach us? How does it apply to me or to us as a church community? As the first questions are about using our head, this set is for the heart also.
- The final set of questions is Individual/Personal Reflection/Action. Whether using the Study Guide alone or in a group, this is where we take time to decide on what we will do as a result of the lessons contained in this part of the Bible. This takes the scriptures one step beyond head and heart and helps us put them into our lives. And this, of course, is the whole point of scripture study.

Because scripture study is not learning an abstract or academic subject, but is about sharing faith and sharing personal insights and experience, the human dimension of our relationship with the others in Bible study groups needs attention. In addition to preparing for a group session by studying the Reading Guide and the Bible text, it is important for parish groups, R.C.I.A. sessions, or informal groups of any age to begin each session by welcoming everyone. When members are allowed to connect on the

human level, catch up a bit on what has happened in their lives since the last meeting, perhaps share a cup of coffee and some refreshments, the relationships deepen and so does the ability to comfortably share insights and ideas. This "hospitality dimension" is the responsibility of everyone in the group, whether or not there is a designated leader. Most groups find that beyond 90 minutes there is little capacity for listening and learning, so it is important to respect the time frame agreed upon in advance. Some groups take a break in the middle of the session, others at the beginning or end.

The Personal Study Edition is also useful for the college or religious education classroom. It provides virtually a one-volume textbook and reference library on the Bible. Experienced and imaginative teachers will find their own way to best utilize a book like this. Here are some suggestions to get you started.

The Study Bible can certainly serve as a textbook for a course on the Bible as a whole or for introductions to the Old or New Testaments. Here again interplay between pertinent sections of the Reading Guides and the biblical text and notes is very important.

Teachers in a Catholic setting may want to give special attention to the Reference Article on "The Bible in Catholic Life" as an important summary of Catholic teaching on the role of the Bible in the Church's life and thought. The Reference Article on "The Bible in the Lectionary" will help Catholics (and Christians from other mainline denominations) understand how the liturgy is a major source of biblical inspiration for Roman Catholic tradition.

Other Helpful Features of This Study Bible

Within this study Bible, you will find a full range of aids to help you discover the meaning of the Bible. The following description of its contents, and suggestions for using the book, might help you take full advantage of its unique resources.

The New American Bible

Beginning on page 1, following the Reading Guides, you will find the full text and notes of the New American Bible. Each major section of the Bible and each biblical book has a brief introduction. Extensive notes explaining words or individual verses are found at the bottom of the page. An asterisk (*) alongside a particular word or verse signals to you that an explanatory note is provided for that biblical text. These notes provide a wealth of information for the studious reader.

The New American Bible also provides cross-references to other related biblical passages. These cross-references are signaled by a small italic letter printed in specific verses. The cross-reference is found at the bottom of the page.

There are sidebars set off within the text of the Bible. These contain information to make the text more understandable and meaningful as you read.

Finally, along the side margins there is another set of cross-references, directing you to the Reading Guide for that particular biblical book. These cross-references are indicated by page numbers enclosed within a shaded box. Page numbers for the Reading Guides are preceded by the letters RG.

General and Reference Articles

Another helpful feature of the **CATHOLIC BIBLE: PERSONAL STUDY EDITION** is that it provides extensive and detailed studies of key issues for understanding and using the Bible. In addition to this introduction, the reader will find the following Reference Articles:

- The Bible in Catholic Life
- Catholics and Fundamentalism
- How to Read the Bible
- Understanding the Historical Background to the Biblical Texts
- The Catechism of the Catholic Church
- Catholic Beliefs in Scripture
- The Bible in the Lectionary
- Lectionary, Historical, and Canon Tables

Glossary

The glossary provides clear explanations of the less familiar or more technical terms used in the Bible or in the Reading Guides and Reference Articles.

Maps

Aside from maps dealing with specific matters in various points of the biblical text, there are full-color maps and a map index at the very end of the Bible. These will provide you with the entire geographical canvas on which the biblical drama is portrayed.

The Bible in Catholic Life by Daniel J. Harrington

Church Life Today

One of the great achievements of the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965) has been the renewal of interest in the Bible among Catholics. How dramatic this renewal has been can be grasped by comparing Catholic practice around 1950 and the situation in the early years of the twenty-first century.

At mid-twentieth century the Scriptures were read at Mass in Latin. There were few selections from the Old Testament, and a rather small number of New Testament passages dominated the one-year cycle. In response to the mandate of the Second Vatican Council we now have a three-year cycle of Sunday readings and a two-year weekday cycle. (See "The Bible in the Lectionary," p. 1849.) The Old Testament is very prominent, and almost the entire New Testament (Gospels and Epistles) is represented. The passages, of course, are read in the vernacular (English, Spanish, or whatever is the dominant local language).

In the 1950s study of Bible texts was not an integral part of the primary- or secondary-school curriculum in Catholic schools. At best Bible content was conveyed through summaries of the texts. Catholic college students might work through parts of the Bible with the aid of cautious and approved textbooks as guides. But now the texts of the Bible form a primary resource for Catholic religious

education at all levels. And Bible courses and Bible-study groups have become especially popular forums for adult education.

At the mid-twentieth century, Catholic seminarians took most of their Scripture courses toward the end of their theology programs. In comparison with dogma and moral theology, Scripture study was considered a minor course. Now biblical studies are a major component of the seminary curriculum at all stages. And such courses are very popular. Students in Catholic seminaries assume that much of their preaching and teaching in the future will be devoted to the Bible, and so they study it with eagerness. There is also a lively dialogue and interdisciplinary cooperation between professors of Scripture and their theological colleagues.

Since Vatican II the Bible has become prominent not only in Catholic liturgy and education but also in popular piety. The revised prayers for the sacraments and other liturgical actions use biblical language almost entirely. Charismatic groups and base communities have found biblical reflection and prayer to be the source of great spiritual energy. Even traditional Catholic observances like the Rosary are (and always have been) thoroughly biblical. The language of Catholic prayer in almost every instance derives from the Bible.

The Scriptures have also been a major element in the ecumenical movement since the council. The serious historical and theological differences between the Christian churches remain. But the most progress has been made where the different Church groups have focused on the Bible as their common heritage and have reexamined their differences in light of the Bible's language and thought patterns. When this has occurred, the usual result has been the recognition that what unites the Christian churches is more important and fundamental than what divides them. In the new and more positive relationship that has emerged between Christians and Jews in recent years, Bible study has been a vital force toward greater mutual understanding and respect.

Catholic theology since the council gives far more attention to biblical sources and is likely to express itself more in biblical than in philosophical language. Official church documents on theological matters or current problems almost always begin from Scripture and try to ground their arguments in biblical texts. The Catholic Church today is far more "biblical" than it was in the mid-1950s.

Bible Study in History

In order to understand the Bible's place in Catholic thinking today, it can be helpful to see how Christians in other times and places thought about and interpreted the Bible. The Bible has not always been studied according to the principles of modern historical criticism. Nor should scientific study of the Bible be understood as superseding, and thus making obsolete, all earlier approaches. A brief history of biblical interpretation will reveal important insights that remain valid today.

The Old Testament constituted the Bible for Jesus and the early Christians. According to the Gospels, Jesus sometimes quoted or alluded to Old Testament texts in order to establish a theological point or to suggest a way of acting. He clearly accorded these texts a certain degree of authority. Nevertheless, Jesus emerges from the New Testament as displaying flexibility toward the Old Testament and even asserting his authority over it. He distinguishes what comes from God and what comes from Moses (see Mk 10:1–12), goes beyond certain scriptural teachings (Mt 5:21–48), and rates love of God and neighbor (Mk 12:28–31) over strict observance of the Sabbath.

New Testament writers such as Paul and Matthew looked upon the Old Testament Scriptures as fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Basing themselves on what apparently was a widespread early Christian understanding, they interpreted the Old Testament Scriptures in the light of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Like other Jews of the time, they understood the Old Testa

ment to be a mystery—that is, something that could not be understood without guidance or explanation. Whereas the Qumran community (the Jewish group that gave us the Dead Sea Scrolls) found the key to the Scriptures in their own sect's history and life, the early Christians discovered Jesus to be the key that opened up the mystery of the Hebrew Bible.

By the time of the Fathers of the Church (the patristic period), the Christian Bible contained two Testaments—Old and New. These Fathers, or early theologians, generally adopted one or the other of two basic approaches to the reading and interpretation of Scripture: the allegorical and the literal methods.

The allegorical method, favored particularly by those theologians who lived in Alexandria in Egypt, emphasized uncovering the spiritual truths beneath the surface of the biblical stories. This method had been developed by Greek thinkers who interpreted the stories in Homer's Iliad and Odyssey as symbolizing emotional or spiritual struggles within the individual. It had also been adopted by Jewish interpreters, like Philo of Alexandria, who used the method on the Hebrew Bible in order to appeal to nonJews and especially to Jews who had come under the influence of Greek philosophy and culture. Christian theologians who used this method included Origen and Clement of Alexandria.

In contrast to this method was the more literal reading of the Bible, favored by those Christian thinkers who lived in Antioch, the capital of Syria in Roman times. The literal approach focused more on the historical realities described in Scripture and insisted that any higher or deeper sense should be based firmly on the literal sense of the text. John Chrysostom and Theodore of Mopsuestia were among those who favored this approach.

It is important to recognize that these different emphases were not completely opposed to each other. Thus, the allegorical method did not deny the historical truth of events in Scripture, nor did the literal method deny the spiritual meaning of those events. Later theologians tended to blend the two approaches, although favoring one tendency or the other. Augustine, for instance, tended toward the allegorical and Jerome toward the literal. Medieval interpreters, building on both these approaches, distinguished four senses in a scriptural text: literal (what took place), allegorical (the hidden theological meaning), anagogical (the heavenly sense), and moral or tropological (the significance for the individual's behavior). The classic example was the term "Jerusalem" (see Gal 4:22–31), which can refer to a city in Palestine (literal), the Church (allegorical), the heavenly home of us all (anagogical), and the human soul (moral). Since this wide-ranging approach to Scripture could easily degenerate into subjectivity, careful interpreters like Thomas Aquinas insisted that "nothing necessary to faith is contained under the spiritual sense that is not elsewhere put forward by Scripture in its literal sense." Thomas Aquinas also used human reason as a tool in explaining the Scriptures and tried to bring together philosophical truth (especially as proposed by Aristotle) and biblical truth.

With the Renaissance and the rise of Humanism came a new interest in studying the Scriptures in their original languages and their historical settings. Erasmus produced a new edition of the Greek New

Testament to go along with his revision of the Latin Vulgate translation. He also used the Greek and Roman classics of paganism along with the writings of the Church Fathers to interpret the biblical texts. Catholic enthusiasm for the study of the Scriptures cooled, however, in response to the claims for the Bible (sola scriptura, or Scripture alone) made by Martin Luther and other Protestant Reformers, especially their statements about the clarity of Scripture (so that there is no need for the Church as the final interpreter) and its sufficiency (so that there is no need for Church tradition).

The rationalist claims of the European Enlightenment made matters even more complicated for Catholic interpreters of the Bible. For example, the philosopher Baruch Spinoza maintained that when Scripture and philosophy come into conflict (as in the case of miracles), then Scripture is to be rejected in favor of reason. Thus the Catholic Church was backed into being the defender of biblical "truth," sometimes with unfortunate consequences.

This survey reveals some abiding principles of Catholic biblical interpretation: the central significance of Christ, the struggle to be faithful to the literal meaning while searching for spiritual meaning, the conviction that faith and reason are not opposed, the insistence that the Bible should be interpreted in the church, and the emphasis on biblical truth against the attacks of rationalism.

Modern Developments

The gradual Catholic acceptance of scientific biblical criticism (or the historical-critical method), while remaining true to the Church's heritage, can be traced with reference to a series of official Roman documents issued during the late nineteenth and the twentieth centuries. For a full collection of official Roman Catholic documents pertaining to the study of the Bible, see Dean R. Bechard, ed., The Scripture Documents: An Anthology of Official Catholic Teachings (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2002).

A cautious beginning was made with the papal encyclical Providentissimus Deus by Pope Leo XIII in 1893, only to be blunted by fears of Modernism under Pius X and by Benedict XV's encyclical Spiritus Paraclitus, issued in 1920. A new age dawned with the encyclical entitled Divino Afflante Spiritu, which was promulgated by Pius XII in 1943, in which the historical study of the Bible was given official approbation. The approach outlined by Pius XII was put into practice by the Pontifical Biblical Commission in its 1964 Instruction Concerning the Historical Truth of the Gospels.

The culmination of official Catholic pronouncements on biblical studies was the Second Vatican Council's Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation. The nature of these documents is cumulative; that is, the latest document generally restates the teachings contained in previous documents and clarifies matters not discussed earlier in detail. However, the document of an ecumenical council has far more official weight than a papal encyclical or an instruction from the Pontifical Biblical Commission. Moreover, the council's document on Scripture was a "dogmatic constitution," the most authoritative kind issued by Vatican II. Thus Vatican II's Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation can be taken as the authoritative climax of a long series of developments in the Church's attitude toward the Bible.

Vatican II was a "pastoral" council. It sought to address the needs of the church and the world in the twentieth century and beyond. Its constitution on divine revelation (also known by its Latin title, Dei verbum) was addressed not so much to scholars or theologians as to the church at large. In effect, the bishops were saying, "This is what the Catholic Church thinks and believes about the Bible and related matters." The document had a rocky history from its first draft in 1962 to its final form in 1965. Pope

John XXIII's rejection of the initial draft, which favored a propositional understanding of revelation (revelation consists of statements of abstract truths) and a theory of two sources of revelation (Scripture and tradition), set the Second Vatican Council on its path of aggiornamento (Italian for "bringing up to date"). (All quotations are from the translation by Liam Walsh and Wilfrid Harrington in Austin Flannery, ed., Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post-Conciliar Documents [Northport, NY: Costello, 1975], 750–765.)

The six chapters in Dei verbum treat divine revelation itself, the transmission of divine revelation, sacred Scripture—its divine inspiration and its interpretation, the Old Testament, the New Testament, and sacred Scripture in the life of the Church. What the constitution teaches on these topics will be taken up in the remaining parts of this essay. Here only what it teaches about scientific biblical criticism will concern us.

The conciliar statement about biblical criticism appears in paragraph 12, which is part of the chapter on the inspiration and interpretation of Scripture. It is prefaced by an acknowledgment that since God speaks in Scripture through human beings, and so in human fashion, interpreters should give careful attention to the ways in which the sacred writers thought and expressed themselves:

> In determining the intention of the sacred writers, attention must be paid, inter alia, to literary forms for the fact is that truth is differently presented and expressed in the various types of historical writing, in prophetical and poetical texts, and in other forms of literary expression. Hence the exegete must look for that meaning which the sacred writer, in a determined situation and given the circumstances of his time and culture, intended to express and did in fact express, through the medium of a contemporary literary form.

Rightly to understand what the sacred author wanted to affirm in his work, due attention must be paid both to the customary and characteristic patterns of perception, speech and narrative which prevailed at the age of the sacred writer, and to the conventions which the people of his time followed in their dealings with one another.

The statement, which is really a condensation of Pius XII's 1943 encyclical Divine Afflante Spiritu, makes three points. First, it insists that we take into account the various literary forms in which the Bible is written, and it warns us against confusing historical, prophetic, and poetic texts. Next, it urges us to pay attention to the historical setting in which the sacred author wrote, suggesting that such historical awareness is necessary for grasping what the author intended. Finally, it recommends that we learn about the literary conventions and cultural assumptions that people accepted at the time when the biblical books were composed. Thus the conciliar document encourages the literary, historical, and sociological study of biblical texts.

The acceptance of biblical criticism, of course, does not reduce the Sacred Scriptures to the status of other, strictly human books. In fact, the very next sentence in the document affirms the divine authorship of the biblical texts and urges biblical interpreters to take that into consideration:

> But since sacred Scripture must be read and interpreted with its divine authorship in mind, no less attention must be devoted to the content and unity of the whole of Scripture, taking into account the Tradition of the entire Church and the analogy of faith, if we are to derive their true meaning from the sacred texts.

In this way the conciliar document achieves a balance between the human and the divine contributions to Scripture. Interpreters are thereby encouraged to apply all the tools of biblical criticism, while bearing in mind the Church's longstanding conviction that the Bible contains "the Word of God in the words of men."

In 1993, to mark the 100th anniversary of Providentissimus Deus and the 50th anniversary of Divino Afflante Spiritu, the Pontifical Biblical Commission, with the full approval of Pope John Paul II, issued a document entitled "The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church." Prepared by an international team of distinguished Catholic biblical scholars, this document describes various methods of and approaches to biblical interpretation, examines certain questions of a hermeneutical nature, reflects on the characteristic features of a Catholic interpretation of the Bible, and considers the place that biblical interpretation has in the life of the Church. This document spells out in some detail many of the directions recommended in the papal encyclicals and in Vatican II's Dei verbum.

The Pontifical Biblical Commission's document describes the historical-critical method as "the indispensable method for the scientific study of the meaning of ancient texts." While giving attention to the many possible contributions from certain "new" literary and socialscientific approaches, it criticizes fundamentalism as "dangerous" and even as inviting people to "a kind of intellectual suicide." And it insists on the pastoral significance of the whole exegetical enterprise when it states: "Exegesis produces its best results when it is carried out in the context of the living faith of the Christian community, which is directed toward the salvation of the entire world."

Methods of Biblical Interpretation

The term biblical criticism refers to various methods of scientific biblical study that have as their goal establishing the text, understanding the content and the literary style of biblical books, and determining their origin and authenticity. This undertaking is sometimes called the historical-critical method—historical because it focuses on the original historical settings of the biblical texts and the historical processes that gave rise to them, and critical because it applies reason to the texts and makes judgments about them in the effort to be as objective as possible. Biblical criticism aims to understand what a text was saying to its original audience and to make clear its significance then (and now).

Textual criticism (sometimes called lower criticism) seeks to establish the wording of the biblical text as the biblical authors wrote it. Since we no longer have direct access to the manuscripts written by the biblical authors (autographs), textual critics try to come as close as possible to the original form of the texts by gathering all the pertinent manuscript evidence (Hebrew and Aramaic for the Old Testament, Greek for the New Testament, ancient translations for both Testaments). When the evidence has been assembled, textual critics determine where the ancient manuscripts differ and proceed to decide which reading is original and to explain how the other readings arose. The rejected readings may have been unconscious mistakes (for example, confusing similar letters of the alphabet, omitting words or phrases, inserting marginal comments into the main text) or deliberate modifications (for example, harmonizing with parallel texts, "correcting" grammar or style, removing "offensive" material). The accepted readings should be consistent with the content and style of the document and follow the rules of grammar and good sense.

Literary criticism attends to the words and images, the characters and their relationships, the structure and progress of thought, the literary form, and the meaning. These processes are used today in studying

all kinds of literature; they are by no means confined to biblical study. Bible concordances, dictionaries, and encyclopedias make it possible to trace the development of a word (for example, faith) or a theme (for example, covenant) and to locate a particular occurrence within such a framework. Careful inspection of a text enables one to chart out the interactions among the characters or to outline the progress of the argument. The biblical writers used many different literary forms. The Old Testament consists of law codes, narratives, psalms, prophecies, proverbs, visions, and even love poetry. The New Testament contains stories of Jesus' words and deeds (Gospels), the actions of some apostles (Acts), letters (Epistles), and visions (Revelation). Rather than stating theological truths in the form of theses or propositions, the biblical authors conveyed their message in artistic and memorable ways. Literary criticism helps us to read the biblical books on their own terms and thus to appreciate their artistry and their truth.

Historical criticism concerns the world behind the biblical texts; that is, the origin and growth of the biblical documents. Scholars assume that sometimes a complicated process of composition lies behind a finished book of the Bible. Smaller literary units—for example, a saying from Jesus, or a hymn—were told and retold, or used orally in worship. Later, perhaps, a collection of sayings or hymns was made. Still later, a writer created a longer narrative into which various sayings were fitted, or which quoted a hymn in order to make a point. At each stage, the original small unit was being used in a slightly different context, and it may have been changed in small ways in order to fit its new use better.

Scholars have various names for this sort of investigation of a biblical text, depending on what level they are examining. Source criticism attempts to establish where previously existing material (for example, a hymn, a saying, or a vision account) has been used by a later author in a longer work, either by accepting what is stated in the work itself or by noticing differences in content, vocabulary, and literary style. Form criticism seeks to classify literary genres or forms, and to isolate the historical settings in which the forms developed and functioned before they became part of the main text. A sermon, for instance, will have characteristics that are different from those of a letter or a story. Redaction criticism deals with the ways in which a biblical author or editor (redactor means editor) used sources, and sometimes changed them, to address problems and concerns facing his readers. So biblical criticism takes account of historical settings at three levels: the sources, the small units, and the finished document.

Archaeological excavations and textual discoveries such as the Ugaritic texts and the Dead Sea Scrolls can shed light on the material world and culture in which the biblical books were written. For example, ancient epics outside the Bible have helped us to appreciate the creation stories in the book of Genesis. And the Dead Sea Scrolls, besides providing the earliest extant manuscripts of the Hebrew Bible, have illumined the thought and organization of the early Church.

The interpretive process can also be enriched by the application of concepts and methods used in the social sciences such as sociology, cultural anthropology, and psychology. These approaches help in exposing the cultural assumptions about the human condition and the world that people in biblical times took for granted, and in explaining the development of ancient Israel into a nation and the early Christian communities into what we call the Church.

Historical criticism is sometimes defined narrowly to refer to the reality of the event behind the text, to determining what actually occurred at (for example) the first Passover or the first Easter. What really happened in detail is sometimes hard to discern, since the biblical authors were often more interested in

the meaning of the events than in their precise details. Some historical critics (in the narrow sense) rule out the miraculous and divine intervention on philosophical grounds and make negative judgments about the communities that handed on the biblical texts. But this is not true of all historical critics, nor is it at all consistent with the Catholic approach to Scripture, which assumes that the biblical texts tell the "honest truth" about the events described in the texts.

While the classic historical-critical method is oriented mainly to illuminating the history of the text and the world behind the text, certain "new" methods of literary analysis focus more on the text as it now stands (the world of the text) and on its effects on the reader today (the world before or in front of the text). Rhetorical analysis explores the capacity of a biblical text to persuade and convince the reader, while narrative analysis investigates how a text works in the sense of its success in telling a story involving plot, characters, and point of view. Structuralist analysis and semiotic analysis are modern linguistic methods that examine the various temporal and spatial relationships in a text, with an eye toward revealing the deeper patterns of meaning underlying the text.

Another set of approaches to biblical interpretation privileges the interpreter and the social location of the interpreter. Liberation theology takes as its starting point the lived experience of poor people today and enters into conversation with biblical texts (e.g., Israel's Exodus from Egypt, or Mary's Magnificat in Lk 1:46–55) as a way of illumining both the biblical text and the present situation of the poor. Feminist interpretation calls attention to the prominence of certain women in the Bible, exposes the patriarchal or male-centered assumptions of the cultures in which the Bible was originally produced, and challenges interpreters to recognize the liberating contributions of women to the biblical story of salvation.

Other reader-oriented resources in biblical interpretation include the history of interpretation (how a text has been understood by Jewish and Christian readers throughout the centuries) and the history of effects (the impact or influence that a text has exercised in the course of history). Canonical criticism focuses on the final canonical form of a biblical text, explores its place within the biblical canon as a whole, and considers its significance for the Church's faith and way of life. Hermeneutics is concerned with discerning the present significance of a biblical text. While this is what preachers have always done, the hermeneutical phase of the interpretive task is open to and incumbent upon all Bible readers. It involves the fusion of horizons between the ancient text and the reader in the present and envisions a process by which the reader is changed intellectually and spiritually by encounter with the biblical text.

Two terms that have recently become prominent with regard to Catholic biblical interpretation and its practical impact in church life are actualization and inculturation. The Christian Scriptures are ancient texts, and so they need to be presented in ways in which they can speak to peoples of different times (actualization) and places or cultures (inculturation). The Scriptures are made "actual" whenever their spiritual insights are presented in such a way that they can address the problems and possibilities of the present day. Likewise, the Scriptures are "inculturated" whenever they are translated, interpreted, and applied in terms that peoples from outside the ancient Mediterranean world can understand and so live out their challenges and opportunities.

One traditional way of bringing together all these different methods in a simple and coherent framework is through the traditional Catholic approach developed in monastic circles and known as lectio divina (divine [or spiritual] reading). There are four steps. The first step is lectio (reading); that is, a careful reading of the text from various critical perspectives (literary, historical, and theological) and the

assimilation or appropriation of the text on both intellectual and emotional levels. The second step is meditatio, which explores what this text may be saying to me (or us) now. One can open up the text by focusing on a theme or a few phrases, by applying the senses (sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch) to the biblical scene, and by trying to make connections between the text and one's present situation. The third step is oratio (prayer), in which

on the basis of reading and meditating one may speak words of praise, petition, adoration, and/or thanksgiving to God. The fourth step may take the form of contemplatio (relishing the religious experience generated by the encounter with the text and resting in the mystery of God) and/or actio (coming to a decision about one's life, or finding new ways to express what one has learned— through dance, drama, artwork, group sharing, homily, etc.).

Scripture as Tradition

The official Catholic emphasis on attention to the literary forms, historical settings, and cultural assumptions of the biblical writings flows from the nature of the books themselves. Far from being individual creations generated in solitude, the biblical books include many ideas, traditions, and even small pieces that already existed before being integrated into the texts in which they now stand. Biblical literature is thoroughly and deliberately traditional.

The traditional character of the Old Testament has long been acknowledged. The first five books, which are customarily called the Pentateuch or Torah, are generally recognized to incorporate material from at least four different sources (Yahwist, Elohist, Deuteronomist, Priestly). See "Introduction to the Pentateuch," pp. 7–9. The historical books (Joshua to 2 Kings, Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah) include earlier accounts, memoirs, genealogies, and so forth. The prophetic books are anthologies of short pieces of poetry and prose, and the wisdom books contain ideas and even sayings that circulated in the ancient Near East for centuries before. The Psalms are a collection of varied kinds of songs used mainly in the Jerusalem Temple; in the Psalms there may even be remnants of nonJewish hymns (see Psalm 29). So complicated and so rich is the process of transmission that it is difficult in most cases to speak of the author of a biblical book as one may speak of an author today. The situation is further complicated by the fact that in biblical times personal creativity and originality were not important values. One displayed real creativity by using traditional ideas and expressions in new settings and in new combinations.

Given the nature of the Old Testament and the ancient concept of creativity, one would expect the New Testament to be thoroughly traditional also. And it is. The earliest complete documents in the New Testament are Paul's letters. Even these highly "original" and occasional pieces rely at key points on preexisting material (for example, Rom 1:3–4; 1 Cor 13:1–13; 15:3–5; Phil 2:6–11). Those epistles whose direct Pauline composition is doubtful (for example, the Pastorals, Ephesians, Colossians, 2 Thessalonians) are best understood as later attempts to bring the figure and teaching of Paul to bear on situations facing the churches in the late first century. We often regard Paul as a creative genius. However, not only did he use some traditional material, but also almost all his undisputed letters contain some indication of joint authorship (see 1 Thes 1:1; 1 Cor 1:1; Rom 16:22; etc.). Moreover, throughout his letters Paul gives credit to his "co-workers" and encourages the collection for the Jerusalem community as a sign of solidarity with the "mother church" there.

The complicated process of tradition and composition applies to the Gospels too. Most scholars today place the final composition of the four canonical Gospels in the late first century: Mark around A.D. 70,

Matthew and Luke around A.D. 80–90, and John around A.D. 90–100. Yet all scholars acknowledge that the evangelists used already-existing material in their Gospels. For example, Matthew and Luke each seem to have read both Mark's Gospel and a collection of Jesus' sayings that modern scholars call "Q" (from the German word Quelle, which means "source"). John utilized a collection of miracle stories (signs) and perhaps also some "revelation discourses." The Markan and Johannine passion narratives surely contain much traditional information, accounts that had been passed from one person to another.

The Gospels and the traditions incorporated in them tell the story of Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified around A.D. 30. Like other Jewish teachers of his time, Jesus taught by word (parables, proverbs, debates, other sayings) and deed (example, healings, symbolic gestures). His disciples remembered and retold his words and deeds, thus providing the basic materials for what became the Gospel tradition. Jesus did not write books. What we know of Jesus comes to us through the process of tradition from Jesus to the early Church and finally to the evangelists.

The nature of the Gospels demands that interpreters attend to three stages in their development. The Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation (Dei verbum 19) captures that development in this marvelously concise statement:

> The sacred authors, in writing the four Gospels, selected certain of the many elements which had been handed on, either orally or already in written form, others they synthesized or explained with an eye to the situation of the churches, the while sustaining the form of preaching, but always in such a fashion that they have told us the honest truth about Jesus.

The council's document affirms that the Gospels tell us the "honest truth" about Jesus. It recognizes that there was an intermediary stage in which traditions about Jesus circulated in oral and written forms as "preaching" about the significance of Jesus. It acknowledges that the evangelists give us only a selection (see Lk 1:1–4; Jn 20:30–31; 21:25) of the traditions about Jesus. It also recognizes that the evangelists used the traditions about Jesus to address the situations of their own day. Therefore, Catholics must read the Gospels as traditional documents (because they are such) and attend to three stages in their development: Jesus, the early Church, and the evangelists.

Although in the past there has been some Catholic resistance to accepting the "traditional" character of the biblical books, this emphasis is perfectly compatible with the principles of Catholicism. There is no obligation for Catholics to be conservative historians of early Christianity (nor is there any obligation for them to be reckless or indifferent). As long as Catholic scholars make clear the link from Jesus through the early Church to the evangelists, they remain faithful to their theological heritage.

In fact, an emphasis on the traditional nature of the biblical writings is fully consistent with certain distinctively Catholic principles. The Catholic stress on the communal character of our way to God and God's way to us sensitizes Catholics to the complexity of early Christian tradition and to the role of the Church in shaping it and being formed by it. The Catholic emphasis that encounter with God is rooted in history and is a mediated experience helps us to see the continuity between Jesus and the early reflections on him, as well as the significance and correctness of those reflections. The Catholic sacramental approach, which sees God in and through all things, leads us to view the very human process of tradition as a vehicle for expressing, safeguarding, and adapting divine revelation.

Scripture and Tradition

The Catholic Church does not restrict divine revelation to the biblical text. Against the Protestant Reformation's slogan of "Scripture alone," Catholic theologians insisted on "Scripture and tradition." The term "tradition" recognizes the fact that the living reality of the Church has the task of preserving the gospel as well as interpreting and applying it in new situations. Catholic Christianity is not simply a "religion of the Book."

While acknowledging the twofold reality of Scripture and tradition, Catholic theologians have long debated the precise relation between the two. One way of approaching the problem was to assume that Scripture and tradition constitute two separate sources of divine revelation. The Second Vatican Council rejected this view in the second chapter of its Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation (Dei verbum 10): "Sacred Tradition and sacred Scripture make up a single sacred deposit of the Word of God, which is entrusted to the Church." In other words, the Word of God (or divine revelation) is the source of both tradition and Scripture.

How exactly Scripture and tradition are related remains a problem. The conciliar document uses the analogy of a wellspring or fountain to insist on their unity while preserving their diversity in Dei verbum 9:

> Sacred Tradition and sacred Scripture then, are bound closely together, and communicate one with the other. For both of them, flowing out from the same divine well-spring, come together in some fashion to form one thing, and move towards the same goal. Sacred Scripture is the speech of God as it is put down in writing under the breath of the Holy Spirit. And Tradition transmits in its entirety the Word of God which has been entrusted to the apostles by Christ the Lord and the Holy Spirit.

The same paragraph rejects the "Scripture alone" principle of the Reformation and preserves the Catholic approach of "Scripture and tradition" by insisting that the Church does not draw certainty about all revealed truths from the holy Scriptures alone. Hence, both Scripture and tradition must be accepted and honored with equal feelings of devotion and reverence. Thus the Second Vatican Council insisted that Scripture and tradition flow from the same divine wellspring and that both must be accepted and honored. Without endorsing any one theological approach to their relation, the council rejected the opinion of those who wished to keep the two separate.

The same tension appears when the Dogmatic Constitution addresses the issue of authoritative interpretation of the Scriptures in Dei verbum 10:

> ... the task of giving an authentic interpretation of the Word of God, whether in its written form or in the form of Tradition, has been entrusted to the living teaching office of the Church alone. Its authority in this matter is exercised in the name of Jesus Christ. Yet this Magisterium is not superior to the Word of God, but is its servant. It teaches only what has been handed on to it. At the divine command and with the help of the Holy Spirit, it listens to this devotedly, guards it with dedication and expounds it faithfully. All that it proposes for belief as being divinely revealed is drawn from this single deposit of faith.

On the one hand, this statement entrusts authentic interpretation to the magisterium (the bishops with the pope). On the other hand, it insists that the magisterium is the servant of divine revelation and can only teach what is drawn from the single deposit of faith constituted by divine revelation.

The precise relation between Scripture and tradition also remains a problem. As a "pastoral" council, Vatican II avoided becoming an arbiter of theological disputes. Its insistence on the oneness of Scripture and tradition, however, did have a pastoral dimension. While not conceding to the "Scripture alone" position, it insisted that the Bible take again its rightful place in the center of Catholic life and that appeals to tradition be judged according to their consistency with Scripture.

The Nature of the Bible

What is this book that it should be studied so intensely and guarded so carefully? The Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation made a theological formula that had become prominent before Vatican II: "the words of God, expressed in the words of men" (Dei verbum 13). That formula derives from the classical theoological definitions of the divine and human natures in the person of Jesus Christ. In speaking about the Bible in this way, the Second Vatican Council sought to hold together the transcendent nature of Scripture and its human form. Although the Bible may look like other books and may be studied profitably as other books are studied (that is, with the techniques of biblical criticism), the Bible is different with regard to its origin and its nature. The "different" character of the Bible is expressed by means of some rather complicated terms: revelation, inspiration, inerrancy, and canon. As with "Scripture and tradition," the Second Vatican Council used these terms without adjudicating the theological disputes surrounding them. As a pastoral council it sought to express the significance of the words for the way in which the Bible is read within the Church.

Revelation is fundamentally God's self-revelation; it is the communication of the mystery of God to the world: "It pleased God, in his goodness and wisdom, to reveal himself and to make known the mystery of his will" (Dei verbum 2). The Christian theological tradition affirms that God's self-revelation comes to us through creation, history, persons, society, and reason. It is also customary to refer to the Bible as a privileged revealer of God—that is, a place where the divine revelation is particularly clear. This tradition appears prominently in Dei verbum 6:

> By divine Revelation God wished to manifest and communicate both himself and the eternal decrees of his will concerning the salvation of mankind.

The order adopted in this statement ("both himself and the eternal decrees") is significant, for it gives pride of place to the "personal" character of divine revelation without denying the content and the consequences. Although this point may seem obvious today, the council's emphasis on the personal dimension of revelation was correctly taken as a major step in clarifying Catholic attitudes toward Scripture. Through the Bible we encounter the mystery of God, not simply lists of commandments or interesting stories. The personal God makes those commandments and stories meaningful.

Two other theological terms for talking about the difference of the Bible from other books are "inspiration" and "inerrancy." Again the Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation asserts the basic point expressed by these terms without arbitrating the very complicated theological debates surrounding them. On inspiration Dei verbum 11 states:

> The divinely revealed realities which are contained and presented in the text of sacred Scripture have been written down under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. For Holy Mother Church relying on the faith of the apostolic age, accepts as sacred and canonical the books of the Old and the New Testaments, whole and entire, with all their parts, on the grounds that, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (cf. Jn 20:31; 2 Tm 3:16; 2 Pt 1:19–21; 3:15–16), they

> have God as their author, and have been handed on as such to the Church herself. To compose the sacred books, God chose certain men who, all the while he employed them in this task, made full use of their powers and faculties so that, though he acted in them and by them, it was as true authors that they consigned to writing whatever he wanted written, and no more.

The same paragraph treats inerrancy:

> Since, therefore, all that the inspired authors, or sacred writers, affirm should be regarded as affirmed by the Holy Spirit, we must acknowledge that the books of Scripture firmly, faithfully and without error teach that truth which God, for the sake of our salvation, wished to see confided to the sacred Scriptures. Thus "all Scripture is inspired by God, and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction and for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work" (2 Tm 3:16–17, Gk. text).

The key expression in this statement is "that truth which God, for the sake of our salvation, wished to see confided to the sacred Scriptures." Without explicitly embracing the theory of only limited inerrancy, that statement suggests that the Bible's inerrancy consists primarily in its being a trustworthy guide on the road to salvation. Thus it expresses "inerrancy" in a positive way, and avoids conceiving it as a defensive program of protecting the Bible against accusations of scientific or historical error.

The council's statement on inspiration refers to the books of the Bible as "sacred and canonical." The word "canon" (whose root meaning is "reed" or "measuring stick") originally meant the rule or characteristics that decided whether a particular book was judged to be part of Sacred Scripture. It now usually refers to the collection of books that are acknowledged to be authoritative in the Church and by which the Church's faith can be measured. The canon of Old Testament books traditional in Catholicism contains all the books of the Hebrew Bible (which is the same as the Protestant Old Testament canon) together with seven others that were part of the Greek and Latin Bible tradition (Judith, Tobit, Baruch, 1 and 2 Maccabees, Sirach/Ecclesiasticus, Wisdom). All Christians today share the same canon of 27 New Testament books. The history of the canon's development is quite complex. The final definitive list of biblical books (including the seven additional Old Testament books) for the Catholic Church was drawn up only at the Council of Trent in 1546, although there was little disagreement about the substance of the canon from the early centuries of the Christian era.

The Bible is different. How it is different has been expressed with the help of some traditional words: revelation, inspiration, inerrancy, and canon. The Second Vatican Council in its authoritative declaration on Scripture (Dei verbum) took over those hallowed terms. In interpreting the council's use of these words we must take account of the pastoral orientation of the council as a whole. Rather than working out theological subtleties or choosing among theological schools, the Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation used those words to convey basic attitudes about how the Bible differs from other books. It affirmed that God's self-revelation comes to us through the Bible, that in some mysterious way God entered into the composition of these writings and inspired them, that the biblical books provide reliable guidance (inerrancy) for those who walk the way toward salvation with God, and that these books constitute the norm or rule (canon) by which the life of the Church is to be guided and measured in all ages. These are the basic "pastoral" meanings of revelation, inspiration, inerrancy, and canon.

The Authority of the Bible

The terms by which Christians express the "difference" of the Bible indicate that it possesses great authority for them. The Bible is the "words of God, expressed in the words of men." It is revealed,

inspired, inerrant, and canonical. The Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation goes beyond the general assertions conveyed by the traditional theological vocabulary and speaks about the authority of various parts of the Bible.

The Old Testament (see Dei verbum 15) prepares for and declares in prophecy the coming of Christ. It conveys our basic understanding of God and the human situation: "how a just and merciful God deals with mankind." It provides "sound wisdom" and "a wonderful treasury of prayers." The document also mentions "matters imperfect and provisional" in the Old Testament, without specifying precisely what these are (presumably legislation about sacrifices and ritual purity, "vengeful" psalms, and other such material). The unity of the two Testaments is traced back to God who "in his wisdom has so brought it about that the New should be hidden in the Old and that the Old should be made manifest in the New" (Dei verbum 16).

The council accorded the Gospels a special place within the Bible "because they are our principal source for the life and teaching of the Incarnate Word, our Saviour" (Dei verbum 18). It insisted on the historicity and apostolicity of the Gospels, while recognizing the complex process of their composition from Jesus through the early Church to the Gospel texts. Catholics find a basic continuity between Jesus and the Gospel tradition under the guidance of the Spirit working in the Church. Their tendency is to insist that the tradition is basically historical. They assume that the modifications and reinterpretations made necessary by changing circumstances do not do violence to the original teaching or event. The "apostolic" character of the Gospels refers not so much to their direct composition by apostles as it does to the faithful transmission of the material in them by those who had experienced the risen Lord and bore witness to his resurrection. The term "apostolic" describes the generation between Jesus' death (about A.D. 30) and the composition of the New Testament books. The claim implied by the term is that those witnesses have told us the "honest truth" about Jesus.

The New Testament also contains Paul's letters and other writings (Hebrews, the catholic epistles, Revelation). After affirming their composition under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Dei verbum 20 describes the contributions that these writings make in the following way:

In accordance with the wise design of God these writings firmly establish those matters which concern Christ the Lord, formulate more and more precisely his authentic teaching, preach the saving power of Christ's divine work and foretell its glorious consummation.

It would be a mistake, however, to conclude from this description that the epistles have a secondary status as supplements to the Gospels. In fact, Paul's authentic letters (1 Thessalonians, Galatians, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Philippians, Philemon, Romans) are the earliest complete documents in the New Testament from the standpoint of their dates of composition. Thus they give us precious information about how Paul and other early Christians in the fifties of the first century A.D. (some 25 years after the death of Jesus) understood the significance of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. They show us how early Christians struggled to articulate their new faith in an environment that was often hostile and foreign to them. They reveal the kinds of problems that early Christians faced within their own communities (see especially 1 Corinthians) and so warn us against too easily viewing the apostolic period as a trouble-free and conflictless "golden age."

Enough has been said about the Bible in general (revelation, inspiration, inerrancy, and canon) and about its major parts (Old Testament, Gospels, Epistles) to indicate that it possesses great authority. But what kind of authority does the Bible have? It is surely not the coercive authority of a parent or the state or the police, which have the power to enforce a law or decision and to punish the uncooperative. It is not even the persuasive authority of the lawyer or the mathematician who convinces another by logic, arguments, proofs, and so forth. At some points in his epistles (for example, in 1 Corinthians 15)

Paul does labor to make a convincing case on the basis of logic. But that is not his usual mode of presentation, nor is it the customary idiom of other biblical writers.

The authority that the Bible possesses can perhaps be best described as compelling. Compelling authority is the authority of the witness, the expert, the participant. Much of the Bible concerns what God's people say about God's action on their behalf. Without narrowing the testimony of the Bible to the concept of an eyewitness, it is possible to describe the Scriptures as a collection of testimonies to God. The biblical descriptions of creation, exodus, monarchy, exile, and return from exile all stress God's relatedness to Israel and Israel's responses of praise, confession, thanksgiving, and so forth. The New Testament writers portray Jesus as the revelation of God's power (and weakness). The proper response is faith, hope, and love. Thus the biblical documents contain the proclamation and articulation of people's faith about God and God's ways with creation.

God is the real basis of the Bible's authority. Insofar as the biblical books bear witness to God and thus enable us to understand better who God is and how God acts, and to grow in love for and trust in the God of the Scriptures, the Bible can be aptly called the "Word of God." And so Vatican II's Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, which so emphasizes God's self-communication, is appropriately titled from its initial two words Dei verbum (Latin for "Word of God").

Scripture in Church Life

This essay began with a comparison regarding the Bible's place in church life of the 1950s and today. A look at Catholic liturgy, education, piety, and theology led to the conclusion that the Catholic Church today is far more "biblical" than it was in the 1950s. This development mirrors some powerful statements made in the final chapter of Vatican II's Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation.

The centrality of Scripture in Catholic liturgy involves both preaching and sacramental practice. Dei verbum 21 insists that "all the preaching of the Church, as indeed the entire Christian religion, should be nourished and ruled by sacred Scripture." The same paragraph directly confronts and dissolves the opposition between word and sacrament that had been prominent since the Protestant Reformation. It does so with reference to the celebration of the Eucharist:

> The Church has always venerated the divine Scriptures as she venerated the Body of the Lord, in so far as she never ceases, particularly in the sacred liturgy, to partake of the bread of life and to offer it to the faithful from the one table of the Word of God and the Body of Christ.

The council document insists that Word and sacrament belong together in the Eucharist, to the point of asserting that they form "one table."

The popularity of Scripture in Catholic education and piety responds to a very strong statement in Dei verbum 22: "Access to sacred Scripture ought to be wide open to the Christian faithful." The document goes on to urge the production of modern-language translations made from the ancient biblical texts. It

also encourages biblical exegetes to examine and explain the sacred texts so that preachers, teachers, and catechists "may be able to distribute fruitfully the nourishment of the Scriptures to the People of God" (Dei verbum 23).

The importance of Scripture for Catholic theology is stated in no uncertain terms: "The 'study of the sacred page' should be the very soul of sacred theology" (Dei verbum 24). The document mandates that all those officially engaged in the ministry of the Word should "immerse themselves in the Scriptures by constant sacred reading and diligent study" (Dei verbum 25). The same paragraph recommends the preparation of volumes such as the present one: "translations of the sacred texts which are equipped with necessary and really adequate explanations." There is overwhelming evidence that in response to the Second Vatican Council the Catholic Church has become much more "biblical." One of its most important documents was the Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, which has served as our principal guide in this article. At nearly every point the post–Vatican II Church has fulfilled the mandates of that council document and thus become more biblical.

The challenge facing the Catholic Church today is to look upon Dei verbum not only as the

end of a long development (which it was) but also as the beginning of a process that has taken us into the twenty-first century and beyond. A still more biblical Church will paradoxically be better able to adjust to the rapid changes that the new millennium is already bringing upon us. A still more biblical Church will be better prepared to make common cause with other Christians, with Jews and Muslims, and with all truly religious people. A still more biblical Church will preserve its spiritual heritage and open its riches to others. An obvious step in the process toward a more biblical Church is an increase in knowledge and love of the Scriptures.

Catholics and Fundamentalism

In the years prior to the Second Vatican Council one often heard the difference between Protestants and Catholics described this way: "Protestants have the Bible and Catholics have the Sacraments." As with all such humorous generalizations, it contained a grain of truth. Catholics generally opened their Bibles only to record family milestones: baptisms, marriages, and deaths. In the renewal that the Church leaders brought about at Vatican Council II, one significant change was the direct encouragement of Catholics to rediscover the Bible. Among the strong statements in this regard is that the Scriptures are food for the soul (Dei Verbum 21) and that access to the scriptures ought to be open wide for the Christian faithful (Dei Verbum 22) since ignorance of the scriptures is ignorance of Christ (Dei Verbum 25). With this opening of the windows to the Scriptures and opening our eyes to the treasures of our faith therein, Catholics' relationship to the Scriptures has changed dramatically. In parishes all over the world there are Bible study groups; in living rooms and classrooms Catholics are unlocking these treasures and enriching their understanding and often changing how they live their faith. At the same time that the council sent us to our Bibles, it updated the source and summit of our faith, the liturgy, so that the Scriptures are now presented in an organized and more complete manner. Now, Catholics hear a wide variety of readings from both the Old Testament and the New Testament at Mass over the three-year liturgical cycle.

Since most Catholics have little experience and background in Bible study, responsible church

leaders do well when they lead us in a Scripture learning process that is in tune with our Catholic tradition rather than one from a fundamentalist Protestant perspective. Many Catholics, who have no access to Scripture study groups in their own church, join such Bible study groups in other churches, many of whom have a fundamentalist rather than a Catholic perspective. While all who value the Bible share some beliefs, there are differences between Catholics and fundamentalists about some serious and basic views of scripture, about its interpretation and about how we use it for our lives. It is important to note that there are also vast differences between mainstream Protestants and many evangelical Protestants, on the one hand, and fundamentalist Protestants, on the other. It is the fundamentalist perspective that Catholics are cautioned about. It is also important to note that Catholic biblical scholarship has been indebted to the work of (non-fundamentalist) Protestant scholars over the years.

Both the Pontifical Biblical Commission and Pope Benedict VI, when he was head of the Vatican department that oversaw the Doctrine of the Faith, explained the Church's views:

> The fundamentalist approach is dangerous, for it is attractive to people who look to the Bible for ready answers to the problems of life. It can deceive these people, offering them interpretations that are pious but illusory, instead of telling them that the Bible does not contain an immediate answer to each and every problem. Without saying as much in so many words, fundamentalism actually invites people to an intellectual suicide. It injects into life a false certitude, for it unwittingly confuses the divine substance of the Bible message with what are in fact its human limitations. (The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church [Rome: Pontifical Biblical Commission, 1993] # I.F.)

Fundamentalism is a danger. …

Fundamentalist Perspective on the Bible

1. The Bible is the Word of God
2. Scripture alone
3. Emphasis on literalist reading of Bible
4. Tendency to view inspiration narrowly Inerrancy of the Bible in all matters
5. Lack of historical perspective in interpretation Frequent interpretations out of context
6. Direct and immediate applicability of most biblical passages
7. Denial of role of church in canonization of scripture
8. Tendency to ignore history of interpretation
9. Narrow and precise prophetic eschatology often linked to a time line
10. Rejection of scientific historical-critical methods of interpretation

Bible in context of the community of faith and the community of all the centuries of faith. Thus I read the Bible with the Church and with the faith of all times. And I read it reasonably, in a reasonable manner. So we must strive to avoid fundamentalism. (Quoted in Richard John Neuhaus, Biblical Interpretation in Crisis [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1989], 140.)

Catholic Perspective on the Bible

1. The Bible is God's Word in human words Scripture and tradition
2. Emphasis on literal (not literalist) reading as well as deeper (and spiritual) meanings
3. Tendency to take a broad view of inspiration
4. No errors in the Bible only on matters of faith and morals

5. Historical perspective is essential for interpretation
6. Necessity of the interpretations in context, especially the context of the sacred canon
7. Mostly indirect applicability of biblical passages
8. Recognition of role of Church in canonization process
9. History of interpretation essential
10. Broad and imprecise eschatology not linked to any specific timeline
11. Acceptance of scientific historical-critical methods of interpretation (among others)

How to Read the Bible

The various books of the Bible, as most people know, were not written in English but in languages now "dead": biblical Hebrew, Aramaic, and Koine Greek. To make these texts accessible today, translators have produced the New American Bible and other modern language translations. While we can be grateful for the benefits of such translations, we should also be aware that they share certain important limitations. All languages are deeply embedded in the cultural systems out of which they come. Therefore, if we wish to understand a text written in another language, we must understand that other culture as well, and simply reading an English translation does not provide that vital cultural information.

Therefore, although people taught to read English can easily read the New American Bible, if they were to do so as though it were a modern English text coming out of contemporary social experience, they would be seriously mis-reading the ancient stories, laws, letters, and poetry produced by the ancient authors and editors and understood by the first audiences of the Bible. A modern reader must learn something of the alien and long-dead cultures standing behind these texts; that is why publications such as this study Bible contain so much historical, religious, and literary background. If you sometimes think that explaining Isaiah's prophetic books or St. Paul's letters is complicated, imagine how much explanation St. Paul or Isaiah would need if they wanted to read one of our books!

"Readers" Yesterday and Today

To speak of people reading the Bible in itself points to one of the most striking, yet often least recognized, differences between the modern reader and the ancient one. In the ancient world of the Hebrew people and even the later world of the Greeks, very few men—and almost no women—could read or write. Consequently, the authors of the biblical documents belonged to a tiny literate elite within largely illiterate societies. In addition, because the audience was illiterate, most of the biblical texts were written primarily to be heard with the ear rather than read with the eye. Those who could read would read aloud to a larger group. Hearing a text, rather than seeing it, affected the way ancient material was fashioned; repetition, puns, prologues, and summaries are all devices in biblical material because of the requirements of the ear.

Modern readers use chapter titles, tables of contents, paragraphing, and internal headings as ways of orienting themselves in books or articles. But such "eye helps" did not exist in ancient writings. The verse numbers in the Bible, for instance, were not added until the sixteenth century A.D. by the famous Parisian printer Stephanus. Where to stop and where to start, how to grasp the way the author organized the material, and what type of writing the author had chosen to use had to be signaled in ways accessible to the ear for an ancient audience. Thus, repeated opening and closing patterns, proverbs, hymns, oracles, laws, letters, and straightforward, reliable narration are all important aspects of biblical literature. Such qualities are not so prevalent in modern writing.

But we must look deeper. It is not only the case that the writings of the Bible, in their final form, were meant to be read aloud. It is also the case that much of the material in those writings—the sayings of the prophets, the stories of Genesis, the accounts of events in the life of Jesus—circulated for years, perhaps centuries, as oral tradition before ever being written down. The stories were passed orally from one generation to the next, adapted to new occasions and altered to fit changing social and political circumstances. After a time, collections of these oral stories were made and written. Thus, the absence of widespread literacy in antiquity meant that oral communication was the medium of critical importance. Therefore, in order to understand the Bible as its first audiences did, modern readers must learn to hear its texts as well as read them.

Even referring to the Bible may encourage contemporary readers to mis-read, for the Bible is not one book but a collection of many books coming from many different countries and several quite distinct cultures. The Hebrew Bible contains books written from the tenth century B.C. to the second century B.C., almost a millennium of human history. The present shape of many of these books evolved over centuries of editing and reworking, from the early legends about the origins of the Hebrew people, most of which originally circulated as oral tradition, to the later apocalyptic visions of the end of the world in the book of Daniel. Because of this complex process of composition, these documents often reflect not only the evolving religious ideas of the Hebrew people but also their changing social and political fortunes. Yet, since the first audiences were themselves living that political and social history, it is in many places assumed that the reader or hearer will understand the context, and therefore that context is not explained. We can get an inkling of the need for explanation if we think about how we would explain, to an ancient Israelite or an early Christian, a contemporary news article that begins, "The White House announced today . ..." And once we have thought about that—about what "the White House" means in contemporary America—we can also think about what we might expect if we are given various dates for this news article. Suppose the dateline were "Washington, D.C., October 1962. The White House announced today . ..." Suppose it were 1982? Or 2002? What difference does it make if John F. Kennedy, Ronald Reagan, or George W. Bush is in the White House?

Although the New Testament books were written over a much shorter period—perhaps 60 or so years, from the mid-40s A.D. for Paul's earliest letters to as late as A.D. 100–110 for some of the later letters or the book of Revelation—the political history of that century, containing the war between Rome and the Jews, the subsequent fall of Jerusalem and Qumran, and the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple, as well as—probably—the destruction of the Christian community in Jerusalem, plays a crucial role in the outward growth of the Christian movement. Actually, the 27 separate letters and books that now compose the official New Testament canon are only a small selection from a much larger body of writings by Christians during the first several centuries B.C.

The Hebrew Bible and the New Testament, the two major divisions of the Bible, clearly display certain similarities in form and content: They both draw upon oral traditions; they are both made up of various types of literature, written at different times, directed to separate groups of people for a variety of reasons; and they both relate the continuing story of God's involvement with the Jewish people and the surrounding Gentile world. But we must also acknowledge that, because their audiences, aims, and backgrounds are so different, they often present moral and theological positions aimed at very different concerns. Therefore, to view the similarities as establishing a uniformity of perspective for the Bible would be a serious mis-reading of the material, for the cultural situation is fundamentally different. To

grasp just how different, we can consider the differences in the various conceptions of the universe that are reflected in different parts of the Bible.

The View of the Universe

In the ancient Near Eastern world of the Sumerians, Babylonians, and Hebrew people, the universe was an intimate and fairly compact affair, which might be visualized as three stories, separated by the solid firmament of the earth below and the heavens above. The top story, formed by the heavens, was the abode of the gods and was surrounded at its outermost limits by water, which the gods could allow to fall upon the earth by opening windows in the heavens—a fact that could cause considerable anxiety among the human population for fear that the gods might forget or decide not to close the windows and thus flood the earth. The second story, the space between earth and the heavens, was the location of humanity, while the bottom story with its limits also defined by water, which would rise to the earth above through rivers and oceans, belonged to the spirits of the underworld. All three stories were closely connected to each other. In such a small universe, encounters between the divine and the human worlds were expected and regular. Only when one element or another was out of place or not performing its assigned task (e.g., the gods were asleep or on a journey when they were needed [see 1 Kgs 18:27] or the king refused to rebuild the city walls or the farmer neglected the time of harvest) was the harmony of an entire system put at risk by an eruption of chaos. Order and a strong sense of place created a very secure world, and religion provided the map or contract set of rules needed to maintain the established order.

By the beginnings of Christianity, that secure, compact universe had exploded. Only a few other periods in the history of Western civilizations can rival the extensive change in perspective that occurred during the Greco-Roman era. The exact causes of that ancient transformation remain unclear, but it was surely influenced by the increasingly sophisticated developments in astronomy, science, and mathematics in Greek circles as well as the growth of large, multinational urban centers around the Mediterranean basin, where cultural, economic, and religious exchange could flourish. These intellectual and social innovations, along with the new mobility permitted by the widespread use of Koine Greek as a general language of commerce and the relative stability of Greek and then of Roman rule, extended the limits of the universe far beyond anything imaginable by earlier peoples.

The view of the universe in the Greco-Roman period, formally codified by Claudius Ptolemy in the second century A.D., might best be visualized as an expanding series of concentric spheres, all in eternal motion around a tiny, stationary earth. The first seven spheres contained the moon and the planets (including the sun), each moving in its appointed round and in the process, rubbing against the other spheres to produce musical notes. The outermost sphere contained the fixed stars. The planets were not the only inhabitants of each sphere, however, for the Greco-Roman people also believed that each sphere housed an order of angels or demons, constantly watching the activities of the human world below, and the closer the sphere to earth, the nastier were its tenants, with the demons responsible for illness, birth defects, and pains of all kinds lodging in the space between the moon and the earth. The intimate, secure universe of the earlier age had disappeared into the vast, threatening reaches of the cosmos, and God no longer dwelt a short distance away but instead resided out beyond the farthest sphere. Religion in such an age existed to help people escape the fears of daily life and to assure them of God's continued care in this world and the next across the outstretched spaces of the stars.

Today we live neither in the ancient three-story universe of the Hebrew people nor even in the Ptolemaic universe of the early Christians. In reading about worries over sleeping deities or threatening demonic powers, modern people probably think of metaphorical language or symbolic meanings, for in modern writings those images would surely function in that fashion. The Bible, however, is not a modern book or collection of modern books. The people who told, wrote, and heard these stories faced uncertain and dangerous worlds, which they attempted to understand as God's creation in ways their societies and theories pictured it. In order to read the Bible in a manner similar to the way they might have heard it, we must learn to appreciate the world in which they lived.

Understanding the Historical Background to the Biblical Texts by Donald Senior

The biblical writings were created over a lengthy period of time. That broad historical and cultural canvas is one important cause for the Bible's rich diversity. In this Study Bible, the Reading Guides (see RG 48) provided for each biblical book, and the introductions provided in the notes to the biblical text itself, offer specific information about the historical background of the individual books of the Bible. The following paragraphs sketch the relationship of the biblical books to the history out of which they grew.

The accounts of creation and the stories about the first ancestors of the human family, such as the tragic rivalry between Cain and Abel and the story of Noah and the flood, obviously do not have the same historical grounding that later traditions could. These stories answer the question about the origin of humanity and its plight in history. Firm historical traditions begin only with the forging of Israel into an identifiable people, an event that did not begin until probably around 1250 B.C. Traditions about the earlier patriarchal period starting around 1850 B.C. are much less certain historically, and even events from the time of Israel's sojourn in Egypt and during the period of the Exodus and early settlement in the land are sketchy, because there were few means of preserving historical archives.

The Major Periods of Biblical History

The Time of the Patriarchs (1850–1250 B.C.)

The period from Abraham to Joseph is recounted in Genesis 12–50. Historically, this was a period

of vast migrations in the Middle East, with clans of herders moving freely from Mesopotamia down through the Fertile Crescent into present-day Israel. Egypt had been a dominant power in the Middle East for more than 2,000 years prior to that time. Egypt's might was counterbalanced by a succession of powerful dynasties at the eastern end of the Fertile Crescent, including the Persians, Assyrians, and Babylonians. Israel, located geographically between those two areas, would often be the battleground for those opposing forces.

Few firm historical traditions exist from this period, but the general picture provided in the biblical traditions about the patriarchs does reflect something of the nomadic lifestyle and familial religion typical of the period.

The Exodus, Wilderness Wandering, and Settlement in the Land (1250–1130 B.C.)

This period is covered in Exodus, Deuteronomy, Numbers, and Joshua. The story of Israel as a unified people begins in Egypt with the stories about Moses and the miraculous Exodus from Egypt. During a

period of wandering in the desert, the covenant was formed with the LORD, the God of Israel. Under the leadership of Joshua, Israel finally breaks through into the Promised Land, driving the native Canaanites before them.

There is considerable debate about the historical background to this period. Some scholars, particularly conservative ones, are willing to accept the biblical portrayal at face value: namely, that there was a mass migration of Hebrews from Egypt and that they invaded the regions of Israel with military force and thereby gained possession of the land.

The lack of clear archaeological evidence supporting such a vast military conquest and some ambiguity in the biblical traditions themselves have led other historians to surmise that both the migration from Egypt and the possession of the land took place over a longer period of time. Some Hebrew tribes may have already settled in Israel prior to the Exodus, and joined with the incoming tribes at a later period. While some Canaanite cities may have been taken by force, some of the land was probably settled in a peaceful fashion.

In any event, the Bible sees this process as a dramatic act of deliverance by God and as the historic beginning of the story of Israel.

The Period of the Judges (1130–1020 B.C.)

This early period of Israelite history is narrated in the book of Judges. It is clear that the Israelites at first resisted the idea of a strong central government. They preferred a loosely organized federation of clans or tribes ruled by charismatic leaders called judges. Only the LORD could claim the right to be called "King." This independent spirit and aversion to the monarchy goes deep into the consciousness of Israel.

The Monarchy (1020–587 B.C.)

This long, but in fact highly diverse, period of Israel's history is taken up in the books of 1 and 2 Samuel; 1 and 2 Kings; and a parallel account in 1 and 2 Chronicles.

The transition from the more informal and charismatic leadership under the judges to the more institutional form of the monarchy begins with Saul (about 1020–1000 B.C.) but reaches its zenith with David (1000–960 B.C.) and Solomon (960–930 B.C.). Threats from surrounding peoples and the need for more complex social organization gradually led Israel to adopt a monarchical form of government. David eventually unified diverse groups of people under a single government system, ruled from his new centrally located capital of Jerusalem. Under David and his son Solomon, Israel's territories greatly expanded.

The united kingdom forged by David did not last very long. Solomon strained it by increasing taxation and by lack of sensitivity to the old tribal loyalties. When Solomon's son Rehoboam ascended to the throne, the seams between north and south split, and the separate kingdoms of Judah in the south and Israel in the north began. This divided monarchy would last until 724 B.C., when the Assyrian empire would crush the northern kingdom. Judah would survive until the Babylonian invasion of 587 B.C.

The biblical account has little respect for the northern rulers and takes a critical view of most of the kings of Judah as well, considering them unfaithful to the covenant. During this period the great prophetic movement would ignite in Israel. Elijah, Elisha, Amos, and Hosea were prophets in the northern kingdom. Isaiah served as court prophet to the kings of Judah.

Exile and Return (587–332 B.C.)

This crucial period of Israelite history is narrated in 2 Kings 24–25 and in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. In the 590s B.C. the Babylonians took over Judah and installed a puppet king; when, in 587, that king attempted a rebellion, the Babylonians moved in with great force. They destroyed most of Jerusalem, pulled down the Temple, and forced all but the lowest members of society into exile.

The Babylonian captivity would last almost 50 years. Systematic deportation as a way of subduing conquered peoples had been used first by the Assyrians and then by the Babylonians. Only a small remnant of Israelites was left behind under the firm control of Babylonian officials. When the exiled Jews eventually returned, they considered the people who had stayed behind as somehow corrupt and would not allow them to take part in the reconstruction of Israel, a source of bitterness that would lead to the sharp divisions between Jews and Samaritans so obvious in the New Testament period.

Under the leadership of Ezra and Nehemiah, Jerusalem and its Temple were rebuilt. But Israel was now only a small and fragile nation, clustered around Jerusalem and very concerned with preserving its identity.

The Greek Conquest and the Rise of the Hasmoneans (332–39 B.C.)

This is a turbulent part of Israelite history, reflected in 1 and 2 Maccabees and Daniel.

Alexander conquered Palestine in 332 B.C., beginning a period in which Greek culture would have a strong impact on the life of Israel. After his death, the Middle Eastern portion of Alexander's empire was divided between the Seleucid dynasty, which ruled from Syria, and the Ptolemies, ruling from Egypt. The Ptolemaic dynasty controlled Israel from approximately 332 to 199 B.C. Their generally benign rule gave way to the Seleucids, who attempted to impose Greek culture and taxation in a more rigorous fashion. Seleucid ruthlessness eventually triggered the Maccabean revolt, which by 160 B.C. had thrown off the yoke of the Seleucids against incredible odds.

The Jewish dynasty of the Hasmonean family now began a 100-year reign. The Hasmonean kings proved to be as corrupt and ruthless as the foreigners who had preceded them. Reactions by pious Jews to the compromises of the Has-moneans and their Jerusalem aristocracy would give rise to protest groups such as the Essenes and Pharisees. By 60 B.C. Roman influence was growing in the Middle East and brought pressure on Israel itself. The Hasmonean period came to an end with the emergence of Herod the Great, a vassal of the Romans, who would unify the country and hold it in his grip.

The Roman Period (39 B.C.–A.D. 100)

The New Testament writings emerge during this period of biblical history. With the death of Herod in 4 B.C., the Romans divided Israel among his three sons. Eventually the Romans removed the cruel and incompetent Archelaus, taking over direct rule of Judah and Samaria.

Herod Philip and Herod Antipas would continue to govern in the regions of Upper Galilee, Lower Galilee, and the Transjordan (see Map 12).

Roman rule and its heavy taxation proved intolerable to the Jewish people. Tensions mounted all during the first half of the first century, exploding into revolution in A.D. 66. That revolt would be violently suppressed by the Romans, climaxing with the destruction of Jerusalem and its great Temple in A.D. 70. That event would change the complexion of Judaism forever. Another short-lived revolt would break

out in A.D. 132. The Romans would continue to occupy Palestine until the time of the Byzantine Empire. All of these events have left a profound impression on the writings of the New Testament. <>

THE TRINITY IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION: SEEING FATHER, SON, AND HOLY SPIRIT IN JOHN'S APOCALYPSE by Brandon D. Smith [Studies in Christian Doctrine and Scripture, IVP Academic, 9781514004180]

How should we read the book of Revelation?

Interpreting Scripture faithfully is a challenge with regard to any text and for any reader of the Bible. But perhaps no text confronts and confuses readers as much as the book of Revelation. With its vivid imagery and rich prophetic language, John's Apocalypse provokes and stirs our imaginations. Some have viewed it primarily as a first-century anti-imperial document. Others have read it as a book of prophecies or eschatological promises. Still others wonder why it is in the biblical canon at all.

Theologian and biblical scholar Brandon Smith brings clarity to this question by reading the book of Revelation primarily as John's vision of the triune God. In conversation with early church theologians, including Irenaeus, Origen, Athanasius, and the Cappadocians, as well as modern biblical scholarship, Smith shows how John's vision can help us worship the one God who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Studies in Christian Doctrine and Scripture, edited by Daniel J. Treier and Kevin J. Vanhoozer, promotes evangelical contributions to systematic theology, seeking fresh understanding of Christian doctrine through creatively faithful engagement with Scripture in dialogue with church tradition.

Review

"Brandon Smith has written a bold, brilliant, and beautiful theological interpretation of John's Apocalypse. Smith reads with a mixture of attention to the text and the various pressures that the text exerts upon the reader to think of God in triune terms. Smith's reading of the Apocalypse is historically sensitive and theologically attuned to John's story of God Almighty, the Lamb, and the Spirit who speaks to the churches. This book sets a new bar in the theological interpretation of Scripture." -- Michael F. Bird, academic dean and lecturer in theology at Ridley College in Melbourne, Australia, and author of Introducing Paul: The Man, His Mission and His Message

"An exciting new chapter of the history of biblical exegesis is unfolding in real time. Exegetes like Brandon Smith are leading us, with theological sophistication and evangelical zeal, beyond the tired (not to mention unchurchly) polarities of 'high' vs. 'low' Christology and 'scientific' vs. 'confessional' hermeneutics into a robustly and unapologetically *Trinitarian* reading of the Christian Bible. A landmark study." -- Wesley Hill, associate professor of New Testament at Western Theological Seminary

"Remarkably, no significant work on the Trinity in the Apocalypse has been written, and Brandon Smith has remedied that deficiency in this astute book. Smith's study represents theological interpretation of Scripture at its best as he investigates the trinitarian contours in the Apocalypse. Still, we don't have an

example of an author imposing his construct onto the biblical text; instead, Smith demonstrates persuasively that the Trinity informs and pervades the Apocalypse. Biblical exegesis and theological retrieval in this instance are illuminating dialogical partners, and we can be grateful to Smith both for providing a model for theological and exegetical work and for deepening our understanding of the Apocalypse." -- Thomas R. Schreiner, James Buchanan Harrison Professor of New Testament Interpretation at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

"Brandon Smith's excellent book takes one of our most mystifying doctrines—the Trinity—and one of our most mystifying early Christian texts—Revelation—and illumines them both through his distillation of research on pro-Nicene theology. In this, he demonstrates how the tools and readings of early Christian authors can help us to approach Scripture better." -- Madison N. Pierce, associate professor of New Testament at Western Theological Seminary

"Amid the twenty-first century 'trinitarian retrieval' currently underway, Brandon Smith's book stands out as the kind of project desperately needed—firmly grounded in exegetical rigor, clearly shaped by the narratival structure of the biblical canon, keenly aware of the unique literary features of John's Apocalypse, and uniquely capable of drawing out the theological implications of those textual realities. This is a model for constructive theological reflection on Holy Scripture." -- Matthew Emerson, dean of theology, arts, and humanities at Oklahoma Baptist University

"The old insult *obscurum per obscurius* means trying to explain one obscure thing by way of something even more obscure. Surely a study of the Trinity in the book of Revelation runs this risk, we might fear. But instead, Brandon Smith surprises us with clarity and calmness, a firm grasp of the main lines of biblical truth, and a compelling vision of the big picture of Christian doctrine. Highly recommended as an exercise in reading Scripture with classic doctrinal categories for the purpose of knowing God." -- Fred Sanders, Torrey Honors College, Biola University

"Brandon Smith's important work furthers the recent movement to reassert the intellectual integrity of viewing the New Testament as foundational to the church's orthodox doctrinal tradition. With sophistication and care, he engages the interplay between the text of Revelation and its early interpreters as an entry into the text's divinely revealed meaning. *Trinity* and *trinitarian*, rather than being conceptual impositions on the text, are convincingly shown to be a dynamic framework for truthfully confessing God's self-offering to the church in his Scriptures. In the process the book of Revelation's historically fraught role in Christian self-understanding is wonderfully focused, enlivened, and empowered. Deploying wide scholarship and lucid writing, Smith provides readers with a rich exegetical and theological feast, on a table set by one of the Bible's most fruitful books." -- Ephraim Radner, professor of historical theology at Wycliffe College, University of Toronto

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Doing Theology with the Trinity

Doing theology is a holy act that should not be undertaken by the proud or belligerent. Or, as Gregory of Nazianzus warns, theology is "a serious undertaking, not just a subject like any other.'" When it comes to trinitarian theology in particular, Gilles Emery highlights where our motivations should lie: "Trinitarian theology is an exercise of contemplative wisdom and a work of purification of understanding based upon receiving the revelation of God in faith (it is 'faith seeking understanding')." That is the goal of this study: to contemplate and grow in our understanding of the triune God, whom we worship and stake our lives on.

Maximus the Confessor's opening words in his Chapters on Theology reveal much about his theological presuppositions: "God is one, without first principle, incomprehensible, throughout being the total potentiality of being; he excludes absolutely the concept of temporal or qualified existence.'"

In his introduction, we see Maximus's priority in discussing the foundation for Scripture and theology: the triune God. This God is one, uncreated, eternal, incomprehensible, self-sufficient, and unchanging. If one wants to read Scripture rightly, then, one must recognize and confess that this God who inspired the Scriptures is supreme, authoritative, and perfect. Maximus and his theological forebears, based on their reading of Scripture, affirmed this truth about God and Scripture, and this became their core presupposition any time they engaged with the biblical text.

Indeed, we cannot deny that we all have theological presuppositions that influence how we read the text based on myriad contextual factors. For example, people raised in different socioeconomic environments in different parts of the world in different centuries may emphasize texts differently based on their own lived experiences or based on practical application in evangelistic environments. Denominationally, a Baptist and a Presbyterian will read certain passages about baptism or church polity differently based on their own presuppositions or based on judgments they have made about a network of related passages. Presuppositions are unavoidable, but we should not automatically assume that our presuppositions are bad. Instead, we should be aware of our presuppositions and ask if our presuppositions hinder our faithfulness to the text. So, I have come to believe through studying Scripture that confessing God as triune is faithful to the presentation of the text itself; thus, I make no apology that as a Christian, I confess that God is triune and expect him to present himself in Scripture as such. Reading Scripture, then, is a worshipful endeavor. Put succinctly: if our reading of Scripture is explicitly trinitarian as we recognize God's providence and self-revelation, then "the doctrine of God becomes itself an exegetical tool.'"

For me, then, a trinitarian reading of Revelation is a reciprocal endeavor that comes from a presupposition about who God is, but that presupposition has been influenced and shaped by the text

itself. Simply put, one should not promote a trinitarian reading of Revelation unless it is a faithful reading of Revelation in particular and Scripture in general. Hopefully, the following chapters will show that a trinitarian reading of Revelation is, indeed, a faithful reading.

Now, we can all admit that reading Revelation is difficult. It seems that every commentary, monograph, article, or sermon on the book of Revelation starts with this same lament. And while interpretations of Revelation vary wildly, this shared sense of confusion and wonder unites all of us who seek to understand it. And then we have decided to add on the doctrine of the Trinity, which hardly anyone would describe as an easy doctrine to grasp. I feel the weight of G. K. Chesterton's famous quip: "Though St. John the Evangelist saw many strange monsters in his vision, he saw no creature so wild as one of his own commentators."6 When you are done reading this book, you may very well be tempted to say the same of me.

Common interpretations of Revelation—from the pew to the pulpit to the podium—are located somewhere between two poles: Revelation is either a first-century political document or a book of eschatological predictions.' But apocalyptic works are much more than political tracts or stories predicting the world's end. Most often, apocalyptic works are written to an audience in times of suffering. The seer pulls back the veil for his audience to show them a glimpse into divine purposes, revealing to them that God has not abandoned and will one day vindicate them.' And Revelation, beyond all its interpretive quandaries, is rife with rich language and imagery about the words and deeds of the triune God who is bringing all of history to its culmination. So, while Christians might be tempted to overlook the Trinity in Revelation rather than look for the Trinity first, we must remember that God most clearly reveals himself in his words and deeds.

John's trinitarian theology can be summed up this way: the Holy Spirit has shown him the purposes of the eternal Father, who has sent his divine Son—slain as the Lamb and exalted as King—in order to inaugurate and then finally to complete the triune God's plan of making all things new. Thus, any meaningful interpretation of Revelation must be undergirded by and subservient to its portrayal of the Father, Son, and Spirit's identity and activity. So, a trinitarian reading of Revelation brings clarity and coherence to a book full of diverse and disparate language, symbols, and scenes. For John, the Father sits on the throne and in some sense is the source of divine activity, and his purposes are not only concentrated upon but also consummated in Christ. Moreover, John depicts the Holy Spirit as a powerful divine agent with "an intensely personal quality" who drives the book's major points and moments. The Spirit is active in both obvious and surprising ways in John's Apocalypse, elevated above a mere angelic or impersonal agent of God. This stark theocentric character of Revelation simultaneously highlights the identity and mission of Jesus as well as the Spirit within the divine nature and plan.

This book will offer a trinitarian reading of Revelation by rigorous interaction with the text, engagement with modern scholarship, and drawing on the early church's classic trinitarian reading strategies and conceptual categories. Rather than merely adopting the answers to orthodoxy's doctrinal test, we will see that their methods for arriving at such conclusions enhance our theological reading. In short, I will argue that a trinitarian reading of Revelation is not an imposition on the text but rather is drawn from a close reading of the text.

In chapter one, we will discuss the context and methodology for this study. In particular, we will survey various debates related to theological readings of Scripture and the church's classical formulations of

trinitarian theology, followed by an approach for a trinitarian reading of Revelation. In chapters two through four, we will apply our approach to select passages in the book of Revelation related to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit that highlight their nature and relationships to one another, noting the ways in which our trinitarian reading brings clarity and coherence to these important passages. Finally, chapter five will address ways this approach contributes to modern conversations on trinitarian theology and exegesis, as well as church life and practice.

We should all be seeking understanding by faith, including when we participate in the task of theology. As John Webster wonderfully said, "Theology is thus most properly an invitation to read and reread Scripture, to hear and be caught up by Scripture's challenge to a repentant, nonmanipulative heeding of God's Word." As someone who has been redeemed and transformed by the triune God, his Scriptures, and the living Christian tradition, I pray that this book will also encourage you to seek his face not only in Revelation but in the entirety of the biblical canon. <>

The Apostolic Constitution "Preach the Gospel": Praedicate Evangelium With an Appraisal of Francis's Reform of the Roman Curia by Massimo Faggioli [Liturgical Press, 9780814668535]

Praedicate Evangelium (Preach the Gospel) is one of the most important legislative acts that Pope Francis has promulgated since his election in 2013. In addition to the full text of this new constitution, this book features world-renowned theologian Massimo Faggioli's explanation of the significance and limitations of this document. Bringing his unique insight as an Italian church historian, Faggioli explains how the constitution tries to apply, in a way that is different from the reforms of both Paul VI in 1967 and John Paul II in 1988, the ecclesiology of Vatican II to the structure and culture of the Roman Curia. It puts into motion many different aspects of the whole pontificate of Francis, including his desire for more diversity in the college of cardinals, decentralization of papal power, the reform of the economic and financial institutions of the Vatican, and the necessary structure to manage the global clergy abuse crisis in the Catholic Church.

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The apostolic constitution Praedicate Evangelium on the reform of the Roman Curia, promulgated by Pope Francis on March 19, 2022, is one of the most important documents of his pontificate. The work of drafting and finalizing this constitution absorbed the activities of the pope's newly created Council of Cardinals for almost nine years, since September 2013, and it embodies significant aspects of the vision of Francis for the Church. It represents one of the most important efforts to bridge the theology of Vatican II and the institutional dimension of the Church in the Vatican. This reform embodies significant breakthroughs but also visible elements of compromise with the status quo, and, at the same time, it leaves space open for an implementation of the constitution depending on the development of the "synodal process" that will be concluded in October 2023 with the assembly of the Bishops' Synod in Rome. But for Francis, synodality must continue to be part of the new way of being Church. The future of synodality will depend also on the way in which the new Roman Curia as reformed by Francis will interact, in ways that cannot be legislated upon, with the ecclesiology of "walking together" as a people of God.

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The Implementation of Praedicate Evangelium

On May 5, 2022, Pope Francis published a chirograph with the appointment of an inter-dicasterial commission with the task of adapting and modifying the Regolamento generale della Curia roman in light of Praedicate Evangelium, and to advise about the conformity and updating of the Ordines servandi and/or "Statutes" of all institutions of the Roman Curia."

This step—from the apostolic constitution to the statutes of individual dicasteries and other institutions of the Roman Curia—will be very important because the new apostolic constitution is one of the most important legislative acts that Francis has promulgated since his election in 2013. But it is still too early to say whether PraedicateEvangelium fundamentally changes the Roman Curia like the reforms of 1588 (after Trent), 1908 (after the fall of the Papal States), and 1967 (after Vatican II) did. A lot will depend on the statutes of individual dicasteries and the people who are hired to work there at all levels. It will also depend on the kind of bishops that will be appointed around the world and who will have to interact with the Curia from their dioceses and bishops' conferences.

Praedicate Evangelium comes at a time that is reminiscent of that transitionary period in the first half of the nineteenth century. It followed the storm of the French Revolution, the French occupations of Rome, and lasted until 1870 with the fall of the Papal States, which, in the history of the Curia, was a change even more consequential than Vatican II because the loss of temporal power of the pope had made superfluous many offices and institutions.

But there is no doubt that Praedicate Evangelium is a reform of the Roman Curia typical of the postconciliar Church. On the one hand, it is a serious effort to shape the Curia according to the ecclesiology of Vatican II and reflective of a less Italian, less European, and more global Church. On the other hand, it encompasses all the uncertainties of Catholic theology about institutions, still trying to find a balance between the urbs (Rome) and the orbis (the Church in the world), papal primacy and episcopacy, the bureaucratic and the charismatic. It also reflects the uneasy relationship, if not alienation, in the Catholic Church between theology, magisterium, and canon law, and some of the hesitations of Pope Francis as a legislator.

It is interesting to see that this reform has been published in the middle of the "synodal process" rather than afterward. But evidently it was also a priority to publish this apostolic constitution before the end of the pontificate and before the conclave electing the successor of Francis. Remarkably, Praedicate Evangelium has been published with Benedict XV^ still alive, more than nine years after his resignation, and the constitution does not address the issue of the institution of the "pope emeritus."

There are some positive tensions and possible contradictions. Synodality is a key concept for Francis's pontificate, but the foundations of the Roman Curia in the Middle Ages were based on a "consistorial system" of meetings of cardinals deciding in a collegial way, which was in place before the modern concept of permanent congregations or dicasteries. It was, to some extent, a system of government more "collegial" than the one that was created in 1588, where everyone became accountable to the pope but in a system of silos. The Curia that is envisioned and mapped out by Praedicate Evangelium may become less Roman (the term "bishops' conferences" is used fifty-eight times) and less clerical (the possibility of appointing lay leaders of dicasteries). But it is also a more papal Curia.

This document must be read in the context of Francis's distance from the Curia, which is not just a matter of words, but also of a style of governing the Church. Francis governs mostly without the Curia, but he has not disbanded them. At the same time, he has articulated a vision of the future of the Roman Curia as "the antenna" of the global Catholic Church—a receiving and transmitting antenna. On the other hand, this reform of the Curia will take effect in the context of a college of cardinals that is more globally diverse than ever. Individually, many of today's cardinals are theologically and spiritually closer to Francis, but they are also more physically and culturally distant from Rome. This will have an impact on the way the Roman Curia behaves toward the Church of the "peripheries" and vice versa.

The Curia has changed in history, but many of those changes happened not just because of theological ideas or Church power struggles, but also because of world events: wars (in Europe in the nineteenth century), financial crises (such as the Great Depression of 1929 and its financial effects, which were also felt in Rome), decolonization (no less influential than Vatican II). In this sense, it is interesting that the possible diminution of the role of the Secretary of State takes place at a moment when, because of the war in Ukraine and the disruption of the international order, its role of coordination and assistance to the pope is more important than it was in 2013, when discussions on a new apostolic constitution began.

Only with the passage of time will we be able to see if the real effects of Praedicate Evangelium can live up to the expectations of a new order of things in the Catholic Church. The real problem of the Curia and its irreformability or resistance to reform has always been much less the Curia itself than the Roman court. In the centuries before 1870, the court of the king pope absorbed the Curia. But even since the power of the pope as a sovereign over a real territory and state disappeared, the Roman court around the pope has still continued to exist: court in the sense of those spaces (embassies of foreign countries and international organizations to the Holy See, cultural and academic institutions, circles and think tanks, NGOs and advocacy groups, restaurants and villas) for the socializing that is necessary for initiating and conducting the "political" negotiations that are part of the work of every bureaucracy—including the Vatican. These days, there is also a new court, made of the media and social media court, without which the papacy cannot operate effectively in the global world. Praed-cate Evangelium legislates on the Roman Curia, but it can also connect in new ways the Roman court, the Roman Curia, and an extraordinarily diverse Catholic Church around the world. It would be one of the long-term effects of Vatican II. —Massimo Faggioli <> Dicastery for the Eastern Churches (art. 82-87)

Dicastery for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments (art. 88-97)

Dicastery for the Causes of Saints (art. 98-102) Dicastery for Bishops (art. 103-112)

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PSEUDO-DIONYSIUS AND GREGORY PALAMAS: THE BYZANTINE SYNTHESIS OF EASTERN PATRISTICS by Agnieszka Switkiewicz-Blandzi [Philosophy and Cultural Studies Revisited / Historisch-genetische ... Philosophie und Kulturgeschichte, Peter Lang Gmbh, Internationaler Verlag Der Wissenschaften, 9783631841679]

The study shows the reception of the views of Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagite by Gregory Palamas. The author presents the doctrinal context of Palamas' dispute with Barlaam from Calabria on the possibility of knowing God, the most important issue in 14th-century Byzantium. The author distances herself from many previous interpretations of this problem. She proves that, considering how much Palamas succumbed or did not succumb to the Areopagite or "corrected" his position, he has a very weak doctrinal basis. The author notices that over-emphasizing Dionysius' dependence on the Neoplatonic tradition does not lead to a solution to the problem. Palamas' teachings are placed in the context of the traditions of the Christian East and their relation to the thoughts of the Areopagite himself.

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> Theosis is said to go hand in hand with gnosis. ... Ignorance divides and separates, knowledge connects and deifies. R. Roques

The path to the light passes through darkness. The path to knowledge begins with ignorance. The figure of Gregory Palamas, the most outstanding theologian and philosopher of the Byzantine Empire, whose influence on contemporary Russian philosophy and Orthodox theology cannot be overestimated, is almost unknown to Polish audiences. Pseudo- Dionysius the Areopagite, the second figure to whom this book is devoted, is also a mysterious character to such an extent that it is a matter of dispute to this day as to who this exceptional theologian and mystic actually was. That having been said, without his Corpus Areopagiticum, we would be hard- pressed to imagine the culture of the Middle Ages broadly understood, the treatises of St. Thomas Aquinas, even Gothic architecture.

So, we begin our story like a wanderer at the foot of a mountain whose magnificent peak is shrouded in clouds, invisible at first sight and yet so promising. We begin by acknowledging our ignorance, but also our desire that the darkness be brightened by the light of knowledge.

And finally, the problem of knowing God, raised by both thinkers, can be summed up in one word: apophatic, by which we mean, quite precisely, abscission, understood as abstract thinking, the abandonment of concepts, the process of negation. The cognitive order from dark to light is also tied to the stages of spiritual development about which Pseudo- Dionysius and Palamas write using the vast tradition of Eastern monasticism and mysticism.

The philosophy and theology of Gregory Palamas, the most versatile thinker of the fourteenth- century Byzantine Empire, has become increasingly the subject of study for Polish historians of philosophy. Over the past several decades, a variety of academics in Europe (including Poland), the United States and Russia (on universities in St. Petersburg and Moscow) have published his works translated into their

national languages. At the same time, scholars have published numerous works on specific issues. Thanks to broader and deeper studies focusing on the writings of Gregory Palamas, historians of medieval philosophy unanimously view him as the author of an extremely interesting doctrine, one that is deeply rooted in the tradition of the Eastern Church.

Gregory Palamas, known as the Doctor of Hesychasm, is the creator of the synthesis of patristic thought, around which – as Vladimir Lossky wrote – many misunderstandings arose and whose true value was underestimated for many years.4 Recently, however, the conviction has deepened that an understanding of the Bishop of Thessaloniki's views, along with their theological and philosophical foundation, is a prerequisite for getting to the heart of orthodoxy. After all, Palamas' metaphysics of light, based on the tradition of Greek patristics, is one of the most important attempts to present the foundations of Eastern Christianity in philosophical language. Nowadays, scholars have no doubts that Gregory Palamas was the thinker through whom the prayer practices of the hesychasts and the doctrinal framework of the Eastern Church's theology found their fullest expression. At the same time, he was a figure who closely tied to his epoch. The most important political events in fourteenth- century Byzantium – dynastic struggles and political disputes – found their dramatic reflection in the life of the Doctor of Hesychasm and had a fundamental influence on the development of his doctrine. It was fully presented in the work entitled The Triads, which emerged gradually, during discussions on the interpretation of the thought of Pseudo- Dionysius. Many scholars of Palamas' achievements believe that the significance of The Triads in Byzantine theology and philosophy can be compared to the role played by Thomas Aquinas's Summa Theologica in the development of Western Christianity's philosophy and theology.

The circumstances of the creation of The Triads and treatises written in defense of the hesychasts are related to a dispute that flared up at the court of the Byzantine emperor Andronikos III. The essence of this dispute over the conditions for knowing God was nothing new, since the Fathers of the Eastern Church considered themselves from the beginning with the way in which a human being can come to know the Creator. In the patristic tradition, it was a firmly established belief that knowing God, possible through the experience of a unifying vision along (that is, full communion – ^^^^^^), constitutes the highest and most necessary goal of human life realized through the process of deification. Therefore, the doctrine of salvation is perceived precisely as a way to resemble God. The presence of this issue, as Vladimir Lossky noted, is a characteristic feature of all dogmatic controversies within the Eastern Church, "all the history of Christian dogma unfolds itself about this mystical center." In other words, theology revolves around the problem of the absolute transcendence of God as the source of all existence, with the simultaneous revelation of the Trinity to its creations (both noetic and corporeal beings) out of consideration for love of him, thanks to which it can return to its Creator in unifying cognition. In this antinomic (transcendence/ presence in the world) understanding of God, there is a whole spectrum of issues considered by the Cappadocian Fathers, Pseudo- Dionysius, Maximus the Confessor, and the monastic tradition starting with Evagrius Ponticus. I have deliberately listed here theologians who wanted to show how a non- participatory being becomes participatory through its manifestations, its actualizing powers, just as it is simultaneously indivisible and divisible, and then how these energies find hypostatic constitutions in the three Persons of the Trinity, though they are not its consecutive persons. I consider – on the one hand – how the divine- human person of Christ is a condition for the possibility of transforming human nature to know the essence of God through energies, and on the other hand – how man, a psycho- physical being, is capable of experiencing the

Supreme Being, seeing It thanks to deifying energy, while at the same time It is beyond all participation. These considerations culminated precisely in fourteenth- century Byzantium, when monastic thought was already fully formed, based on the tradition of generations of monks, holy elders, and ascetics. Understanding and support for the mystical experience, which already dominated the religious life of the Eastern Empire at the end of the thirteenth century, clashed with resistance derived from paideia – a certain intellectual baggage possessed by society's educated classes. Byzantines, who considered themselves to be Romans and claimed Constantinople to be the second Rome, were undoubtedly the heirs of the ancient Greek culture.8 According to L. Bréhier, the Byzantine Empire should be understood as an organic whole of the Hellenized and Christianized Roman Empire. Bréhier sees in Byzantium three basic elements of European civilization that make up one whole: Hellenism, Roman law and Christianity; Byzantine society was thus the heir to antiquity. This heritage, rich and at the same time constraining, found its reflection in every area of life, including in language, literature, art and, of course, philosophy. The Cappadocian Fathers, Pseudo- Dionysius the Areopagite, Maximus the Confessor, and John of Damascus put a great deal of effort into adapting Greek concepts to the presentation of Christian truth in order to use them in a way that would exclude heresy. As B. Tatakis notes in his introduction to Byzantine Philosophy, the Church Fathers tried to systematically and consistently express the new faith by assimilating Greek contents that did not conflict with the truths of faith. Therefore, as the Greek scholar writes, "they are true masters; the authority of tradition does not burden them, for they create tradition."10 And yet, the problem of their dependence on the Plato or Plotinus' thought as a factor that runs contrary to orthodoxy is raised to this day.11 While, in the field of theology, heresies originating in Greek thought (e.g. the views of Arius, Eunomius, Origen) were condemned, in other areas Byzantine scholars were faithful disciples and followers of the ancient masters. As M. Wesoly emphasizes, there is nothing contradictory in this:

> The distinction was accepted between external knowledge, which was secular Hellenic science, from internal knowledge, the inexpressible mystery of revealed faith and apo-phatic theology.

The anathema of the Synodicon, repeated every year, clearly defined the boundaries beyond which an interest in "secular knowledge" could not go:

> For those who plumb the depths of Hellenic teachings and nurture them not only for the sake of education, but who follow and follow these vain views as true, and thus regard them as something certain ... – anathema!

Fourteenth- century Constantinople, Nicaea, Thessaloniki, and Mystras were thus the cities where Plato and Aristotle's teachings were studied. From these philosophers, their inhabitants learned logic, the art of analysis, and synthesis. For this reason, in court and church circles steeped in Hellenism, the tension between the ancient legacy and Eastern Orthodoxy became increasingly acute. Doubts emerged both among the clergy, where many higher ecclesiastical functions were performed by people studying Greek philosophy, and among well-educated aristocrats familiar with the scholarship of antiquity. The emperor's court and its philosophical school were a place that brought together both groups, where the orthodox patristic tradition was simultaneously cultivated. In 1330, the monkscholar Barlaam of Calabria was officially appointed head of the philosophy faculty at the imperial university. John Kantakouzenos, marshal of the court (megas domestikos) during the reign of Emperor Andronikos III, entrusted Barlaam with this position based on latter's broad knowledge of mathematics, astronomy and logic. During his lectures, the Calabrian thinker dealt mainly with the works of Pseudo- Dionysius; John Kantakouzenos thus officially appointed Barlaam to interpret and expound upon the Areopagite's thoughts on the issue

of knowing God. Describing Dionysian thought more in the spirit of nominalism rather than patristic antinomy, Barlaam came to the following conclusions: 1. God is absolutely unknowable and utterly transcendent to human cognitive faculties, both mental and sensual. 2. Man is unable to transcend the determinants of his created nature. 3. The only knowledge about God we can possess results from the knowledge of created beings, and it is therefore partial and incomplete. 4. We know God only in a way that is possible for us – that is, through created symbols and analogies arranged in a specific hierarchy. Barlaam claimed that Pseudo-Dionysius derived these conclusions from his reading Greek philosophy, and that in his Mystical Theology he even used expressions he had found in the writings of the Pythagoreans, Panaetius of Rhodes, Brontinus, Philolaus, Charmides, and others. The Calabrian thus believed that the light- energy visions of the hesychast monks of Athos had no epistemological value, since it was one of many created divine manifestations; cognition therefore remains in the sphere of natural knowledge. In Barlaam's view, the monks were uneducated ignoramuses, and their visions were without divine grounding, mere delusions. His attack on both the theory and practice of Hesychasm initiated a stormy discussion, whose essential focus was the question of one's ability to know God. Palamas' subsequent responses consistently focused on various aspects of the issue. Thus, the first of the three parts of The Triads deals mainly with the possibilities of getting to know God through the acquisition of knowledge in the process of secular education.

Palamas' opponents, as I mentioned, believed that knowledge of God could be achieved indirectly through beings' knowledge. Barlaam based his position on a literal interpretation of Pseudo- Dionysius' works De Coelesti Hierarchia and the Divine Names. In his opinion, negative theology, Pseudo-Dionysius conceived it, serves only to emphasize the limitations of the human mind in terms of knowing God's nature. The essence of apophaticism is the assertion that our mind, as a creation that is subject to change, cannot know the essence of its source. It thus produces negative concepts related to the object of knowledge – i.e. it can only define what God is not. This cognition, partial and uncertain, should avail itself of the image of the world acquired through the senses, since the cosmos as created by God shows traces of his presence in the form of symbols; it leads to the Creator through hierarchies and analogies. According to Barlaam, real knowledge available to man relating to the supreme Being is symbolic knowledge, and therefore relative. Full illumination – i.e. knowledge of the essence of the divine being – can be achieved by a rational creature after the death of the body, have reached a new state of mind permeated with divine energies. According to the Calabrian philosopher, Pseudo-Dionysius' system excludes the possibility of a direct vision of divine essence, which it is absolutely inaccessible, and if one has any chance of crossing through the cloud of ignorance, it is after getting rid of the mortal shell of the body.

This was the interpretation of Pseudo-Dionysius, supported by numerous quotations from his writings, that Palamas had at his disposal. Due to the thematic framework of my work, I will omit the issues that are currently under discussion by academics about Barlaam's correct or incorrect understanding of Pseudo- Dionysius. I will only point out here that an excellent introduction to this issue is provided by the works of a renowned translator and researcher Robert Sinkewicz, e.g. The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God in the Early Writings of Barlaam the Calabrian (1982); Reinhard Flogaus, Palamas and Barlaam Revisited: A Reassessment of East and West in the Hesychast Controversy of 14th Century Byzantium (1998); and the most recent study by Håkan Gunnarsson, Mystical Realism in the Early Theology of Gregory Palamas (2002). On the other hand, it seems to me of paramount importance to highlight the role that Barlaam played in the Palamite reading of the Areopagitics. Let us note that

Gregory's intention was not to reinterpret undisputed patristic authority or to provide any correction, but to discuss with Barlaam and find a doctrinal foundation in defense of his brothers – the monks of Athos, whom Barlaam had ridiculed and contemptuously named omphalopsychoi (men with their souls in their navels), reflecting one of the details of the prayer practice. According to the Calabrian, this is the "prayer of the heart" – i.e. the long- lasting and constantly repeated formula "Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on us," a kind of "mantra," that caused a state of inner quiet (hesychia), enabling one to see and experience divine light, visions as experienced by the apostles on Mount Tabor during the Transfiguration of Christ.18 Barlaam deliberately simplified and trivialized this process, presenting centuries- old prayer practice as a purely automatic activity which – without the need for internal transformation – was supposed to lead to visions God. Based on Pseudo- Dionysius' apophatic theology, he found such a belief very harmful, and he argued that these visions were symptoms of mental illness. According to this interpretation, the monks of Athos were at risk of being accused of preaching the heretical view that one could attain illumination of the mind through a specific prayer practice, not only by ignoring the knowledge of created beings, but also by denying the order of sacraments and the mediation of priests. Through such an approach, the teaching of the hesychasts would be both a falsehood and a doctrinal error like that taught by the Bogomils and condemned by Alexios I Komnenos. In view of the far- reaching consequences of Barlaam's interpretation of Pseudo- Dionysius, it is obvious that Palamas' main goal, who was closely associated with the Athos community, was to challenge his opponent's conclusions. The Doctor of Hesychasm therefore directed his argument against Barlaam, and he was forced, by way of counterarguments, to present a correct understanding, in his opinion, of Pseudo- Dionysian thought – i.e. to carry out a plan that, absent the controversy, he would have never had in the first place.

In this book, I try to answer the fundamental question about the way Palamas understood and assimilated the Pseudo- Dionysian tradition, not only in The Triads (where Pseudo- Dionysius is most often quoted, but also in other treatises cited due to their significant and substantive content: Apologia dieksodikotera, Hagioretic Tome, and The One Hundred and Fifty Chapters (Capita physica, theologica, moralia et practica CL).

After many years of study – beginning with the monastic tradition expressed in the Apophthegmata of the Desert Fathers and the broadly understood Byzantine theology broadly understood (comparative works on Pseudo- Dionysius, Theodore the Studite, John of Damascus, Maximus the Confessor) and ending with the doctrine of Gregory Palamas – I noticed that that the method adopted by most historians of philosophy does not allow us to obtain satisfactory results when analyzing the influence of Pseudo- Dionysian thoughts on the works of Palamas. The current method of research has a tendency to deal with strictly defined issues concerning the relationship between the Doctor of Hesychasm's thoughts and the patristic legacy. This is done by quoting the text he used and then providing comparative context, though it is tacitly assumed at the outset that Palamas' writings are either contradictory or compatible with the particular thread under investigation. With such an approach, disputes – especially those concerning the presence and meaning of Pseudo- Dionysian thought in Palamas' works – become difficult to resolve. It seems to me that the solutions used so far, which consist of analyzing the explicit or implicit dependencies of Pseudo- Dionysius' doctrine on Neoplatonism, and then showing how much Palamas was, or was not, influenced by this thought, cause greater controversy and do not solve the problem. Therefore, the method applied here is different than previous methods. For example, I consider theological and philosophical problems in connection with

specific issues by placing them in the context of the tradition in which the author moved and the polemics from which these issues arose and were clarified, and by situating them in their respective historical environment. This methodology was postulated by Stefan Swiezawski when, in Rozmyślanie o wyborze w filozofii (Reflecting on choice in philosophy), he wrote that scholars should consider issues of medieval philosophy and theology from the inside – i.e. from a medieval rather than modern point of view. Instead of only examining the compatibility of Gregory Palamas' thoughts with the output of his predecessors – in this case, instead of referring to Pseudo- Dionysius, as if superimposing the former's works on the latter's – I made an attempt to analyze controversial issues and terms in their natural surroundings: personal, theological and historical. In other words, my intention in this work was primarily to examine, on the basis of source texts, the intentions of both thinkers, and to check whether they were consistent in their basic doctrinal assumptions. The next stage of deliberations was an attempt to read the Areopagitics through the eyes of the Bishop of Thessaloniki, while maintaining the most impartial position possible. At the same time, I tried to determine whether, according to Palamas, a correction of certain aspects if Pseudo- Dionysius' thought was necessary; whether this correction took place at all; if so, what it consisted of; and finally, whether this was a conscious procedure or one that also the need, resulting from polemics, to demonstrate the doctrinal foundations of the hesychasts' practices. In a broader sense, another intention emerges from the studied works of Gregory, namely the desire to present the mystical experiences of his confreres using the systematic language of theology, one which was drawn from the rich legacy of the Cappadocian Fathers, Maximus the Confessor, Pseudo-Dionysius, John of Damascus, Macarius of Egypt, and Evagrius Ponticus. For this reason, one of my aims is to present the thoughts of the Doctor of Hesychasm as a synthesis of the great heritage of the Eastern Church, thought inspired by many components of tradition, which requires at the same time that I provide an overall look at the quantum of issues that inspired Gregory. <>

The Oxford Handbook of Dionysius the Areopagite edited by Mark Edwards, Dimitrios Pallis, Georgios Steiris [Series Oxford Handbooks, Oxford University Press, 9780198810797]

The handbook contains forty essays by over thirty contributors from various universities on the antecedents, the content, and the reception of the Dionysian corpus, a body of writings falsely ascribed to Dionysius the Areopagite, a convert of St Paul, but actually written about ad 500. The first section contains discussions of the genesis of the corpus, its Christian antecedents, and its Neoplatonic influences. In the second section, studies on the Syriac reception, the relation of the Syriac to the original Greek, and the editing of the Greek by John of Scythopolis are followed by contributions on the use of the corpus in such Byzantine authors as Maximus the Confessor, John of Damascus, Theodore the Studite, Nicholas Stethatos, Gregory Palamas, and Gemistus Pletho. In the third section, attention turns to the Western tradition, represented first by the translators John Scotus Eriugena, John Sarracenus, and Robert Grosseteste and then by such readers as the Victorines, the early Franciscans, Albert the Great, Aquinas, Bonaventure, Dante, the English mystics, Nicholas of Cusa, and Marsilio Ficino The contributors to the final section survey the effect on Western readers of Lorenzo Valla's

proof of the inauthenticity of the corpus and the subsequent exposure of its dependence on Proclus by Koch and Stiglmayr. The authors studied in this section include Erasmus, Luther, and his followers, Vladimir Lossky, Hans Urs von Balthasar, and Jacques Derrida, as well as modern thinkers of the Greek Church. Essays on Dionysius as a mystic and a political theologian conclude the volume.

CONTENTS

The papers which form the nucleus of this volume were delivered at a conference on the Corpus Dionysiacum,1 organized by Dimitrios Pallis under the auspices of the universities of Oxford and Athens, the one providing the venue and the other the bulk of the funding for the event. It was a condition of the funding that the proceedings should be published, but it seemed to the organizers (Mr Pallis, Professor Edwards of Oxford, and Professor Steiris of Athens) that the interests of scholarship would be better served by a more comprehensive collection of studies, embracing not only the afterlife of the corpus but its origin and its antecedents, which would be suitable in quality and dimension to be published as a Handbook by Oxford University Press. The editors are grateful to those who delivered their papers at the original conference, and equally to those who answered requests to furnish supplementary essays. As a name for the Handbook they have chosen not the formidable title of the conference but the fanciful appellation that the author of the corpus gave to himself, in its Latin rather than its French variant, and without any cautionary prefix ('pseudo-Dionysius' or 'Dionysius the pseudo-Areopagite') to preserve the unwary reader from deception. It may be useful, since we can write no biography of the man, to begin this introduction with a brief history of the name.

According to the Life of Dionysius by the Byzantine scholar Michael Syncellus (c. 761– 846), he was a native Athenian who sensed the first unconscious stirring of faith when, in the company of the sophist Apollophanes, he witnessed the darkening of the earth by an unforeseen eclipse. When the meaning of this event was revealed to him by Paul on the Areopagus, he became one of the most intimate disciples of the Apostle and was made the first bishop of the church in Athens. He adorned this office both by his virtues and by his erudition, producing the works that now make up the Dionysian corpus. Accused by Apollophanes of no longer handling that which belonged to his ancestors in the ancestral manner, he answered that Apollophanes had not learned to handle that which belonged to God in a godly manner (Patrologia Graeca [henceforth PG] 4, 628B– C; Podolak 2015: 229). Symeon Metaphrastes (died c. 1000) relates that, 'desiring to multiply his talent' as Christ enjoins, he left Athens for Rome and quickly entered the inner circle of its bishop Clement (PG 4, 593D; cf. also PG 115, 1036D). At Clement's behest— or, as Michael Syncellus prefers, to escape the persecution of Trajan— he travelled to Gaul, where he fell victim to a ferocious persecution. A later hagiographer records that after he and his companions had been beheaded, Dionysius rose and took his head from the executioner— a parenthesis hints, however, that this miracle was witnessed only with the eyes of faith. These accounts explain how St Dionysius of Athens became St Denis of Paris, but not why his writings remained so long unknown or why, when they came to light in the course of the Christological controversy in the sixth century, they were found to have less in common with the works of accredited Fathers of the Church than with those of pagan philosophers who were not long dead. The response of John Philoponus, of the lexicon known as the Suda8 and of a Christian editor of Proclus9 is that the Platonists of Athens purloined his writings and contrived for the next five centuries to pass off their garbled paraphrases as an original philosophy.

If we say then that Koch and Stiglmayr, whose labours are documented by Christian Schäfer in this volume, were the first to expose the dependence of the Corpus Dionysiacum on Proclus, we must recognize that they differed from their Byzantine and Latin forerunners not so much in the rigour of their scholarship (for the kinship with the Neoplatonists never went unnoticed) as in their willingness to dethrone a saint. Lorenzo Valla too, as Denis Robichaud demonstrates, was not the only Humanist to perceive the difficulties of the traditional attribution; Valla himself (though he also unmasked the Donation of Constantine) never intended to become Luther's ally in the subversion of the papacy. The result of Luther's repudiation of Dionysius as one who has 'nothing to say of Christ' was not, as Johannes Zachhuber shows in two related papers, the total extinction of interest in this author among his followers: the asperity of Anders Nygren's assault on mysticism becomes intelligible when we see how readily some Lutherans took Dionysius as their guide to the state of being coram Deo, in the presence of God, which Luther intended in quite a different sense. The English poets and theologians whom Andrew Louth reviews here were equally responsive to the mystical strain in Dionysius, equally indifferent to the Celestial and Ecclesiastical Hierarchy, the first of which presented an obsolete picture of the cosmos, the second a pattern of churchmanship to which, had it ever been realized, they could never have subscribed.

This Protestant Dionysius, as we may call him, had become the nameless prototype of the lone pilgrim who seeks his God in the ever-receding uplands of the mind. There is no Celestial Hierarchy, no Ecclesiastical Hierarchy, no epistolary fiction in the Bampton Lectures of William Ralph Inge, the Anglican rationalist, or the seminal translation of C. E. Rolt, with its prefatory allusions to McTaggart, Amiel, Pascal, St Bernard, and Thomas à Kempis before it mentions the 'scriptural basis'. Scholars who had lost faith in the inerrancy of Scripture and in the Church's monopoly of exegesis coined the word 'mysticism' to denote the cultivation of an inward state of readiness for God. Wherever the title of Dionysius' Mystical Theology was better known than its contents, it would be cited as the fountainhead of a practice of nescient consciousness, which emptied the mind to make room for love or faith but was largely indifferent to the scriptural or liturgical affirmations which are the scaffolding of the mystical ascent in Dionysius. The darkness into which he invited the reader was often assumed, with little textual warrant, to be of a piece with the purposeful self-diremption of the intellect enjoined by the Cloud of Unknowing, with the spiritual desolation suffered by John of the Cross or even (as we learn from Timothy Knepper's essay in this volume) with the perpetual deferral of the signified in the postmodern theorisation of the sign. Even some of the Orthodox thinkers surveyed by Dimitrios Pallis in this volume have been apt to treat Dionysius as a philosopher, an ontologist of absence, paying little attention to his avowed project of elucidating the figurative vocabulary of the Bible. Only in recent decades have readers from this, let alone from any other, communion, addressed the Dionysian corpus as a whole: Andrew Louth and Alexander Golitzin have perceived what eluded Inge and Nygren, that even the hermeneutic quest will founder if the soul attempts to be its own teacher, spurning the assistance of the 'ecclesiastical hierarchy' and the angels who form a nine- runged chain of love from heaven to earth.

This emphasis on the liturgical strain in Dionysius seems to be a phenomenon of twentieth- century scholarship. As the papers by Beate Regina Suchla and Maximos Constas reveal, the chief concern of his early Byzantine readers John of Scythopolis and Maximus the Confessor was to compensate for apparent heterodoxies or lacunae in his teaching on the most elementary articles of belief. John of Damascus, as Edwards and Pallis argue, borrows not only the language of negation from Dionysius but some hints towards a theology of the image; the Dionysian legacy, however, did not fall indivisibly into

the hands of the iconophiles, as we learn from the paper by George Arabatzis on Dionysius and Theodore the Studite. Many of its most celebrated interpreters, after all, were the Christian heirs of Greek philosophy, for whom the intellect was the proper organ for the knowledge of the ineffable. Deirdre Carabine demonstrates that the Dionysian theme of procession and return was the linchpin of Eriugenás cosmology, while Theo Kobusch investigates the evolution in Nicholas of Cusa of a concept of nonalterity (non aliud) which escapes the incongruity of giving such names as 'God', 'the One', or 'the Good' to that which lies beyond all names. His contemporary Marsilio Ficino found in the works of Dionysius a charter for the harmonisation of Plato with Christianity, imagining (as Michael Allen and Mark Edwards observe) that he was thus doing openly what the pagan Neoplatonists had achieved by plagiarism. Readers of Georgios Steiris's contribution to this volume may be surprised to discover that, in his appropriation of Dionysius, Gemistus Pletho revealed himself to be both a strict monotheist and the advocate of a popular metaphysics in pursuit of political ends. Between Eriugena and the Renaissance, the works of Plato and Proclus were barely known at first hand, so that Albert the Great and his pupil Aquinas, as Wayne Hankey argues, could sever Dionysius from the Platonic tradition and treat him as the heir to Aristotle. But, as in their Franciscan precursors Alexander of Hales and Robert Grosseteste (whose translation of Dionysius is the subject of a paper by Declan Lawell), the Aristotelian Dionysius begets a Dionysian Aristotle, quite unlike his namesake in modern histories of philosophy, who has no suspicion of any reality other than that which is handled, heard, and seen.

Between the Middle Ages and the present, 'mysticism' came to signify not merely the penetration of divine secrets but the enjoyment of communion with God through the deliberate heightening of our internal capacities. Although it does not yet mean this in Dionysius (as Ysabel de Andia demonstrates here), we apply the term without misgiving to Gregory Palamas, whose application to Christian experience of the distinction between the essence and the energies of God is discussed by Torstein Tollefsen. Mark Edwards observes, in his essay on three modern theologians, that if he is read through Palamas (with Lossky) or through Maximus (with von Balthasar), Dionysius exhibits none of the sterile enmity to life that is imputed to him by Inge. For many Latin Christians, the Celestial Hierarchy was the bridge between the meditative and the contemplative senses of the term 'mystical'. This work was the first to receive a Latin commentary, the only work by Hugh of St Victor, according to Paul Rorem, that acknowledges Dionysius as the fountainhead of the apophatic theology which, here as elsewhere, he combines with the anagogic reading of Scripture. In discussing the translations of John Sarracenus, Mark Edwards notes that his version of the Celestial Hierarchy provided the basis for the glosses of Thomas Gallus, who (as Declan Lawell demonstrates) not only wove the Celestial Hierarchy into his itinerary from reason to love in the Commentary on the Song of Songs, but composed a treatise on living like the angels. Monica Tobon argues that the Franciscan tradition to which Bonaventure belongs had developed a similarly anagogic understanding of love, which she holds to be faithful to the teaching of Dionysius. The Celestial Hierarchy is also the only text in the Dionysian corpus to which Mark Edwards (in consultation with Tamara Pollack) finds unambiguous references in Dante. And while it appears to be of little interest to the author of the Cloud of Unknowing, Peter Tyler shows that in Hugh of Balma it found a Carthusian reader of less exclusive sympathies. A number of these medieval recipients of the corpus were as indifferent to the Ecclesiastical Hierarchy as modern interpreters are to the Celestial Hierarchy, and perhaps it is only in the late Byzantine figures surveyed here by Antonio Rigo that a balance between them was maintained.

The chapters at the beginning of this volume should be read with special care by those who imagine— if such there be in these latter days— that the apophaticism of Dionysius is an innovation, foreign to the spirit of Christianity. Maximos Constas argues that he exploits the writings, not only the name, of Paul, while Bogdan Bucur observes that he owes to Clement not only an insistence on divine ineffability to balance the anthropomorphism of Scripture, but the first conception of a celestial hierarchy, if not under that name. Ilaria Ramelli, who has given much study elsewhere to the shaping of Evagrian spirituality by Origen's metaphysics, explores the contribution made by both to the contemplative philosophy of Dionysius, while Michael Motia compares his precepts for penetrating the darkness of Scripture to Gregory of Nyssás meditation on the ascent of Mount Sinai by Moses. No one pretends that the Bible is the only source of these linguistic prolusions, and Charles Stang finds it remarkable that he borrows so openly from the vocabulary of the Neoplatonists. This being said, his Christian premises oblige him, as Mark Edwards and John Dillon point out, to conflate the ineffable One with the realm of being, and to make God himself the sole subject of theurgy, with results that would seem to Iamblichus and Proclus to sit rather beneath than beyond the bounds of logic. Riggs is clearly right in his understanding of the Dionysian system as a confluence of Christian and Platonic traditions; it is profitable to remember, however, that in the first extant manuscript of the corpus (as Suchla reports) its Christian tenor is accentuated by the addition of three works by John Philoponus and the commentaries of John of Scythopolis. Doubts as to whether the Greek that has come down to us is the original text would therefore be warranted even if we did not possess a Syriac translation which appears to some scholars to furnish evidence of more primitive readings. The current debate between scholars on this matter is a keen one, and we have left intact the competing observations of István Perczel and Emiliano Fiori.

The enigma of Dionysius, therefore, does not lie wholly in his pseudonymity. Even if we were to learn on incontestable authority that he was, let us say, Eusebius the pupil of the Athenian Neoplatonist Isidorus, that would not suffice to tell us which of our competing recensions, the Syriac or the Greek, is the more original; it would not tell us whether his object was to convert his fellow students to Christianity, to satisfy his own thirst for an intellectual system or to prove to his co-religionists that Platonism need not be the enemy of faith. It is possible, after all, to put this second question to Clement of Alexandria and remain unsure of an answer, just as it is possible to believe that we have remains of at least three letters by Ignatius of Antioch without being certain whether the Greek or the Syriac version is the more primitive. Even if all these problems were resolved, it would be left to us to achieve a synthesis of all five writings, without making Dionysius wholly a churchman, wholly a mystic or wholly a philosopher. György Geréby argues that if we reverse the bias of the medieval period and ignore the angelology of the corpus, we shall miss the political element which ought to make a peculiar appeal to the modern world. Of course he is not the only author of ancient times who shows his trunk to one inquirer and his tail to another: who has done justice to the whole of Plato, the whole of Aristotle, or even— dare one say it— the whole of Paul? It is arguable indeed that a more comprehensive understanding of these authors, cemented by a clear perception of all that they have in common, is a precondition of studying any book in the Dionysian corpus, let alone of interpreting the corpus as a whole.

At the same time, it is true that the author compounds our difficulties by alluding to works of his own whose very existence is in doubt, together with those of his putative teacher Hierotheus. Questions relating to these works were raised not only by the developments of modern scholarship but even by the readers of the corpus in ancient times. It is also true this author's apparent success in assuming a

false identity creates its own riddles, for his age was not one in which forgeries could hope as a matter of course to pass undetected. Most of the acts and gospels produced in the names of the apostles had already been rejected; Origen's defenders had cited undisputed instances of forgery in support of their contention that his works had been falsified by his detractors; the watchword of those who opposed Chalcedon in the name of Cyril— 'one nature of the divine Word enfleshed'— was soon to be exposed as an unwitting quotation from the heretic Apollinarius. And yet not only the Dionysian corpus but an amplified redaction of the letters of Ignatius23 and eight books of Apostolic Constitutions purporting to have been edited by Clement of Rome were accepted as genuine in the early Byzantine era by authors of some erudition and discernment. Lest we imagine that Christians were peculiarly credulous, we should remember how many Orphic texts are cited for the first time by the Platonists of late antiquity. We may find it curious nevertheless that, except in one particularly late and extensive catalogue, the works of this putative friend of Paul appear in none of the numerous appendices to the New Testament, which so often include not only Hermas, Barnabas, and some form of the Didache, but other books which are now lost or of less repute.

We ask, with little hope of illumination, whether those who embraced these late pseudepigrapha were really deceived or were merely acknowledging the authority of their contents by accepting the fiction of authorship. The success of the Dionysian writings is all the more remarkable because there was no primitive text— no equivalent to the Didache or the letter of Ignatius to the Romans— to provide a nucleus for the forgery. And it is Dionysius, not the false Ignatius or the false Clement, who became at once the teacher and the mouthpiece of ascetics and contemplatives, bishops and scholars, Platonists, Hegelian and postmodernist, with scarcely any loss of honour or influence even where his apostolicity had been thoroughly exploded. The swollen Ignatius never completely displaced the middle recensions of his letters, and the Apostolic Constitutions were seldom of interest to anyone but canonists and jurists, who were not afraid to question their integrity. By contrast, without the Corpus Dionysiacum, there would have been no Maximus the Confessor, no Eriugena, no Aquinas, no Cusanus, and no Ficino as we now know them. The pejorative label 'pseudo- Dionysius' belies his place in history, for there are no authentic writings by this disciple from which his lucubrations need to be distinguished: we do not speak of pseudo- Enoch, pseudo- Baruch, pseudoOrpheus, or pseudo- Homer, and the present volume has therefore followed the practice of most contemporary specialists in dispensing with the prefix. The name of Dionysius is synonymous with a single body of literature, just as the name of Homer is synonymous with the Iliad and Odyssey. His text, like that of Homer, is protean, and, like Homer, he grows in stature with every new appropriation— all the more so the more the appropriation departs from what we now suppose to have been his 'intent'. And just as it would have been slighting to call him pseudo- Dionysius, so it would have been needlessly pedantic to call this a volume on the reception of his writings: it is indeed so, for the most part, but this is surely a case in which the reception is the man. <>

THE MYSTICAL PRESENCE OF CHRIST: THE EXCEPTIONAL AND THE ORDINARY IN LATE MEDIEVAL RELIGION by Richard Kieckhefer [Medieval Societies, Religions, and Cultures, Cornell University Press, 978150176511 7]

THE MYSTICAL PRESENCE OF CHRIST investigates the connections between exceptional experiences of Christ's presence and ordinary devotion to Christ in the late medieval West. Unsettling the notion that experiences of seeing Christ's figure or hearing Christ speak are simply exceptional events that happen at singular moments, Richard Kieckhefer reveals the entanglements between these experiences and those that occur through the imagery, language, and rituals of ordinary, everyday devotional culture.

Kieckhefer begins his book by reconsidering the "who" and the "how" of Christ's mystical presence. He argues that Christ's humanity and divinity were equally important preconditions for encounters, both exceptional and ordinary, which Kieckhefer proposes as existing on a spectrum of experience that moves from presupposition to intuition and finally to perception. Kieckhefer then examines various contexts of Christ manifestations—during prayer, meditation, and liturgy, for example—with attention to gender dynamics and the relationship between saintly individuals and their hagiographers. Through penetrating discussions of a diverse set of texts and figures across the long fourteenth century (Angela of Foligno, the nuns of Helfta, Margery Kempe, Dorothea of Montau, Meister Eckhart, Henry Suso, and Walter Hilton, among others), Kieckhefer shows that seemingly exceptional manifestations of Christ were also embedded in ordinary religious experience.

Wide-ranging in scope and groundbreaking in methodology, The Mystical Presence of Christ is a magisterial work that rethinks the interplay between the exceptional and the ordinary in the workings of late medieval religion.

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The Presence of Christ as Exceptional and Ordinary

When Anna Vorhtlin was chosen as prioress of Engelthal convent, we are told, Christ assured her he would be with her in all the cares her office would bring her. He would protect her from adversaries and bestow honor upon her. When the office nonetheless proved burdensome, she prayed, "O Lord, you made me such fine promises, but now I am suffering so grievously!" He replied that he had not abandoned her for one moment but had remained with her always. She then looked up and saw him before her. Taking three steps, he told her she must always walk in his footsteps. Common counsel in late medieval piety: imitation of Christ means following him in a life of affliction.)

Among holy men and especially women of the late medieval West, few themes rival in significance the presence of Christ and communication from him. The story of Anna Vorhtlin, which comes from a compilation by Christina Ebner, is one of many. Christ's frequent presence is a dominant theme arguably the main theme—in the substantially autobiographical book of Margery Kempe, the hagiographic lives that Raymond of Capua and Johannes Marienwerder wrote about Catherine of Siena and Dorothea of Montau, the revelations that Mechthild of Hackeborn and Gertrude of Helfta told to confidantes, the life of Veronica of Binasco written by a later hagiographer on the basis of notes by contemporaries, and other texts, regardless of differences in genre and context.

If the presence of Christ was centrally important to these exceptional figures, it was equally central to the devotional lives of more ordinary individuals. The fourteenth and fifteenth centuries witnessed an explosion of devotional texts, art, and practices, and much of this devotional culture was Christocentric and meant to create a lively sense not only of Christ's historical life but of his presence to the devout person in prayer. For every individual who saw visions of Christ or heard his voice, there were many others who prayed to him assuming he was really and literally (if not physically) present. Meditations on the life of Christ, stations of the cross, veneration of the sacred face of Christ, the rosary, statues of the Virgin and Child or the pietà, might lead the reader or practitioner to imaginative projection backward in time but could equally produce a sense of the infant Christ or the Man of Sorrows as a living presence here and now. New feast days celebrated the name of Jesus along with other devotional foci. Christ present in the eucharistic host was increasingly an object of devotional adoration, exhibited in a monstrance and used in rituals of benediction, and carried in procession on the feast of Corpus Christi. ^ late medieval book of prayers asks for a vision of Christ "with the eyes of the heart" before one's death, assuming this experience could in principle be imparted to anyone. Devotions were supported by indulgences, which could be gained by going on a pilgrimage, saying a prayer, gazing at an image. If we are seeking historical context for the presence of Christ discussed in this book, it is to be found primarily in this burgeoning devotional culture.

If Christ's presence was so vitally important both for exceptional and for ordinary religion, the question must be raised: What connections are there between the exceptional and the ordinary? That is the central question pursued in this book. The answer is not simple, because the links were various. Most basically, ordinary and exceptional piety enjoyed a symbiotic connection. Widely shared assumptions about Christ's presence lent plausibility to more striking claims about perceiving that presence, while those exceptional claims reinforced the more wonted assumptions. Visions and locutions reinforced

ordinary conviction, but ordinary conviction made visions and locutions possible in the first place. A prayer book that cultivated prayer before a crucifix and a story in which Christ spoke back from the crucifix represent two sides of the same Christocentric culture.6 If prayer practices helped cultivate awareness of Christ's presence, it may have been not so much the more sophisticated meditations but ordinary prayer formulas and even recitation of sacred names that had such effect. The life of a saintly woman such as Dorothea of Montau may interweave notions of rarefied mystical experience (voiced perhaps by the hagiographer more than the subject) with accounts of hearing Christ insistently in the context of everyday life (probably revealing more fully the subject's perspective). Scholarly attention tends to be directed either toward the exceptional figures (the nuns of Helfta, Birgitta, Margery Kempe, and others) or toward the ordinary religion of parish churches and chapels, homes and cloisters, processional routes and pilgrimage shrines. But the exceptional and the ordinary were not rigidly detached from each other. Too often missed is the tangled interweaving of commonplace experience and extravagant event, habitual routine and sensational irruption. If we want to understand how late medieval religion worked at any level, exceptional or ordinary, we need to explore how ordinary and exceptional religion related to each other. That, then, is the main point of this book: the embeddedness of the exceptional within the ordinary.

Why should Christ's insistent companionship be called his "mystical" presence? The theme is not usually associated with the canonical mystics of the late medieval West, Marguerite Porete or Meister Eckhart, The Cloud of Unknowing or Julian of Norwich, or others, most of whom have only supporting roles or cameo appearances in this book. It might seem better to speak of the "spiritual" presence of Christ. But to call it "spiritual" would emphasize its ordinariness, while calling it "mystical" suggests that it is exceptional. It was in fact both: ordinary as a matter of implicit faith but exceptional as a matter of explicit experience. The figures we are discussing crossed over the line and claimed to experience in an ongoing way a vivid realization of Christ's manifest presence, which is referred to here as "mystical."

The presence of Christ is, of course, not specifically a late medieval phenomenon. There is nothing more fundamental to Christianity than the conviction of Christ's presence. One early Christian poet suggested that he is always present to receive in his body the pains of his saints, and he had done so already when the Holy Innocents were massacred, which implies that even during his historical life he could be spiritually present in such a way as to receive others' bodily sufferings in his own body. In two lines of verse, this poet managed to weave together the historical and transhistorical presence of Christ, his spiritual and his physical presence, his infancy narrative and the suffering in his own body more often associated with his Passion. More typically the aspects of his presence are represented one at a time. At the end of Matthew's gospel, Christ promised he would always be present among his disciples. For Matthew he might be present in the concrete individual in need, the hungry and thirsty calling for aid. For Paul in his epistles his presence might be embodied in the Church, in the Eucharist, in the bodily members of the baptized. Even to say that Christ is both divine and human is to make a claim about his presence; while creatures come and go, present in particular times and places, it is the nature of God to be present at all times and places. Christ is the only person seen as reliably present in both modes, and the Christ who as God is present everywhere is the same person who was present at a historical moment. A ghost may perhaps stumble across a divide between worlds, but that is unexpected. Christian theology and devotion take it as the special quality of Christ always to be present everywhere, the same person who was present in Capernaum or Emmaus. Having tasted human experience, having lived a life on earth, he has a story to recall and a personality that inheres in that person. The Jesus of

history is not distinct from the transhistorical Christ. To say that "Christ is risen" is again to make a claim about his presence, to say that he is present to living individuals as alive: stories of his appearance (to Paul in particular) predate the gospel accounts of the empty tomb, and in at least three of the gospels the absence from the tomb is less prominent to the narrative than the presence to the disciples. That Christ has risen is less significant than that he is risen. The martyrs had visions of Christ when they were about to die. He stood by Saint Anthony in his temptation, but appeared only afterward. He came to Saint Martin and others incognito, as a beggar. He spoke to Saint Francis of Assisi and others from a crucifix. Twelfth-century Cistercians insisted that the historical "memory" of Jesus might be delightful but the experience of his living presence was far more so. When a friar visited an elderly woman, she knew that he had medical problems, but she said Jesus had spoken to her that morning and given assurance that his medical treatment would go well. Often these stories are difficult to locate in time and place, but this incident can be assigned with precision to the northwest side of Chicago, in 2009. Volumes have been written about people who report such experiences in recent times.

Still, there are aspects of the theme that are especially characteristic of late medieval piety, if not unique to it. Between the late thirteenth and the early fifteenth centuries, hearing the voice of Christ and sometimes beholding him in visions were phenomena interwoven with the everyday lives of individuals and sometimes with the communal routines of women's monasteries, particularly their liturgical routines. Saints' vitae and other sources in the later medieval West sometimes represented contact with Christ as not just an occasional but a frequent experience. He might be a saint's "frequent visitor," ever in her company, as was said of Catherine of Siena. It is this pervasive presence—the interaction and communication with Christ that become so frequent that he seems almost a constant companion—that is here called the "mystical presence" of Christ. During the long fourteenth century, cases of such interweaving can be found especially in Germany but also in Italy, England, and elsewhere, in tandem with the Christocentric devotionalism prevalent at the time. Devotionalism brought religion into every corner of life, and the mystical presence of Christ was the experience of his presence in that same quotidian environment. While these tendencies lasted, they played a tremendously important role in religious culture."

Already in the first half of the thirteenth century there were individuals such as the Flemish nun Lutgard of Aywieres (1182-1246), who had a vision of Christ that dissuaded her from marriage, had another vision of Christ crucified, and experienced further encounters with Christ. Sometimes he gave her reassurance regarding the state of her soul, or her inattention to liturgy, or her death. She beheld the face of Christ and was united with him in contemplation. Her vita says, "The presence of Christ renders every place, no matter how hateful, supremely delightful and remarkably desirable." When she died, the nuns of her convent knew that Jesus came with the saints to receive her. Often her contact with Christ came when she interceded on behalf of others.' Her vita does not talk about integration of Christ's presence with liturgical and quotidian experience, but it anticipates later cases in which that presence was even more fully experienced. Ida of Nivelles (ca. 1190-1231) also often conversed with Christ; lit "beckoned to her," his spirit was "ever-familiar," and during mass she sensed his presence on the altar, but if he came to her as a child, they would engage in playful exchange. In both these cases, as in others, there is anticipation of tendencies that would become more fully and richly developed in the long fourteenth century.

Plan of This Book

If people claimed to experience the presence of Christ, it may be useful to begin by asking about the Christ they encountered. Much of the historical literature over the past two generations has assumed that late medieval devotion was chiefly to the humanity of Christ. Chapters 1 and 2 will show that this notion is problematic. The Christ whose presence is reported in the sources is very much a divine Christ. In the religious literature and in common parlance, Christ is almost ubiquitously referred to as God. He may be helpless in the manger and suffering on the cross, but in medieval sources it is usually car—and often emphasized—that it is God in the manger and God on the cross. Christ on the cross says he wishes "to show you that I, God, stop my ears in heaven." Is there confusion here, or misunderstanding? No, what we find in the sources is standard, long-standing theology of Christ's person and natures. For our late medieval sources, Christ's divinity is not only a matter of faith but, as we shall see, a fundamentally important precondition for both ordinary and exceptional experience of his presence. Chapter 1 lays out the basic argument and its theological implications, while chapter 2 traces how these issues are dealt with in a range of later medieval texts. That traditional Christology can be seen in late medieval texts should not be surprising or controversial; that the divinity of Christ was important to late medieval writers is no great discovery. Nonetheless, the strong emphasis in the scholarly literature on the humanity of Christ tends to obscure why and how his divinity was crucially important. While chapters 1 and 2 jointly deal with these issues, chapter 2 also serves to introduce to the reader the texts and personalities that will recur throughout the book.

Chapter 3 then turns from the Christ who is revealed to the recipients of that revelation. Those who are said to have heard and seen Christ are easily seen as altogether special cases, whether their experience is seen as supernatural or as delusional. It may be useful to look at such reports in terms of a spectrum, a fluid transition running from presupposition of spiritual presence to intuition and then to perception of that presence. There is a sense (which will need to be discussed) in which presupposition of presence was nearly universal: those who recognized Christ as God at least notionally took it for granted that he was ubiquitous. The devout might intuit his presence. The exceptionally devout might claim to have heard or even seen him, and if they persuaded others that they had perceived that presence, this said something about them, possibly that they were saints. ^ simple and straightforward version of the argument might be that intuition was what really occurred and that statements of perception were inflated boasts or hagiographic topoi. Perhaps that was the case; it would be difficult to prove. What we can show is that the sources themselves at least sometimes recognize something very much like this fluid transition from presupposition to intuition to perception as a valid model for understanding experience of spiritual presence.

These first three chapters, dealing with the Christ whose presence is experienced and the ways that experience of Christ becomes represented, the "who" and the "bow" of his manifestation, constitute the heart of the book. The following chapters present a series of corollaries to what is said there, or alternative perspectives on the main themes laid out in those chapters. Most importantly, subsequent chapters explore further ways in which the "mystical presence of Christ" is exceptional yet grounded in ordinary religious experience.

If we wish to understand the relationship between ordinary and exceptional piety, we must know something about the ways people prayed to Christ and the relationship between such prayer and experience of his presence. Prayers to Christ, meditations on his historical life, and scripted dialogues

with him are all elements in the Christocentric devotion that contextualizes claims about his mystical presence. Chapter 4 surveys these forms of prayer and meditation but argues that it is simpler prayers, interjections, and even repetition of the name `Jesus" that are the strongest links between ordinary piety and exceptional experience. It is crucially important that those who reported hearing and even seeing Christ did not generally use rarefied forms of prayer distinctive to them, but used common and often very simple prayer formulas. The devotional and liturgical stimuli to intuition and perception of the divine were the same devotional, meditative, and liturgical exercises that were widely shared by ordinary Christians.

Experience of Christ's presence often occurs in the context of liturgy, which makes present the Christ who instituted the Eucharist, suffered and died, and rose from the dead. The liturgical year further includes feast days that commemorate events from Christ's life. The liturgy thus provides a context in which the past is made present and the Christ of biblical narrative becomes manifest. Liturgy and sacrament provide the setting in which Christ is most ordinarily recognized as present. But as chapter 5 suggests, the cycle of liturgical feasts, which bring back memory of past events, was less important in our sources than liturgical services seen as occasions for Christ's manifestation in the present.

Most of the figures examined in this book are women, but some men also spoke about experiencing Christ's presence: Meister Eckhart, Henry Suso, Walter Hilton, and others. As chapter 6 proposes, when men talk about Christ's presence, they typically have in mind the encounter with a person but not a personality. This distinction opens the book's main contribution to the exploration of mystical presence as a gendered phenomenon.

Chapters 7 and 8 show how the theme of Christ's recognized presence becomes articulated within the culture and the social dynamics of communities, especially the women's monastery of Helfta and the south German Dominican convents that produced the "sister-books." People speak of experiencing Christ's presence in large part because they are encouraged to do so and are given pertinent vocabulary by a broader or a more specific community. From the perspective of those within these communities, the ways that Christ becomes manifest are not simply expressions of communal culture, but ways that Christ enters into that culture, accommodating himself to it to make his presence recognizable. This aspect of his manifestation is most fully developed in the literature from Helfta. It is seen in the later sister-books as well, but in those texts the social dynamics that Christ enters into become more prominent.

When the presence of Christ becomes a pervasive experience for women who live not in community but in the secular world or in reclusion, their experience is most often transmitted in the writings of their confessors. It is from the writings of these male companions that we know about the women who received the revelation, their personal relationships (often fraught) with Christ, and their sometimes narrow circles of associates. Chapter 9 centers on a particularly interesting case of this sort, that of Dorothea of Montau, and explores some of the complexities of her relationship with her hagiographer and with Christ. In the hagiographic dossier for Dorothea, Christ appears as a kind of disciplinarian regulating her daily life and piety, as a mystical bridegroom, and as a teacher. Dorothea and her hagiographer presumably both accepted all three perspectives on Christ, but there is reason to think the perception of Christ as a taskmaster in quotidian affairs comes mainly from Dorothea, while his depiction as mystical bridegroom owes a great deal to the hagiographer's intervention. Because Dorothea exemplifies more fully than any other figure the themes explored in this book, and will already

be familiar from references to her in earlier chapters, this chapter serves as a capstone for the book as a whole.

Speaking of Christ as overtly manifest could, of course, become problematic, as chapter 10 demonstrates. Late medieval Christians were keenly aware of the dangers of delusion and self-deception. The absence of Christ was also a factor that complicated a sense of his presence, although his absence in one mode does not preclude his presence in others; if there are different modes of presence, there are also different modes of absence. Chapter 10 discusses how these problems are discussed in the sources.

Even the preliminary survey given here makes clear that the mystical presence of Christ was on the whole found not only more among women than among men but among German women in particular and that women connected with the Dominican order were perhaps even more predisposed in this direction. German women's houses were characterized by an eager exchange of texts, by contact with the highly mobile Dominican friars who could mediate cultural exchange, and thus by a collective identity that made it easy for the mystical presence of Christ to become widely established as a cultural phenomenon. But the broader point here is the connectedness of ordinary and exceptional religion, so if German women's monasteries seem more prominent than English laity or the affiliates of Italian friars, that is not because they are entirely distinctive, but because they most fully attest trends that extended throughout the late medieval West. <>

Enemies of the Cross: Suffering, Truth, and Mysticism in the Early Reformation by Vincent Evener [Oxford University Press, 9780190073183]

Enemies of the Cross *examines* how suffering and truth were aligned in the divisive debates of the early Reformation. Vincent Evener explores how Martin Luther, along with his first intra-Reformation critics, offered "true" suffering as a crucible that would allow believers to distinguish the truth or falsehood of doctrine, teachers, and their own experiences. To use suffering in this way, however, reformers also needed to teach Christians to recognize false suffering and the false teachers who hid under its mantle.

This book contends that these arguments, which became an enduring part of the Lutheran and radical traditions, were nourished by the reception of a daring late-medieval mystical tradition — the post-Eckhartian — which depicted annihilation of the self as the way to union with God. The first intra-Reformation dissenters, Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt and Thomas Müntzer, have frequently been depicted as champions of medieval mystical views over and against the non-mystical Luther. Evener counters this depiction by showing how Luther, Karlstadt, and Müntzer developed their shared mystical tradition in diverse directions, while remaining united in the conviction that sinful self-assertion prevented human beings from receiving truth and living in union with God. He argues that Luther, Karlstadt, and Müntzer each represented a different form of ecclesial-political dissent shaped by a mystical understanding of how Christians were united to God through the destruction of self-assertion. *Enemies of the Cross* draws on seldom-used sources and proposes new concepts of "revaluation" and

"relocation" to describe how Protestants and radicals brought medieval mystical teachings into new frameworks that rejected spiritual hierarchy.

Review

"Vincent Evener's thorough study abandons simple distinctions between mysticism and Protestantism or between mainstream and liberal reformers. He shows the common ground among such varied theologians as Luther, Karlstadt, and Müntzer as well as how their different approaches to piety led to distinct approaches to politics. Anyone who wants to understand how conflicts among the reformers emerged should read this excellent book." -- Volker Leppin, author of *Martin Luther: A Late Medieval Life*

"**ENEMIES OF THE CROSS** provides a masterful analysis of how early Protestant reformers viewed suffering as both a source and sign of theological truth, even though they disagreed sharply about the content of this truth. Evener demonstrates convincingly that one simply cannot understand the early development of Protestantism without taking stock of suffering and the central role it played in Reformation epistemology, theology, and spirituality. An impressive achievement." -- Ronald K. Rittgers, author of *The Reformation of Suffering: Pastoral Theology and Lay Piety in Late Medieval and Early Modern Germany*

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From the beginning, Luther, Karlstadt, and Muntzer worked to reshape Christians' emotional and mental dispositions—to subject these dispositions to God's truth and discipline. The goal was not only to teach true doctrine, but also to inculcate forms of spirituality and life in accordance with that doctrine. The reformers needed, moreover, to offer compelling guidance to secure Christians from the deceit that had supposedly befallen previous generations. Christians needed criteria to evaluate their own spiritual experiences and lives and to evaluate doctrine, teachers, and communities. From the fundamental conviction that God's manner of conveying salvation was entirely contrary to the expectations of fallen

reason and will, the reformers studied in this book offered suffering as inseparable from the receipt of salvation on God's terms and from life in the world on the basis of that salvation. In so doing, they drew deeply from the well of post-Eckhartian mystical teachings on annihilation and union. With the aid of Tauler and the German Theology, they divided the world into true and false doctrines and teachers, indeed true and false Christians, and they guided their reformed followers in careful discernment surrounding what became the highest form of deceit—false suffering.

For a time, Luther, Karlstadt, and Muntzer made common cause against the Roman church and scholastic theology, seeking to summon Christians away from allegedly self-willed and self-deceived religion back to the foot of the cross. Under the pressure of unsettling and violent events, however, their views and paths diverged dramatically. As they warned readers and hearers about each other, each relied on the still-shared conviction that a right doctrine of salvation and life had to uphold true suffering—no Christian could expect salvation, or respond rightly to the tumult of reform, on the basis of an unbroken self-will and fallen reason. At the same time, the three reformers defined differently the nature both of humans' sinful self-assertion, which needed to be humiliated and destroyed, and of the union with God or Christ attained in the wake of this destruction. Their democratization of mysticism in this respect was also delimitation—mysticism became a hammer to identify and malign the unannihilated, as well as a tool for self-critique and self-discipline. On the social plane, the democratization and delimitation of mysticism had major implications for the constitution of Christians as ecclesial-political actors.

From his trust-centered paradigm, Luther argued that Christians united to Christ by faith would accept that God works sub contrariis—even amid the persecution of the true church. According to Luther, God ordained and preserved a good social order and promised to care for Christians in all matters temporal and eternal; Christian faith clung to that promise in the face of every assault of conscience, sin, the devil, or the world. Muntzer, conversely, saw spiritual annihilation as an experience that marked the beginning of faith, when elect souls willingly confronted and broke through their unbelief; thereafter, God entered the empty space and souls again became the possession of God according to the created order. Unambiguously led and instructed by God, redeemed souls for Muntzer represented God's instruments to reorder church and society, casting down and separating the godless from the godly. Karlstadt, finally, was focused no less than Muntzer on conformity to the divine will and law; but he rejected the possibility of complete self-abnegation and union with God in the here and now. For Karlstadt, faith was neither trust in God's promise of salvation through Christ alone (as for Luther), nor the fear of God alone and expectation of God's possession and instruction of souls in a Spirit-led church (as for Muntzer). For Karlstadt, faith was a love-rich knowledge that could become ever deeper through inner illumination and study of scripture, as well as through consequent self-accusation and reformation of self and community. The process of immersion into God's will and growth in active conformity was individual and corporate. Karlstadt expected neither sinless Christians nor pure communities, and he interpreted persecution, like all suffering, as God's salutary rod of discipline, to be embraced in self-hatred.

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I argue that we should not see the mystical presence in Luther's thought and teaching as something that was subsumed and controlled within a political Reformation. Not only Muntzer and Karlstadt, but Luther himself used his mystical inheritance to make Christians into dissenting ecclesialpolitical actors.

This was as true before the Peasants' War as after. The dissent required by Luther's view of unio mystica as a faith bond through the Word was nonetheless of a different character than the dissent taught by Muntzer or Karlstadt. While Luther insisted that true Christians must endure persecution for the Word, this was not simply a counsel of conformity; Luther demanded a hard clinging to truth despite suffering and loss, empowered by intense trust that God works under contraries. On the positive side, Luther called Christians to active participation in the God-given structures of society, impelled by trust in God's blessing—indeed by the Spirit of Christ within—despite the mundane nature of such daily toil and the pervasiveness of sin in society.

Recognition that Luther had a genuine conception of dissent even through the Peasants' War—however unsatisfying the conception may be from modern perspectives—points to the need for new formulations of the relationship of mysticism and dissent in the Reformation era. Significant efforts to theorize this connection have been made by both Steven E. Ozment and Hans-Jurgen Goertz. Ozment recognized the dissenting force latent in mystical practice, experience, and theory: even if mysticism "does not issue in dissent, reform, or revolutionary activity;' he wrote, "it uniquely drives home the prerequisite for such, viz, an understanding of the penultimate character of all worldly authority and power. In the mystical traditions, quietism is no less negative a judgment on established power than violent revolution. Mystical salvation is the discovery of the final power and authority of the Self within one's own self." Examining radical uses of the German Theology as well as the life and writings of several radical reformers, Ozment argued that radical reformers appropriated medieval mysticism to "redefine the nature of religious truth and authority" over and against the "uncompromising claims of Rome and Wittenberg"; the radicals affirmed "the priority—if not the sovereignty—of individual experience and insight in religious matters." Such a dissenting use of mystical anthropology is indeed present in Muntzer's works from the Prague Manifesto forward; nevertheless, the analysis in chapter 5 will show that Muntzer's first concern in reading and using the Eckhartian mystics was a soteriological one, shaped by the conviction that salvation and truth were contrary to fallen reason and desire. The same can be said for Luther, whose dissenting use of mysticism was not recognized by Ozment. Democratization of mystical concepts allowed every Christian to experience union; the question was, how was union to be defined? Could the revolutionary impulses latent in mysticism be contained?

Focusing primarily on Muntzer, Hans-Jurgen Goertz's investigations in the 1960s and 1970s referred to an "externalization of mysticism"—the process of rooting out the "world" that Muntzer at first applied to souls was subsequently projected onto the social plane. More recently, Goertz has argued that Muntzer's reception of mysticism was oriented by anti-clericalism toward the change of objective religious and economic conditions, and that Muntzer's apocalypticism helped him extend his concern for inner processes "into the universal sphere"—an extension that was nonetheless a "logical development" of the "mystical outlook" not a break from it. Leppin, as we've seen, argues similarly that apocalypticism made Muntzer's mysticism revolutionary. The argument in the ensuing pages is that the use of mystical concepts to define the true believer, and hence to distinguish true believers from false, inevitably created the pressing question of how those true Christians united to God were to relate to everyone else: mysticism was no longer an elite pursuit but the sine qua non of Christian identity. There were indeed added ingredients—ranging from apocalyptic perspectives to political considerations—that encouraged Muntzer to turn mystical ideas in a revolutionary direction and restrained Luther and Karlstadt from the same; but the reformers' use of mysticism was, in and of itself and from the get go, an effort to shape Christians as ecclesial-political actors.

By focusing on the connection of suffering and truth, themes of true and false suffering, and the reception of Eckhartian motifs around these loci, the present book offers a new perspective on the theology and reform program of each figure studied. ^ word about prior assessments of Muntzer and Karlstadt is in order here. Whereas scholarship before the 1970s usually saw Karlstadt and Muntzer as disciples of Luther whose personal failings or intellectual inadequacy caused them to stray from the master into unrestrained "legalism" or "spiritualism," more recent perspectives usually describe them as original thinkers who, like Luther, did their theological work through study of medieval traditions. Detailed studies of their reception of medieval traditions have yielded much insight, but the tendency to press Karlstadt and Muntzer, along with their respective theologies, into received "types" has hampered understanding and, in Muntzer's case, obscured his deep engagement with themes of promise and faith from Luther. Karlstadt's theology is frequently described as "Augustinian" or "mystical;' while the debate over whether Muntzer was an "apocalyptic;' "mystical;' or "revolutionary" figure continues to cast a shadow. What is needed now is to see how Karlstadt and Muntzer used inherited traditions to forge theologies equally as creative as Luther's, responding both positively and negatively to Luther and meeting the challenge that the Wittenberg reformation set for itself: dividing the European Christian world into true and false Christianities, and equipping Christians to deal with the difference.

Chapter 1 describes how suffering and union with God were connected in late-medieval Eckhartian mysticism. Reformers were influenced by accents unique to this mysticism, including the daring conception of union with God through annihilation of the self, the critique of self-chosen suffering that left the self-will intact, and the demand to yield to God's will even in the experience of seeming forsakenness (resignatio ad infernum). Through a comparison of surviving, handwritten marginal annotations left by Luther and Karlstadt in their respective volumes of Tauler's Sermons, chapter 1 demonstrates the reformers' shared interest in the nothingness of the soul, the experience of being reduced to nothing, and the status of the reduced soul as God's instrument. Chapter 1 also discusses the German Theology, showing how this text from the Eckhartian stream used the willingness to be reduced to nothing and to endure a hard Christ-life as the key markers of true rather than false forms of union or friendship with God; this preoccupation with truth and falsehood made the German Theology especially useful to sixteenth-century reformers. Anonymous, printed marginalia in a 1520 edition of the German Theology represent a view of Christian salvation and life similar to the one later developed by Karlstadt—a view that defined sin as claiming for the partial self the life and works imparted to the soul by God, the whole, and that saw Gelassenheit as the solution to this Annehmlichkeit. The rich inheritance of mysticism in the Reformation would not be constrained by Luther's redefinition of union with God as a faith-bond through trust in the Word extra nos. Karlstadt may not have written the marginalia, but he may have learned from them.

In chapter 2, I turn to Luther's criticisms of indulgences and of scholastic theology in 1517 and 1518, and I argue that Luther engaged in a two-front struggle against cross-shirking: interpreting all suffering as a punishment for sin that should be endured willingly by the contrite, Luther on the one hand worried that Christians were taught and encouraged to appropriate the benefit of others' suffering—especially through indulgences and relics—rather than suffering themselves. On the other hand, Luther criticized those whose vigorous self-mortification and apparently patient suffering merely concealed an unwillingness to endure the humiliation and reduction of their own moral and intellectual resources for earning salvation. Crucially, Luther at this time was reorienting the doctrine of salvation around the themes of divine promise and human trust in the Word extra nos—moved by grace alone, Christians

needed to recognize the nothingness of their mental and moral efforts toward salvation, abandon self-trust, and trust in God's promise incarnate in Christ and spoken in the words of forgiveness on account of Christ. This was a salutary despair of the self, taught by suffering, that won assurance of salvation. Luther criticized scholastic theology and theologians for using reason to construct a theology that reflected and buttressed self-assertion and distrust of God, and he offered suffering as a crucible that would separate true and false theologians and doctrines. The teacher who did not offend reason and pride was an enemy of the cross. Luther's message divided the Christian world—beginning with its theologians and teachers—in terms of true and false rather than in terms of earnest and lukewarm. True Christians needed to discern and trust that God works under contraries of suffering.

With these beginnings, Luther found a ready ally in his colleague Karlstadt—despite the personal rivalry and the substantial theological differences that existed between the two already in 1517. Chapter 3 analyzes some of the many vernacular pamphlets (Flugschriften) produced by Luther and Karlstadt between 1519 and 1521 to teach and win over less-educated clergy and the "common person:' We will see that this literature was replete with mystical motifs, and both reformers developed a paradigm of annihilation and union, while attributing all agency to God. Nevertheless, their views were distinct: Luther focused on the annihilation of self-trust and union with God through faith, while Karlstadt underlined the need to judge the self and "sink" into the divine will. Both recognized the incompleteness of annihilation and union—Luther seeing a coincidence of full union with Christ through faith and despair of the self; Karlstadt depicting a gradual process of growth in love-rich knowledge of God's will and hatred of self. Above all, chapter 3 shows how the Wittenberg reform message was presented as a summons to the cross away from a supposedly corrupted doctrine that put human ideas in the place of divine teachings and flattered self-will. By undergoing the mortification of their own reason and will, however, and receiving salvation on God's terms, Christians were promised new capacity to see God at work underneath suffering and through the lowly. The reformers' use of mysticism was political from the get-go. Brief examination of Luther's Wartburg Postil, authored in exile in late 1521, will show how teachings about the reduction of the sinner unto nothingness and the need for despair of the self were prominent in Luther's program for evangelical preaching; the Postil preserved (transformed) Eckhartian motifs in the Lutheran preaching tradition.

Chapters 4 and 5 focus on Karlstadt and Muntzer, respectively, showing how each developed unique views on salvation, spirituality, and reform out of the shared well of Eckhartian mysticism. Karlstadt focused on God's pedagogy of Christians through inward illumination, scriptural study, and eternally ordained suffering. Gelassenheit became a hard practice of constant self-accusation, oriented toward the goal of sinking into God's will and returning to the soul's (pre-)created existence. Reform proceeded in the same manner on the communal level, incessantly but gradually, through illumined scriptural study and self-examination. Muntzer, conversely, concluded that God would retake possession of elect souls who responded to God's inward stirring: elect souls needed to confront their inward unbelief, detach themselves from fear of and desire for creatures, and not let themselves be deceived and satisfied by easy externals, whether in the form of Wittenberg's scripture and faith or Rome's ritual and tradition. For Muntzer, the unbelief that elect Christians needed to break through was no mere anxiety about salvation, but fundamental doubt about the truth of Christianity vis-à-vis other religions. By giving themselves over to God's inward work, elect souls returned to the created order of things and became instruments for the execution of God's will on the ecclesial-political plane. Muntzer's core theological loci were promise and faith, but he gave each term different content than Luther, relating God's promise

to the possession of souls and the transformation of the ecclesial-political order, and faith to the courage—possible only for pure, possessed souls—to execute God's will without fear of creaturely opposition.

In chapter 6, finally, we will see how the reformers' competing views of suffering, salvation, and union clashed in the debate over violent revolution surrounding the Peasants' War. As discussed earlier, each reformer counseled a different response to oppression and persecution, rooted in their respective paradigms of annihilation and union. Each divided true and false teachers and Christians according to suffering and the readiness to suffer, while dismissing opponents' suffering as feigned, self-imposed, misappropriated, or simply endured on behalf of falsehood. Democratized but delimited, transformed and relocated, mystical ideas became a hammer that people were to use to test their own experiences and to figure out the right side and the right course of action in a troubled world, filled with enemies of the cross of Christ. <>

TRAGIC DILEMMAS IN CHRISTIAN ETHICS by Kate Jackson-Meyer [Moral Traditions Series, Georgetown University Press, 9781647122669]

Moral dilemmas arise when individuals are unable to fulfill all of their ethical obligations. Tragic dilemmas are moral dilemmas that involve tragic outcomes. The existence of moral and tragic dilemmas is debated in philosophy and is often dismissed in theology based on the notion that there are effective strategies to resolve difficult ethical situations. Yet cases from real-life events in war and bioethics offer compelling evidence for the existence of tragic dilemmas.

In **TRAGIC DILEMMAS IN CHRISTIAN ETHICS,** Kate Jackson-Meyer expertly explores the thought of Augustine and Aquinas to show the limits of their treatment of hard cases, as well as where their thought can be built on and expanded in relation to tragic dilemmas. She recognizes and develops a new theological understanding of tragic dilemmas rooted in moral philosophy, contemporary case studies, and psychological literature on moral injury. Jackson-Meyer argues that in tragic dilemmas moral agents choose between conflicting nonnegotiable moral obligations rooted in Christian commitments to protect human life and the vulnerable. Personal culpability is mitigated due to constrained situations, and society is also culpable when tragic dilemmas are a result of structural sin.

TRAGIC DILEMMAS IN CHRISTIAN ETHICS offers practical strategies that Christian communities can use to provide healing to those who have acted in tragic dilemmas and to transform the unjust structures that often cause these tragedies.

Reviews

"A distinguished and undeniably important contribution to Christian ethics." —PAUL J. WADELL, professor emeritus of theology and religious studies, St. Norbert College

"An indispensable work for any person of conscience seeking guidance on the perennial project of assessing moral responsibility in a world of great complexity and ambiguity."—THOMAS MASSARO, SJ, professor of theology, Fordham University

"This book provides many original insights for scholars, and it would make an excellent text for teaching important issues in fundamental moral theology." —CHRISTOPHER P. VOGT, associate professor of theology and religious studies, St. John's University

CONTENTS

This book argues for a category of tragic dilemmas within Christian ethics. A tragic dilemma is a particular kind of moral dilemma. In a moral dilemma, a moral agent cannot fulfill all of her obligations. A tragic dilemma is a moral dilemma that involves tragedy of some sort. According to classical philosophical and theological ethical theories, unmet moral obligations that are impossible to fulfill are no longer binding if the moral agent acts in the best way possible, thus eliminating any truly dilemmatic situations. However, according to theorists who accept moral or tragic dilemmas, the unmet obligations remain. But how, why, and which obligations endure are matters of debate.

This book develops an understanding of tragic dilemmas that builds on insights and debates from theology and philosophy. The Augustinian and Thomistic traditions do not make space for the possibility of moral or tragic dilemmas, but they do acknowledge hard cases. I identify both the limits of these approaches and the theological resources they offer for thinking about dilemmas. While Augustine decries the "misery of these necessities" of life and Paul Ramsey offers the paradigm of love transforming justice, I show that these approaches do not adequately solve all difficult cases.' Nevertheless, the Augustinian view highlights the importance of lament. Recognizing the limits of both the Thomistic hierarchy of goods and the principle of double effect, I lift up Thomas Aquinas's notion of "repugnance of the will."

Building my case, I turn to insights from philosophy. ^ apply to a Christian context Lisa Tessman's distinction between "negotiable" and "nonnegotiable" moral obligations, and I take seriously Rosalind Hursthouse's contention that "a virtuous agent cannot emerge [from a tragic dilemma] with her life unmarred."

My central claim is this: In a tragic dilemma, a moral agent chooses between—with sufficient knowledge—conflicting nonnegotiable moral obligations rooted in Christian commitments to protect human life and the vulnerable and recognized by Augustinian lament. Transgressing a nonnegotiable obligation involves wrongdoing that causes great harm and may mar an agent's life, but personal culpability is mitigated so long as the agent acts with repugnance of the will, and societal culpability is operative when the tragic dilemma is a result of structural sin. In response, Christian communities should offer individual and communal healing after tragic dilemmas.

In this view, the only kind of event that presents a true moral dilemma is a situation that is inherently tragic because, by definition, it involves the inability to protect sacred goods (human life or the vulnerable) and involves wrongdoing. So then, according to this Christian view that I am proposing, the only kind of situation that can be conceptually understood as a moral dilemma is by definition a tragic dilemma. This conceptualization of a tragic dilemma relies on a broad view of moral responsibility that calls for recognizing and indicting unjust social structures that cause dilemmatic situations. This should spur action to transform the unjust structures that often cause tragic dilemmas.

This book considers cases where classic approaches to hard situations leave moral agents feeling uncertain about ethical decisions, even when they seem to have made the best choices possible. For instance, hospitals and health care professionals were forced to make difficult decisions about resource allocation amid the coronavirus pandemic. Especially excruciating were decisions early in the pandemic regarding who would receive a ventilator. Common secular ethical guidelines, exemplified by Ezekiel Emanuel and colleagues, follows utilitarianism, arguing that hospitals ought to follow a maximizing approach to ensure that the most people and the most years of life are saved. The Roman Catholic approach, articulated by Daniel Daly in a publication for the Catholic Health Association, is not primarily consequentialist and so considers consequences only after prioritizing intention, the inherent dignity of each human person, the demands of the common good, and the preferential option for the poor. Although based on different frameworks, these approaches often lead to similar conclusions. For instance, both Daly and Emanuel and colleagues advocate to prioritize a younger patient with no comorbidities over an older patient with no comorbidities, but they also explicitly warn against using "quality of life" as a decision factor given that it is prejudicial, especially against people with disabilities. Importantly, both approaches assume that a best decision is possible. Both views propose that ethics committees or other groups make rationing decisions in order to prevent health care professionals from taking on that burden alone. This is very important in light of the likelihood that health care professionals may experience moral distress amid these circumstances.'

However, narratives from the front lines of the coronavirus pandemic indicate that health care professionals are troubled by these decisions, no matter what decision-making rubric they use and no matter who makes the decisions. For instance, Dr. Sadath A. Sayeed, reflecting on his work in Massachusetts, worries about the burden of resource allocation decisions during the pandemic: "Nevertheless, I also cannot help feel that a crucial part of our humanity will be chipped away each and every time such decisions are actually made." But the decision-making guidelines put forward by Emanuel and colleagues and Daly make no space for such concerns. It seems possible that cases of resource allocation are situations of tragic dilemmas, but this category is absent from traditional Christian ethics. What, then, are we to make of Dr. Sayeed's fears, and how can the Christian community support him and other health care professionals who share his concerns?

The existence of true moral and tragic dilemmas is highly debated within philosophical literature, and definitions are often vague and imprecise. Theories about moral and tragic dilemmas share a concern for the problem of competing obligations where right action is ambiguous, even if one acts in the best way possible. But the literature leaves open many questions that I address throughout this book—issues around logic, autonomy, the nature of moral requirements, blame, and healing. Not all theorists distinguish between moral and tragic dilemmas. Of those who do, not all systemically examine each category. For those who hold the distinction, major transgressions or sad repercussions are usually what

characterize moral dilemmas as specifically tragic. But how this relates to Christian ethics has been unclear. This book sets out to fill that lacuna.

The foundational arguments for and against moral dilemmas have unfolded primarily within the field of moral philosophy, and they raise important questions for theology. The discourse in philosophy has tended to focus on moral dilemmas generally, with fewer scholars taking up the issue of tragic dilemmas specifically or comprehensively. When considering the current literature on moral and tragic dilemmas, it is accurate to say that all tragic dilemmas are moral dilemmas, but not all moral dilemmas are tragic dilemmas. I think much more should be made of these two categories and the kinds of distinctions they assume. I argue that the only plausible kind of moral dilemma, from a Christian perspective, is a tragic dilemma. To make this claim, I attend to the expansive literature on moral dilemmas as well the more pointed discussions on tragic dilemmas. But theologians have tended to deny the existence of dilemmas. Augustine famously laments the "miseries" of this life but (seemingly) does not go so far as to admit the possibility of inevitable wrongdoing in hard cases." A highly influential conceptual rejection comes from Aquinas, whose ethical system affirms that there is always a "right" choice. God's demand that Abraham sacrifice Isaac seems to be a dilemma, but influential interpretations of this by Aquinas and Soren Kierkegaard imagine the scenario in a way that the obligation to not kill one's son is lifted. These dismissals of moral dilemmas are understandable insofar as religion posits God as good, and what kind of good God would put humans in situations where wrongdoing is inevitable? However, even secular philosophers contend that dilemmas are often the result of structural injustices. To see dilemmas as the result of societal sin is certainly a plausible theological position.

The few theologians who have gestured toward the existence of moral dilemmas offer little in the way of a sustained theory, which might explain why their work is rarely referenced in the literature on moral dilemmas. For instance, Reinhold Niebuhr offers a relatively overt treatment of moral dilemmas insofar as he recognizes "the whole moral ambiguity of warfare" and that it is necessary to accept "guilt" for the seemingly justified action of killing civilians in World War II bombings of German cities. This is, arguably, a deeply disturbing conclusion. Despite his commitment to pacifism, Dietrich Bonhoeffer supported Abwehr conspirators who attempted to assassinate Adolf Hitler. In doing so, he lived out the challenge of discerning God's call and taking on suffering and guilt in the face of hard realities. In response, Bonhoeffer focuses his theology on the suffering Jesus. But his work is incomplete because he was killed in a concentration camp when he was only thirty-nine years old, Philip Quinn develops a notion of tragic dilemmas through analyses of both God's command for Abraham to sacrifice Isaac and Shusaku Endo's character Sebastian Rodrigues in the novel Silence." While Quinn's work is helpful, I find both of these stories to be questionable sources for unfurling the complexity of moral or tragic dilemmas. In the case of Abraham, God spares him from sacrificing Isaac. In the case of the novel, End's main point seems to be that loving God can take various forms, and these might be hard to accept, especially when God seems absent or "silent." Most recently, Lisa Sowle Cahill has argued for the category of "irreducible moral dilemmas" within the context of war." She argues that both Christian just war theorists and Christian pacifists offer incomplete analyses because they do not acknowledge the moral transgressions inherent in their positions—that is, killing in the case of just war theory and abstaining from violence while others die in the case of pacifism.

When other theologians have entered the debates on dilemmas, they have tended to deny the existence of dilemmas without, in my view, solving the issues that drive the concern for dilemmas, such as how to

weigh experience, the role of feelings in ethics, the relationship between constrained agency and guilt, the relationship between intention and foreseeable consequences, the role of discernment, the limits of the principle of double effect, the existence of tragedy, and the inadequacy of current ethical systems.

To study moral dilemmas is to take seriously experiences of workers on the front lines of the coronavirus pandemic while also acknowledging the messiness of dilemmas, the ambiguity of feelings, the difficulty of accounting for human experience, and the implications of all this for theology and ethics. I assert that the questions that Dr. Sayeed's concerns raise and the questions moral dilemma theorists ask are fundamental to theology and what it means to be human. To the extent that theologians avoid these questions, they neither contribute to nor learn from the insights arising from the real world and from the debates around dilemmas.

Sequentially, this book begins with cases and then discusses dilemmas primarily within the context of philosophy before moving into theology. This might seem as if I am overemphasizing the role of experience or that I am starting from philosophy and moving to theology, but those would be mischaracterizations because Christian ethics is at the heart of this book. I begin with human experience—a major source of theology—and then move to reason as argued from the point of view of philosophy, another major source of theology. I believe the moral experiences described in the cases call theologians to reexamine some ethical categories. These moral experiences do not justify or ground new categories in and of themselves because moral experience is not self- validating, but these moral experiences ought to prompt an investigation of our current ethical categories. Furthermore, theology can benefit from engagement with philosophical thought; in turn, philosophical thought can learn from theology. This does not mean it is necessary for Christian ethics to adopt philosophical positions wholesale, but it is important for theologians to acknowledge and to engage thoughtfully with this conversation about moral dilemmas.

I draw on narratives, cases, and stories to produce a work that is relevant beyond my positioning as a Roman Catholic, American, white, upper-middle-class, and educated woman. As I will discuss, I use of the method of "portraiture" as a way to responsibly investigate and reflect on other people's stories.

In chapter 1 I lay out the major philosophical debates surrounding moral dilemmas, and I highlight touchstones, questions, ambiguities, and problems these debates bring to theology. Moral philosophy's treatment of dilemmas is incomplete, in part because moral philosophy lacks the theological tools of Christian ethics: an acute awareness of the reality of sin and tragedy, a robust view of the moral agent that recognizes moral development in light of a relationship with God, a well-developed understanding of forgiveness, and an emphasis on the role of the community. Accounting for what these resources offer, I argue that it is incumbent on Christian ethicists to take up the questions raised by moral philosophy on the issue of dilemmas.

In chapter 2 I argue that Augustine and the Augustinian tradition create the groundwork for an approximation of the categories of moral and tragic dilemmas. I draw out how their attention to the reality of hard cases and the prevalence of sin attunes them to the tragedy of life. Augustine is at once both optimistic about the reign of God's providence and acutely aware of the reality of sin, lamenting the miseries that beset Christians, especially those tasked with the responsibility for political order in the earthly city, such as his infamous judge. Furthermore, without an explicit category of dilemmas, ^ argue that Augustine presents an inconsistent ethical system in an attempt to justify killing evidenced by

the dueling theological anthropologies buttressing his ethics. Protestant ethicists who take up Augustine's legacy as it relates to dilemmas—namely, Ramsey—have shied away from developing a robust and systematic account of dilemmas. However, even Ramsey seems to admit limits in his ethical system, hinting at times when love's transforming power cannot fully solve hard cases and noting the difficulties for the Christian politician who tries to act well.

In chapter 3 I assess Aquinas and the Thomistic tradition's treatment of moral and tragic dilemmas. Although Aquinas explicitly denies the possibility for moral dilemmas that are not the agent's fault, ^ find new points of contact between Aquinas and moral dilemma theorists. I argue that Thomists' primary strategies for solving apparent dilemmas—the hierarchy of goods and the principle of double effect—are essentially ineffective. Although Aquinas does not acknowledge the categories of moral dilemmas and tragic dilemmas, I argue that analogs and resonant themes are found in his discussion on repugnance of the will and mixed actions.

In chapter 4 I use Christian thought to develop a definition and understanding of tragic dilemmas. In doing so I hope to provide a theological answer to some of the major unresolved philosophical issues within the moral dilemmas debate: What features of moral and tragic dilemmas can be defended, how can an agent's life be marred, and when does an agent become morally responsible for a tragic dilemma? I affirm the distinction, raised in philosophy by Tessman, between negotiable and nonnegotiable moral requirements, and I argue that in the Christian tradition nonnegotiable requirements are supported by the Christian duties to honor others' humanity and to respond to the vulnerability of others. This forms the basis of a Christian understanding of tragic dilemmas. Tragic dilemmas are marked by lament for the great harm that is caused by moral transgressions. Agents are morally responsible for any lingering nonnegotiable moral obligations and the resultant harm caused. However, moral responsibility is mitigated in these constrained situations so long as agents act with repugnance of the will. The concept of tragic dilemma also demands that we acknowledge and address the structural issues that cause dilemmas. And as real-life cases of moral injury from war show, tragic dilemmas can cause distress, thus potentially marring agents' lives.

In chapter 5 I offer Christian strategies for healing from tragic dilemmas. I argue that the healing process is a practice that ushers in God's grace. The process must allow the agent to atone for the wrong committed, to restore emotional health, and to reconnect to the community. Because we are social beings and because society often bears some blame for the occurrence of tragic dilemmas, healing must also happen in, with, and among the community members.

Cases of Moral and Tragic Dilemmas

Moral and tragic dilemmas are conceptually untidy at first glance because they posit that certain ethical issues can remain open in various ways. I begin this book by sketching a somewhat fuzzy picture of dilemmas by way of examples with the hope that the picture will become clearer as I add layers of analysis throughout the book, returning to these cases to develop and to defend a cogent Christian understanding of tragic dilemmas. At first pass, these examples will showcase important features of the broader category of moral dilemmas. After deep analysis and by the end of the book, these examples will serve to illustrate and support the most salient features of tragic dilemmas in the Christian view.

Portraiture Method

Some of the cases presented here are described by the agents themselves while other cases describe hard situations found in real life. Characterizing the cases as moral or tragic dilemmas is often a work of interpretation on my

part or on the part of others. This is appropriate because it is necessary to interpret experience. I do this following the method of portraiture.

Emmanuel Katongole employs the method of "portraiture" in theological reflection. This approach relies on the theory developed by Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot and Jessica Hoffmann Davis. ^n this method of storytelling, Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis explain that the writer makes an effort not only to tell someone's story but to tell it in a way that produces "new understandings and insights" even for the subjects themselves. Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis explain that through portraiture, subjects can see themselves in "a perspective that they had not considered bef^re." The result of portraiture, in their view, is a sketch that sheds new light on a situation.

Following this method, ^ interpret cases using portraiture and a theoethical lens. With this perspective, I may characterize some cases as dilemmas even when the subjects or others do not. The cases are important because they offer a fresh perspective to theology by highlighting experiences that theological ethics ought to take seriously, and analysis from a theological perspective enhances understanding of these complex moral cases. Thus, the portraits and theology have a dialectical relationship, mutually informing each other.

Case Studies

When possible, I reproduce the agents' descriptions of the situations, and when that is not practical, I describe the cases. The examples presented here are derived from a variety of sources: some are personal testimonies, others are fictional scenarios made popular in film or books, and the rest are meant to represent other ways moral dilemmas may occur in real life. The goal is to give a sense of what I and others are thinking about when we refer to moral and tragic dilemmas. If the case has been used in a way germane to this study, I have included some short commentary in order to convey how the case has been included in some of the dilemma literature. Throughout the book, and especially in the conclusion, I return to these cases and assess them according to the Christian understanding of tragic dilemmas that this book develops. <>

Mysticism and Experience: Twenty-First-Century Approaches edited by Alex S. Kohav [Lexington Books, 9781498599375]

Mysticism and Experience: Twenty-First-Century Approaches embarks on an investigation of the concept of mysticism from the standpoint of academic fields, including philosophy, anthropology, religious studies, mysticism studies, literary studies, art criticism, cognitive poetics, cognitive science, psychology, medical research, and even mathematics. Scholars across disciplines observe that, although it has experienced both cyclical approval and disapproval, mysticism seems to be implicated as a key foundation of religion, alon with the highest forms of social, cultural, intellectual, and artistic creations.

This book is divided into four sections: The Exposure, The Symbolic, The Cognitive, and The Scientific, covering all fundamental aspects of the phenomenon known as mysticism. Contributors, taking advantage of recent advances in disciplinary approaches to understanding mystical phenomena, address questions of whether progress can be made to systemically enrich, expand, and advance our understanding of mysticism.

Contributors: Eva Jane Neumann Fridman, Jess Hollenback, Harry T. Hunt, Richard H. Jones, Leonid I. Perlovsky, Ori Z. Soltes, Rick Strassman, Reuven Tsur, Sivan Wagshal Te'eni. and Laura E. Weed

Review

Any person interested in mysticism will find this book of great value. Although writing about mystical experiences can be likened to "sending a kiss by mail," there is much to be learned from the essays here. The book covers topics ranging from the anthropology of Mongolian shamanism to psychedelic drugs, symbolic aspects of mystical experiences and attempts to communicate such experiences, attempts to scientifically explain mystical states, and questions of the very possibility of such explanations. Important and provocative questions are raised: What sort of experiences count as "mystical?" Of the variety of such experiences, how can they be explained? Are there only physiological and psychological grounds or is there a transcendent reality that is contacted during mystical experiences? If a transcendent reality, how is it that it appears different to different people? How can such experiences be described if they are ineffable? And, what difference might there be between a mystical experience and the ordinary experience of our everyday world? -- Burton Voorhees, Athabasca University

This book is a vast, profound, and modern approach to mysticism. The high-level researchers and authors participating in the book come from philosophy, spiritual studies, cognitive sciences, art studies, psychiatry, and literature, bringing authentic and meaningful interdisciplinary approach to the subject. -- Louis Hébert, University of Quebec at Rimouski

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It is hardly an exaggeration to state that mysticism is one of the most misunderstood, or least understood, phenomena within the vast panoply of human experience. It has suffered a disproportionate share of cyclical approbation and disapproval, including condemnation and even contempt. Yet from the establishment of religions to the highest forms of social, cultural, intellectual, and artistic creations, mysticism seems to be implicated as a key, and often the key, impetus and trigger, source and foundation.

In the post-twentieth-century era, new perspectives and insights afforded by specialized disciplines—many with expertise not normally associated with the mystical realm—offer modern approaches to a more-complex, expanded meaning of mysticism. This book examines mysticism from the standpoint of several academic fields and the most recent, advanced opportunities they offer.

What qualifies the use of the term "mystical"? The question is important because of the wide-ranging claims to mystical status, which are often applied to non-mystical experiences that can range from common meditations that never rise to the level of altered states of consciousness—which, as this volume emphasizes, is the sine qua non of all genuinely mystical experiences—to merely being engaged in reading Scripture.1 To consider another pervasive but likewise misplaced claim, can contemplation or even mere discussion of such speculative notions as, for example, the so-called Sefirot of the kabbalah, be seen as mystical activity? Moshe Idel, speaking of the kabbalistic classic, is emphatic: "While [the Zohar's] symbolism may invite contemplation, the awareness of certain theosophical and anthropological ideas does not change the nature of man." For another type of example, just because someone may interpret a text in a manner that supplies answers that are meaningful in a spiritual sense, it does not necessarily follow that the explanation supplied is "mystical" (as is sometimes claimed). When in Christian theological hermeneutics the Song of Songs, for instance, is construed allegorically as the story of love between Christ and his church, such interpretations are symbolic rather than "mystical." Likewise, when in a rabbinic Midrash "Adam is ... identified with Israel," there is nothing mystical per se conveyed by such information. For example, as Moshe Idel avers apropos a certain Jewish-rabbinical stance: "The study of the Torah is envisioned as a theurgical activity—that is, as a way of maintaining the world and of affecting the divinity."

The significance of such distinctions should be apparent. The ability to "change the nature of man" is, or should be, a key issue for the subject of mysticism, one that far exceeds merely becoming aware of "certain theosophical and anthropological ideas," even of the exalted Sefirot. This becomes clear when one considers an aspect invariably associated with mysticism, namely, the experiencing of the so-called mystical states of mind. Mysticism and "mystical experiences" are experienced by mystics, so called precisely because they undergo or have undergone some unusual consciousness-related—that is, consciousness-altering—phenomena. An ability to achieve such mental states is a fundamental issue,

even if we also need to differentiate between specific kinds of mysticisms within the enormous range of "altered states of consciousness" that are, in fact, achievable by human beings.

The book's introductory essay, "Unutterable Experiences of Consciousness Alteration," endeavors to offer an overarching, unifying perspective through its focus on the question of experience. Too often, when considering mystical experience, the emphasis has been on the former, with "experience" per se being neglected or even seen as irrelevant. Yet, as a prominent philosopher of mind David Chalmers, who is cited in the introduction, puts it, "The really hard problem of consciousness is the problem of experience." The subject of mysticism, for its part, is as complex and difficult—if not impenetrable—as that of consciousness itself.

What is experience? One is experiencing life, living; this, among other things, entails possessing—or being in—a "mode of getting into contact with reality" (as Christoph Siebert, an author also cited in the introduction, frames it). It is experience that, in spite of the sheer profusion of non-ordinary phenomena possible within the realm of human practices, in the end offers the ultimate unifying conception—as well as a key marker—that coalesces, not to say reduces, all such manifestations to one unquestionable and requisite feature: alteration of consciousness. It is alteration of consciousness and the related notion of altered states of consciousness that accounts for what may seem to be a bewildering variety of things mystical; they represent different kinds as well as levels of intensities of consciousness alteration.

The present volume exploits the sometimes vastly different approaches and perspectives of different academic disciplines that it has brought together under its covers. Their differing disciplinary tactics apropos things mystical do not aim to present a unified perspective on, or even the same perception of mysticism. Thus,it may seem that we have perhaps drifted further away from a consensus and further complicated the already-overburdened, confusing picture of mystical and related phenomena.

Yet arguably the contrary is the case. On the one hand, the volume presents substantive indications that an apt and highly relevant way of looking at mystical phenomena is by viewing their fundamental underlying mechanism as alteration of consciousness. Looking at it from another angle, what the book does is the following: it takes us away from the traditional milieu of mysticism-related studies that is often confined to and circumscribed by individual religious traditions and practices. Notwithstanding occasional forays, it is still rare for the latter to engage directly such diverse contemporary approaches as cognitive science, consciousness studies, neurobiology, or psychology, which help pull us away from the discourse centered on what the traditions themselves are able or willing to disclose, often and necessarily only via the language of myths, secrets, and mysteriousness. And yet, because of the enormity of the challenge involved, and because we are still at the unenviable stage of being in a proverbial dark room with an indistinct elephant—attempting to ascertain from every conceivable side what exactly it is yet being distressingly unaware of the elephant's true identity—we should accept our still-enduring limitations and be content, for the time being, with amassing as much data and insight as we can muster.

The book is divided into four parts: "The Exposure," "The Symbolic," "The Cognitive," and "The Scientific"—thus covering several key aspects of and perspectives on the phenomenon known as mysticism and some additional forms of alteration of consciousness. The contributors examine these issues in the following broad areas: remarkable forms of religiosity, such as shamanic spirituality in contemporary Mongolia (chapter 1); the question of "religious experience" both generally and, more

specifically, regarding the experiential, experimental, and medical/clinical aspects of alteration of consciousness (chapter 2) and the question of their purported ineffability (chapter 6); paranormal states of consciousness (chapter 3); mysticism as portrayed in contemporary Western literature and art (chapter 4); the ancient Chinese mystical-philosophical classic, Tao Te Ching, illuminated by cognitive poetic analysis (chapter 5); the question of mystical-noetic knowledge from the perspectives of philosophy of language and cognitive science (chapter 6); the continuum of synesthetic states involved in mystical experiences, investigated via cognitive psychology (chapter 7); recent theoretical explanatory models of altered states of consciousness (chapter 8); and "mysterious emotions that are among the central enigmas of human existence," elucidated by mathematical modeling (chapter 9). The volume concludes with an assessment of scientific claims by practitioners of meditation and other forms of mystical experiences (chapter 10).

Beginning part 1: "The Exposure," chapter 1, "Manifestations of Shamanic Spirituality: Mongolia 1999, 2002" by the anthropologist Eva Jane Neumann Fridman, describes her several encounters with well-known contemporary Mongolian shamans. The depicted events took place in September 1999 in Hövsgöl Province and in August 2002 in Bayanuul Province, both in Mongolia. The anthropological approach generally considers cultural and historical contexts critical to understanding the reasons and meaning underlying behavior. Fridman tests this method against a more mystical point of view: Is what is required for understanding the dramatic events she has witnessed a Western-driven "scientific" methodology and attitude, or do these "shamanistic manifestations," as she calls them, taking place in the Mongolian context present a more perplexing case?

Chapter 2, "Theoneurology: Bridging Hebrew Bible Prophecy and Clinical Psychedelic Drug Research," reflects the research of Rick Strassman, MD, a clinical associate professor of psychiatry at the University of New Mexico School of Medicine. Based on his rare authorized medical research with participants taking psychedelic drugs in the early 1980s, Strassman presents an outline for understanding a particular type of spiritual experience, namely, the Hebrew biblical prophecy. He conceives this understanding as a new theoretical model of religious-mystical experience that is an alternative to the current model known as "neurotheology." The chapter details how current biological models for spiritual experience are based on the belief that the brain generates such states. Strassman's approach reverses the reigning paradigm of neurotheology, proposing instead his theory of the neurology: as a top-down alternative to neurotheology, theoneurology proposes that God communicates with humans via the agency of the brain rather than the brain generating the impression of such communication. Strassman takes advantage of medieval Jewish philosophers who articulated a sophisticated metaphysical structure to account for the prophetic state. Interweaving such medievalism with contemporary biological sensibilities enables Strassman to revivify their approach, with strikingly original results.

Part 2, "The Symbolic," opens with chapter 3, "Materializing the Symbolic in Paranormal Experience." Its author, historian of religion Jess Hollenback, explores the significance and potential of some mystical experiences for deepening our understanding of symbolization processes. In particular, the chapter focuses on how the "materialization" of thoughts and desires has often played a role in shaping a variety of luminous phenomena that occur during paranormal states of consciousness. A key question in the chapter "pertains to the way that symbolization seems to focus and direct psychical energy." This process, which Hollenback calls the "materialization of the symbolic," is the polar opposite of creating abstractions. Materialization of the symbolic is manifested in psychosomatic lesions or stigmata induced

by the suggestions of the hypnotist and in placebo and nocebo effects. Hollenback's attempted "defamiliarization of the familiar" allows the reader to conceive phenomena and occurrences that he or she has likely never imagined or considered real or even possible.

Chapter 4, "Words and Images of a Transcendent Inner Mysterion: Mysticism in Contemporary Western Literature and Art," is the work of Ori Z. Soltes, a Georgetown University–based author, whose wide-ranging interests extend from religion and art, to philosophy and poetry. The chapter looks at ways the arts have attempted to contend with the mystical and, especially, with "the innermost, hidden most recess of God—the mysterion." Soltes's essay presents two interrelated subjects united by one issue: contemporary literature and contemporary visual art, both taking up the subject of mysticism. As Soltes frames the essay's context, given the view of God as visible for Christians and invisible for Jews and Muslims, the question of mysticism offers not only broad concerns but a range of embedded definitional issues pertaining to figuration and abstraction, words, letters, numbers, and vegetal and geometric forms and their symbolic uses. As a result, Soltes engages questions that are highly germane to the investigations of many writer- or artist-mystics today: If the goal of mystics is a transcendent mysterion that is both beyond reach and buried within our innermost being, are they using their art as an instrument of searching or of a would-be description? And what, in the end, are the purposes of art, both visual and verbal, vis-à-vis the reader/viewer, and how do those purposes naturally intersect—or oppose— the mystical enterprise? Literary works discussed in the chapter include Jorge Luis Borges's "Death and the Compass" and "The Aleph," Andre Schwarz Bart's The Last of the Just, Cynthia Ozick's "The Pagan Rabbi," and Myla Goldberg's Bee Season. The many contemporary visual artists considered who address the realm of mysticism include Barnett Newman, Hossein Zenderoudi, Yona Verwer, Mark Rothko, Parviz Tanavoli, Anselm Kiefer, and Makoto Fujimura. In summary, Soltes concludes that "only the mystic who has succeeded in having (as opposed to merely aspiring to have) a mystical experience can say that she or he has had one. We cannot know whether any of the writers whose work I have discussed has had the experience of feeling emptied of self and filled with God; all we can say is that, in one way or another, overtly or more subtly, each of them has found the idea of mysticism to be an effective—compelling—vehicle for the tales she or he tells and the ideas that she or he wants the reader to consider."

Chapter 5, "The Dao Flickering through Words: A Cognitive-Poetic Analysis of Dao-de Jing," opens part 3: "The Cognitive." In their chapter Sivan Wagshal Te'eni and Reuven Tsur examine the ancient Chinese classic Dao-de Jing (Tao Te Ching) from a cognitive-poetics perspective, exploring the verbal strategies by which this text suggests the ineffable. Reuven Tsur, emeritus professor at Tel Aviv University and a recipient of the prestigious Israel Prize, is one of the principal founders of the new discipline of cognitive poetics. As the essay states, "ordinary consciousness attempts to cope with ... [the] excess of information" flooding the cognitive system "by organizing it into stable objects and categories, excluding much valuable information that may be captured, at best, by intuition. Some altered states of consciousness, such as varieties of mystic experience, are attempts to capture some of this excluded, precategorial information." This process is often "interpreted as catching a glimpse of some inaccessible reality, beyond the ultimate boundary." The illuminating discussion considers instances of three kinds of mystical insight in the Dao-de Jing, including (1) insight into "some inaccessible reality," (2) insight into the "intrinsic nature of things," and (3) "insight resulting from disorientation." Given the more than 150 different English translations of this Chinese classic, all presumably with differing grasps of what may be

involved, the authors effectively demonstrate the value of cognitive poetics in extracting meaning from this text.

Next, chapter 6—"Why Are Religious Experiences Ineffable? The Question of Mystical-Noetic Knowledge"—is by Albany, New York–based philosopher Laura E. Weed. Her essay considers one of the most puzzling paradoxes of mysticism. Mystical experience is often characterized as ineffable, yet it is also purported to offer great knowledge. Weed explores such apparently contradictory claims from the perspective of philosophy of language and of cognitive science research about nonlinguistic functions performed by the brain. The chapter encompasses research in cognitive science indicating that language capacity is only one of many forms of mental capacity, some of which are not accessible to the language centers of the brain; research in embodied and environmentally situated knowledge indicating that not all forms of knowledge are "in the head," cognitive, and propositional; and research in information theory indicating that information is a ubiquitous feature of the universe and is not as reducible to computational processes.

In chapter 7, "Toward a Cognitive Psychology of Mystical Experiences," psychologist Harry T. Hunt, a prominent researcher of mysticism, introduces an alternative to that offered by neurobiology for understanding the mechanism of mystical experiences. He discusses a cognitive psychology of the continuum of synesthetic states involved in mystical experience, characterizing the more sensate forms of mystical states of consciousness as being intrinsically symbolic, offering support for understanding spirituality as a form of abstract emotional intelligence, akin to other specifically human symbolic forms, rather than as something more primitive or archaic."

While part 3 of the book, "The Cognitive," seeks to highlight the enormous strides that the new cognitive science has made in recent decades, its chapters overlap with the theme of the next section, "The Scientific." In chapter 8, "Explanatory Mechanisms of Altered States of Consciousness: An Overview of Several Approaches," I examine several recent advanced attempts at formulating coherent explanatory mechanisms for alteration of consciousness, among them mystical phenomena. Psychological approaches discussed first include those of psychoanalysis (regression to infantile ego state hypothesis; object relations theory) and transpersonal psychology (cross-modal translations and synesthesias; Harry Hunt's Imaginal Body Experience). "Descending," next, to human homeostatic and neurophysiological level, the chapter examines investigations of physiological hyper- and hypo-arousals by Ernst Gellhorn and William F. Kiely, Roland Fischer, and others, along the ergotropic-trophotropic continuum. Finally, a recent cognitive-neuro-scientific theory of alteration of consciousness is considered: Arne Dietrich's Transient Hypofrontality Hypothesis. These approaches, however, seem to claim explanatory powers exclusively for their respective methods and perspectives, excluding consideration of anything else that might be a contributing factor. With that, the chapter does illustrate a sense of the enormous potential that the sciences hold for our aspiration to understand the human mind and consciousness.

Chapter 9, "Mathematical Modeling of Cognitive Mechanisms of Meaning and the Spiritually Sublime" by Leonid I. Perlovsky, a noted mathematician and cognitive scientist, investigates the dichotomy between cognition and language. According to Perlovsky, this dichotomy creates a special kind of mysticism that originates due to a discrepancy between the two domains. He proposes a mechanism of the mind based on what he calls the "knowledge instinct," which "drives conceptual-emotional understanding of the world." Further, Perlovsky describes a "dynamic logic"—of which he is one of the founding theorists—as "the mathematical model of the knowledge instinct." Specifically, "whereas usual classical logic can be

used to describe static states (e.g., 'this is a chair'), dynamic logic describes processes 'from vague to crisp,' from vague and unconscious mental representations (images, memories, thoughts, decisions, plans) to crisp and conscious ones." According to the author, the mind is only partially conscious and mostly irrational, whereas language can be rational and conscious.

Finally, in chapter 10, "Transcendent Knowledge-Claims and the Scientific Study of Mystical Experiences," the New York–based philosopher of mysticism Richard H. Jones tackles the following question: What bearing does the scientific study of meditators or people undergoing mystical experiences have on the truth of mystical knowledge-claims? Do scientific findings support or refute the claim that mystical experiences provide access to transcendent realities? The range of issues covered in the chapter includes whether mystical experiences are open to scientific study; problems with seeing philosophical conclusions in scientific findings; whether there are natural triggers of genuine mystical experiences; whether mystical knowledge-claims and scientific explanations are compatible; and whether the dispute between advocates of mystical claims of transcendent experiences and materialists can be resolved on scientific grounds. Jones's key sobering takeaway from his incisive scrutiny of the chapter's theme is that "the science of meditators and experiencers cannot answer the question of whether mystical experiences are purely natural phenomena or in fact involve a transcendent reality." <>

THE MANY FACES OF CREDULITAS: CREDIBILITY, CREDULITY, AND BELIEF IN POST-REFORMATION CATHOLICISM by Stefania Tutino [Oxford University Press, 9780197608951]

This book is about the relationship between belief, credibility, and credulity in post-Reformation Catholicism. It argues that starting from the end of the sixteenth century and due to different political, intellectual, cultural, and theological factors, credibility assumed a central role in post-Reformation Catholic discourse. This led to an important reconsideration of the relationship between natural reason and supernatural grace and consequently to novel and significant epistemological and moral tensions. From the perspective of the relationship between credulity, credibility, and belief, early modern Catholicism emerges not as the apex of dogmatism and intellectual repression, but rather as an engine for promoting the importance of intellectual judgment in the process of embracing faith. To be sure, finding a balance between conscience and authority was not easy for early modern Catholics.

This book seeks to elucidate some of the difficulties, anxieties, and tensions caused by the novel insistence on credibility that came to dominate the theological and intellectual landscape of the early modern Catholic Church. In addition to shedding light on early modern Catholic culture, this book helps us to understand better what it means to believe. For the most part, in modern Western society we don't believe in the same things as our early modern predecessors. Even when we do believe in the same things, it is not in the same way. But believe we do, and thus understanding how early modern people addressed the question of belief might be useful as we grapple with the tension between credibility. credulity, and belief.

Review

"Christianity is too easily caricatured as teaching blind faith. In fact, as this subtle and learned account of the Counter-Reformation age shows, Catholics steered a narrow course between the twin errors of credulity (believing what should not be believed) and incredulity (denying what should be believed). Surrounded as we all now are with `alternative facts,' their plight should resonate for us—and may even have something to teach us." —ALEC RYRIE, Professor of the History of Christianity, Durham University

"Stefania Tutino demonstrates the intellectual vitality of the early modern Catholic Church, exploring its concerns with enhancing Catholicism's credibility and avoiding lay credulity without hindering faith. This is intellectual history at its best, as Tutino combines her mastery of theological and juridical texts with an examination of how these concerns affected the lives of Catholics in Europe and beyond." —CELESTE MCNAMARA, Assistant Professor, School of History and Geography, Dublin City University

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This book is about the relationship among belief, credibility, and credulity in post-Reformation Catholicism. Addressing this topic inevitably requires grappling with what these concepts have meant historically, as well as assessing the implications of that history for our current understanding of them.

In today's usage, credulity and credibility undoubtedly have different connotations. In fact, in many ways they are the opposite of one another, and for this reason they generate completely different kinds of beliefs. Considering a person or a fact credible means judging them trustworthy, thus reassuring ourselves that believing them is reasonable and appropriate. By contrast, calling somebody "credulous" means they have failed to assess credibility properly and are consequently unable to base their beliefs on reasonable grounds. As a result, beliefs that can be demonstrated to be credible are legitimate and commendable, while beliefs produced by credulity are not just epistemologically inferior but also morally defective.

This understanding of credulity as different from, and indeed opposite to, credibility is one of the legacies of the Enlightenment. The Romans had already used the noun credulitas and its cognate adjective credulus with a negative connotation, meaning to give credence too easily and in an excessively

trusting manner. For example, Ovid called the fishes that were caught on the hooks of the fisherman Glaucus "credulous" and ironically lamented the "credulity" of his readers, who mistook poetic praise of his lover Corinna for a real description and therefore fell in love with her and competed with him for her favor. Nevertheless, whereas for the Romans credulity was "a mistake rather than a sin," as Plancus put it in one of his letters to Cicero, for the Enlightenment philosophers it was the symptom of the worst kind of intellectual and moral corruption.

In the entry devoted to the verb "to believe" in the Encycl^^edie, Denis Diderot wrote that not all acts of belief are equally commendable. If we believe in something after having "examined the matter well," our belief will be "solid and satisfied." If, however, we believe without examination, we have "sinned against our own reason" and "neglected the most important prerogative of humanity." This is because we have "abused the abilities that were given to us for no other reason than to follow the clearest evidence and the strongest probability:' Believing without the support of clear evidence and strong probability meant suffering from a distinctive kind of "weakness of spirit," which is how Diderot defined credulity. For Diderot, credulity is a vice not because of the content of the credulous belief but because of the method by which we arrive at it. In other words, credulity is not the sin of believing something false; it is the sin of believing something "without discernment," or without making the necessary effort to evaluate the credibility of its arguments and supporters.

For Diderot, being credulous was not the same thing as holding a false belief, but he also thought there was a direct link between credulity and falsity: since credulous people have in effect given up on using their reason, "credulity is the vice most suitable to lying." At the same time, however, Diderot was careful not to equate credulity and religion. In fact, Diderot's fellow encyclopedist Andre Morellet spent most of his long entry on faith demonstrating that believing in Christian dogmas was not necessarily an act of blind obedience and superstition. Rather, professing the Christian faith could be the consequence of a "persuasion raisonnee" (reasonable persuasion) based on the "credibility" of certain specific tenets of Christianity.

Other Enlightenment thinkers were much more radical in arguing that credulity and superstition found in religion, and in Catholicism more specifically, a most fertile ground. For instance, in his Treatise of Human Nature, Hume called the Roman Catholic religion a "strange superstition" whose believers venerated relics of supposedly holy people and pursued other unreasonable practices. He devoted a long section of his Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding to a powerful criticism of miracles and other prodigious and supernatural occurrences; he thought people believed these out of "superstitious credulity" because they lack "sufficient judgment" to examine "critically" evidence and probability.

Undeniably, then, a long and illustrious intellectual tradition lies behind the notion that credulity is the vice of believing what a reasonable person would not consider credible, and that this vice manifests in the realm of religious beliefs. Nevertheless, we should not forget that in the Christian premodern world, credulity had a different connotation because the very act of belief had a different meaning. As Ethan Shagan has recently shown, while many studies analyze the content of religious belief in early modern Europe, scholars of religious history, with few exceptions, have generally neglected the act of believing as an object of historical inquiry. They assume that what changes over time is the content, so to speak, not the vessel. By contrast, the very category of belief underwent fundamental changes in premodern European thought, and, given the proliferation and centrality of beliefs in our current society, understanding the nature of those changes seems a worthwhile endeavor. For the most part, in modern

Western society we don't believe in the same things as our early modern predecessors. Even when we do believe in the same things, it is not in the same way. But believe we do, and although dogmatic religions are no longer at the core of our belief system, we haven't eliminated religious beliefs altogether.

In this book, then, I seek to contribute to this recent debate over the nature and development of Western belief by showing how the relationship among belief, credulity, and credibility changed in post-Reformation Catholic Europe. My argument is that, starting from the end of the sixteenth century and due to a series of different historical, political, intellectual, cultural, and theological factors, credibility assumed a central role in post-Reformation Catholic discourse. This led to an important reconsideration of the relationship between natural reason and supernatural grace and consequently to novel and significant epistemological and moral tensions. From the perspective of the relationship among credulity, credibility, and belief, early modern Catholicism emerges not as the apex of dogmatism and intellectual repression, but rather as a big engine for promoting the importance of intellectual judgment in the process of embracing faith.

To be sure, finding a balance between reason and faith, judgment and obedience, conscience and authority was not easy for Catholic theologians, censors, clergymen, and laypeople. Even Pascal, who probably remains the most famous early modern Catholic to wrestle with this kind of difficulty, admitted that expecting reason to definitively dispel all doubts concerning faith is impossible: at some point, reason hits its limits and the only alternative we have is to wager. Foregrounding judgment and credibility made. it both easier and harder for early modern Catholics to reach some kind of equilibrium and to establish with certainty when exactly reason had to give way to faith. On the one hand, emphasizing credibility gave Catholic controversialist theologians effective weapons against the Protestants, provided important epistemological and hermeneutical insight that greatly aided the efforts of Catholic missionaries in their global enterprise to persuade prospective converts outside of Europe, and allowed Catholic intellectuals and apologists to address the challenges brought by a growing cohort of skeptics. On the other hand, it raised intellectual, ecclesiastical, juridical, moral, and pastoral problems for laypeople and clergymen alike, including at the highest intellectual and administrative levels of the Church. Where should the line between sufficient and insufficient evidence be drawn? What exactly is the difference between justified doubt and unwarranted scrupulosity? At what point does the supernatural become too implausible to be believable? Where should reason stop evaluating the credibility of a belief and leave room for faith in its truth? This book seeks to elucidate some of the complexities, anxieties, and tensions caused by the novel insistence on credibility that came to dominate the theological, religious, and intellectual landscape of the early modern Catholic Church.

I wrote this book not only to contribute to the larger scholarly debate concerning the nature, development, and implications of the relationship between belief and judgment but also to complement my past work. In recent years, I have sought to show that uncertainty and doubt played a significant role in the epistemological approach and intellectual structure of post-Reformation Catholicism. In doing this, I have come to realize that the expanding relevance of uncertainty is intimately tied to the expanding relevance of credibility; doubts are a product of and a catalyst for judgment, and judgment both eliminates and produces doubts. From the perspective of my own intellectual trajectory, I wrote this book to deal, as it were, with the other side of the coin. More generally, I hope this book further

conveys my sense of the epistemological, moral, and theological complexity of postReformation Catholicism.

I am by no means the first or only scholar seeking to provide a nuanced view of early modern Catholicism. My work stands on the abundant body of scholarship that has come out in the last decades and that has profoundly revitalized the study of early modern Catholicism. It is well beyond the scope of this introduction to provide an account that even begins to do justice to the transformations that the field of early modern Catholicism has undergone since the second half of the twentieth century, but let me just mention a few factors that I deem especially important. First, especially after the conclusion of the Second Vatican Council, the history of early modern Catholicism has been taken up by more and more scholars who are not bound by any confessional allegiance or apologetic agenda, which broadened up the field immensely. Then, the study of Catholicism (as well as the study of Protestantism, for that matter) has moved progressively away from the traditional models of ecclesiastical history or church history with their focus on institutions and clerical leaders, and into the more capacious realm of religious history. This development has allowed scholars of early modern Catholicism to enrich their inquiries by taking into account topics usually situated under the domain of different but adjacent fields, such as women's and gender studies, popular religion, cultural history, material culture, memory and archival studies, and history of knowledge, to name just a few. Finally, the field of early modern Catholicism has also expanded geographically. By paying more attention to both the global reach of the early modern Catholic Church and to the methodological, theoretical, and historiographical insight provided by world historians and global historians working in different fields, scholars of early modern Catholicism are not only revisiting our understanding of the Roman Church as a global religion, but they are also changing the ways in which we see the relationship between Europe and the rest of the world, reevaluating the traditional categories of center and periphery, and adding an important dimension to the study of mobility in the early modern world across and beyond the traditional boundaries of the nation-states.

The result of this multifaceted expansion has been twofold. On the one hand, it has enriched the field of early modern Catholic studies by putting it in conversation with several important developments that were not traditionally seen as connected to, and relevant for, the history of the Roman Church. On the other hand, it has shown the extent to which the history of early modern Catholicism is integrated with the cultural, intellectual, social, and political history of the early modern (and modern) world, to which it greatly contributed. I hope that alongside this novel scholarship, my work has helped make a strong case that the world of post-Reformation Catholicism is not a collection of all the things that our enlightened society has managed to leave behind. Rather, it is a useful and revealing step on a journey that we haven't yet completed and that therefore is well worth exploring.

This book is composed of eight chapters, divided into two larger sections. The first section, which includes Chapters 1-3, is devoted to explaining the main theological, juridical, and intellectual factors that contributed to the emergence of credibility as a central feature of post-Reformation Catholic discourse.

Chapter 1 provides a brief account of the theological and juridical meaning of credulitas in the Middle Ages. More specifically, my analysis focuses on the nature and implications of what I call the Augustinian-Thomist notion of credulitas as our natural capability to believe, and therefore as a faculty that, if used properly, allows us to form fundamental and necessary bonds of trust with each other as well as with God. Between the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth centuries, this Augustinian-

Thomist understanding of credulitas was the subject of a profound reconsideration. Post-Reformation Catholic theologians began emphasizing the reasonable grounds on which the truth of the Catholic faith rested, consequently assigning a much more central role to credibility in the process of believing. Chapter 2 demonstrates this shift by examining the works of two authors who can be credited with providing the basic juridical, theological, and moral notions underpinning this newfound emphasis on credibility: the jurist and theologian Martin de Azpilcueta (better known as Doctor Navarrus) and the Jesuit controversialist theologian Francisco Suarez. Chapter 3 explores the implications of Navarrus's and Suarez's intuitions, demonstrating how widely and profoundly the novel emphasis on credibility permeated the seventeenth-century Catholic discourse.

In the second section of the book, which includes Chapters 4-8, I abandon the realm of theological discussions to explore the effects of this newfound emphasis on credibility on the religious, spiritual, and cultural life of a much wider sector of European Catholics. Emphasizing credibility brought a measure of confusion concerning the relationship between knowledge and faith; in turn, this caused tensions between theological and epistemological authority. Even the upper echelon of the Catholic hierarchy manifested a certain discomfort as it tried to graft the novel emphasis on credibility onto the traditional understanding of faith. To examine the wider and deeper role that credibility played in early modern Catholicism, the chapters in this section present a selection of case studies that demonstrate how Catholic institutional and intellectual leaders dealt with these tensions. Chapter 4 focuses on the reaction of the Roman Curia to two authors, Hugo Grotius and Tommaso Campanella. Despite working in widely different intellectual, cultural, and confessional contexts, both Grotius and Campanella embraced credibility as a crucial feature of their elaborations. Examining how the Catholic censors evaluated their works provides significant insight into the theological, polemical, and confessional impact of making credibility a central component of belief. Chapter 5 examines the complex effects credibility had on the debate over belief in the immortality of the soul. Chapters 6 and 7 take us deeper into the world of early modern Catholic clergymen and laymen, showing the kinds of problems that the Roman Inquisitors had to deal with when the Catholic flock used credibility either too much or too little. Finally, Chapter 8 demonstrates the effects that credibility had on the history and geography of the early modern Catholic Church, as its leaders tried to balance their increasingly global missionary ambitions with their increasingly pronounced attention to historical and documentary authenticity. <>

The Nineteenth-Century Salesian Pentecost: The Salesian Family of Don Bosco, The Oblates and Oblate Sisters of St Francis De Sales, The Daughters of St Francis De Sales, and the Fransalians, Introduction, Editing, Translations, and Commentaries by Joseph Boenzi, SDB, Joseph F. Chorpenning, OSFS, Suzanne C. Toczyski, and Wendy M. Wright, Foreword by John W. O'Malley, SJ [The Classics of Western Spirituality, The Paulist Press, 9780809106301]

In the wake of the French Revolution and other upheavals, Don Bosco (1815-1888) and other nineteenth-century founders and spiritual leaders contributed to the development of spiritual practices and perspectives on the Christian life that have been described as the "Salesian Pentecost"

Here are translations of and commentaries on lesser-known spiritual writings of Don Bosco, his collaborators, and his contemporaries involved in the Salesian Pentecost. These diverse persons, fully engaged in apostolic ministry or occupied with the demands of ordinary life as lay women and men, were at the same time engaged in conscious spiritual practices that sought the interior exchange of the heart of Jesus for the human heart.

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FOREWORD by John W. O'Malley, SJ

I grew up in a town in Ohio so small that it could not afford a Catholic school. During the winter, two or three nuns came from a larger town on Sunday mornings to teach us basic catechism for a half hour

between the two masses. This meant that ^ received my real understanding of Catholicism from my parents, especially my mother.

When she was about eleven years old, my grandfather sent her as a boarding student to a Young Ladies' Academy, Mount de Chantal, in nearby Wheeling, West Virginia. As the school's name suggests, it was run by the Sisters of the Visitation of Holy Mary, the order founded by Sts. Jane Frances de Chantal and Francis de Sales.

My mother received an excellent education at Mount de Chantal—six years of French, four of Latin, foundational courses in literature and the sciences, as well as a fine training in both piano and voice. She at the same time appropriated an appreciation of Catholicism that was gentle and inclusive and that was based on the lived assumption that she was beloved of God. Catholicism was a positive, comforting, and even exciting religion.

That was the appreciation of Catholicism that she imparted to me and that has stayed with me all my life. I could not name it, but I noted the contrast with some of my Catholic cousins whose religion seemed to me rigid and rules driven. When after high school, I entered the Jesuits and made the thirty-day retreat using the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius, the part I most relished was the "Contemplation for Obtaining the Love of God." Nothing was more consonant with what my mother had taught me about our faith.

Only decades later when I finally read The Introduction to the Devout Life did I fully understand my upbringing and the spirituality with which it was imbued. I cannot adequately express how grateful I feel toward the nuns of Mount de Chantal for the influence they had on my mother's spirituality and through her on me. I often say, only half in jest, that the school that most profoundly influenced me was a school I never attended. It was in fact a school I never could have attended because I was a boy.

Once I began to look at the Introduction as a professional historian, I came to an appreciation of it that went beyond how deeply it has affected me personally even before I read it. As is often said, it is part of a great revival of Catholic spirituality that marked the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, a period of spiritual luminaries such as Teresa of Avila, Ignatius Loyola, Louise de Marillac, and Vincent de Paul, to name only a few. More to the point, it was a period that produced an outburst of spiritual writings that have become classics.

In that context, the Introduction has a number of noteworthy characteristics, which includes being free of any trace of religious controversy or preoccupation with orthodoxy at a time when few authors could abstain from such topics. This is all the more remarkable because St. Francis directly felt the impact of the fierce religious controversies by not being able as bishop of Geneva to reside in his own proper see because it was radically Protestant.

But among all the Introduction's noteworthy traits, I want to call attention to three. The first is its literary genre. It may come as a surprise to learn that treatises on the spiritual life were a relatively new genre in religious literature until the early sixteenth century. What was available until then were lives of saints, miracle stories, accounts of special revelations, collections of spiritual aphorisms such as The Imitation of Christ, and similar works. Missing were treatises outlining steps in a program to help persons get in touch with themselves and with God acting within them.

The first real breakthrough came with Erasmus's Handbook of the Christian Soldier, first published in 1501. Although a program of moral improvement, it helped solidify the model of a book with an organized program of how to live the Christian life. Other authors began to follow Erasmus's lead. Among the more important was The Spiritual Combat published in 1589 by the Italian Lorenzo Scupoli.

Then came in 1609 The Introduction to the Devout Life, with which the genre achieved maturity. Published in the early years of the seventeenth century, it moreover marked the shift in religious leadership from Spain to France and was thus one of the first glories of France's "great century;' le Grand Siecle.

The second feature to which I will call attention is its positive message about human nature's orientation to goodness and its deep and innate openness to divine love. This stands in striking contrast to the contempt of the world and obsession with human sinfulness that was almost axiomatic in the lived experience of the spiritual life that gained force in the Middle Ages. The assumption prevailed that the harsher one treated one's body and neutralized its impulses the closer one came to God.

That tradition began to weaken with the enterprise of St. Thomas Aquinas and other Scholastics to show the compatibility between nature and grace and continued two centuries later with the Christian anthropology of the Italian humanists. With the Jesuits' Constitutions in the mid-sixteenth century, the positive anthropology received an institutional form. Even so, Scupoli's Spiritual Combat, a best seller in its day, presented the spiritual life as an ongoing battle against one's lower impulses.

Relatively close on its heels, however, came the Introduction, a book that utterly transcended the earlier tradition dominated by unrelenting asceticism. It turned spirituality into a loving exchange between God and the soul.

St. Francis wrote the Introduction for the benefit of people living "in the world," which means that what he proposed is doable for everybody and does not need special circumstance such as a monastery to be practiced. That is the third trait to which I will call attention. Although other works such as the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius were written for a wide public, none before the Introduction was as explicitly and specifically tailored for that public.

Nonetheless, despite the Introduction's groundbreaking qualities, it made effective use of time-honored practices of meditation and gave similarly time-honored advice on how persons living in the world might deal with situations challenging to their relationship to God. In terms of the major theme of the Introduction to the Devout Life, the Homilies on the Song of Songs, which as abbot St. Bernard had preached to his monks in the first half of the twelfth century, delivered the powerful message of the human heart's yearning for God and of God's yearning to abide in such hearts. St. Francis had studied the Song of Songs under a Benedictine monk when he was still a student in Paris, and he was certainly familiar with Bernard's Homilies. That work, deeply imbedded in the earlier tradition, clearly influenced the Introduction.

Thus, Francis was able to bring both new and old elements together in a groundbreaking synthesis that was at the same time solidly traditional. That was the momentous achievement of the Introduction to the Devout Life and of St. Francis de Sales.

The core message of St. Francis de Sales and the Salesian tradition that spoke so powerfully to me and helped shape my life—human nature is oriented to goodness and the human heart has an innate yearning for God, who yearns to abide there—also struck a responsive chord in and captured the imaginations of men and women across nineteenth-century Catholic Europe who were working to rebuild and renew the Church in the aftermath of the devastating consequences of the French Revolution. What linked these individuals was not a common apostolic activity, but the retrieval of the heart-to-heart quality and communication of Salesian spirituality, which was at once attractive, accessible, and able to be practiced by everybody. They found in Francis de Sales and the Salesian spiritual tradition the resources they needed to reinvigorate the Church of their day. This phenomenon, known as the nineteenth-century Salesian Pentecost, is the focus of this volume in the Classics of Western Spirituality series that is a major contribution to making this important chapter in church history more widely known and understood.

The Nineteenth-Century Salesian Pentecost by Wendy M. Wright

> Here we are, like new Apostles blazing with the sacred fire
> of love;
> may we carry it everywhere, and, like them,
> win all hearts in order to bring them all to you!
> Give us Souls, Lord, and we will leave the rest to you.
> Caroline Carre, Journal, Pentecost, May 16, 1875

The story of Roman Catholicism's European flowering during what historians refer to as the "long nineteenth century" (1789-1914) is complex and dramatic. Arising from the turbulent political and social transformations that began with the French Revolution (1789-99), which swept away the very bases upon which European monarchies and the Roman Catholic Church were grounded, this unanticipated flowering of Catholic life and practice is a story of spiritual renewal and innovation lead by persons enlivened by a vision of the beneficence of divine love that ardently seeks human response. A significant chapter of that story is associated with the name of seventeenth-century French-speaking Savoyard bishop Francis de Sales (1567-1622) and the Salesian spiritual tradition that springs from his unique insights.

So many fresh expressions of the Salesian spirit came to life in the nineteenth century that the widespread movement has been described by French scholar Henri l'^^n^re as the "Salesian Pentecost:'¢ The Pentecost l'^^n^re invoked is, of course, the seminal event marking the birth of the Christian church as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 2:1-31). Scripture records that fifty days after the Jewish feast of Passover, when Jesus's apostles were gathered together in Jerusalem in the upper room they had often frequented with their now-risen Lord, a powerful wind filled the entire house and the Holy Spirit descended upon each of them in the form of tongues of fire enabling them to speak in diverse languages. This dynamic action displayed the nature of the divine itself: a self-giving, communicative, and inspiriting life that connects heaven and earth and binds diverse persons together in unity. Thus, the Pentecost theme aptly captures the essence of what happened among a diverse group of Roman Catholics in that long nineteenth century who found the spiritual vision of Francis de Sales resonating with the promptings of their own hearts.

In that era, when miracles, apparitions, and prophecies dominated the European Catholic imagination, mass-produced holy cards were exceptionally popular. Cards like those depicting the legendary virgin

martyr Philomena, venerated for her healing powers by the celebrated country priest-confessor, the Cure d'Ars (1786-1859), were widely circulated. But holy cards of saints associated less with miraculous powers and viewed more as exemplars of the fullness of Catholic faith were also in vogue.' In this way Francis de Sales was recalled and so his image was frequently reproduced. During his lifetime, de Sales had been much admired, especially as a model bishop of the Catholic reform, for his artfully written books, and as founder of the Order of the Visitation of Holy Mary, an innovative women's congregation. That legacy endured and resulted in his relatively rapid beatification (1661) and canonization (1665), as well as his subsequent declaration as doctor of the church (1877).

Those nineteenth-century "Sulpician" style mass-produced holy cards (so named because they could be purchased in the center of Paris at the famous church of St. Sulpice), always depicted Francis de Sales with a fiery heart either held in his hand or hovering in the air above him. Sometimes the enflamed heart depicted was the Sacred Heart, but the bishop's own heart was always explicitly referenced. This iconographic identity was not new: the flaming heart had long been seen as an appropriate image to express the essence of Salesian spirituality. In a more artistically sophisticated way, the imagery had been highlighted at the celebrations of the beatification and canonization of the Savoyard. The renowned Jesuit impresario Claude-Fran^^is Menestrier designed the plans for the celebrations held in Annecy as well as in Grenoble. He made extensive use of emblems, processions, fireworks, and sermons: religious theater of all sorts. Chief among the persistent visual and auditory elements of these celebrations were fire and light, thought to capture the essence of the saint's spirituality. A fiery globe set off during the fireworks and a heart enflamed by rays of sunlight poised upon a bonfire were among the dramatic offerings. These recalled a fiery globe believed to have appeared in the bishop's room while he was composing his magisterial work, the Treatise on the Love of God (1616). Other emblematic treatments of the saint's life, notably Adrien Gambert's popular 1664 La Vie symbolique de Fran ^^is de Sales, circulated and fixed what was to become the distinctive iconography of de Sales—the fiery heart, symbol of the saint's heart set aflame by divine love, which, like a mirror, reflects that love to other human hearts.

Likewise, the Salesian Pentecost that emerged two centuries later is a movement aptly captured by the image of the heart on fire with divine love: a powerful, communicative fire that spreads with vigor, enlightening and inspiring all who are swept up in its warmth. In the wake of the upheavals that launched the long nineteenth century and that ultimately transformed Western Europe and the Catholic Church, a network of individuals formed to promote a freshly invigorated faith. The spirit of Francis de Sales, the saint with the heart enflamed with divine love, animated them. In the centuries after his death, de Sales was especially revered in the regions surrounding his homeland of Sa^^y. The Salesian Pentecost radiated out from there.

In the Diocese of Annecy, presiding bishop Pierre Joseph Rey (1770-1842), charismatic preacher Joseph-Marie Favre (1791-1838), and parish priest Pierre-Marie Merrier (1790-1862) were spurred by the missionary example and spirit of their earlier Savoyard countryman Francis de Sales to launch missions for the re-evangelization of Savoy. Under Bishop Rey, Merrier, along with five other diocesan priests, formed the Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales of Annecy (later the Fransalians), a congregation that conducted missions in the Salesian style. In time, Merrier collaborated with Claudine Echernier (1801-69) to found the Congregation of the Sisters of the Cross of Chavanod for the purpose of educating

poor country girls. Before long, what had begun as an internal project to re-evangelize Savoyard territory soon became an order that worked mainly overseas, principally in India.

From the Piedmont came seminary instructor Giuseppe Cafasso (1811-60), one of the luminous "social saints" of Turin, also known as the "Saint of the Gallows;' and his remarkable pupil John (Don) Bosco (1815-88), who hailed from the rural hamlet of Becchi in the Piedmont and whose deep immersion into the spirit of de Sales under Cafasso was to indelibly shape his vision. The gentle Salesian, heart-to-heart way of proceeding was to be the hallmark of the religious family Don Bosco would eventually establish. Bosco's Festive Oratory of St. Francis de Sales became the site where he and his fledgling group ministered to the neglected and abandoned boys of Turin. The revival of the Salesian spirit in the Piedmont was typically linked to efforts to address social needs. Eventually, a vast Salesian family blossomed under Bosco's supervision, comprising a men's community, the Salesians of Don Bosco; a parallel women's group, the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians dedicated to the education of poor girls; and a lay confraternity known as the Union of Salesian Cooperators. Maria Mazzarello (1837-81) from the rural Piedmontese region of Mornese was the Daughters' first superior.

Although during his lifetime Francis de Sales as bishop of Geneva was never able to reside in his episcopal see, which was a Calvinist stronghold, his memory remained vitally alive there among the Catholic community. His later successor, Swiss-born Gaspard Mermillod (1824-92), had dreams of evangelization fueled by the Salesian spirit. Among Mermillod's most successful efforts was the initial sponsorship of the lay Association of St. Francis de Sales, an initiative approved by Pope Pius IX that was originally designed to convert "strayed brethren" of the Protestant persuasion. That association would flourish and eventually spread the Salesian spirit across Europe.

De Sales may have been especially alive for those who claimed him as their regional saint but, just as in his see, the Savoyard would posthumously win the hearts of Paris as well. Chief among his disciples in the capital was Louis-Gaston de Segur (1820-81), a man of noble heritage whose immediate family was religiously indifferent but who was converted by a gift of a copy of de Sales's Introduction to the Devout Life from his pious Russian grandmother. Once ordained and later elevated to the episcopal office, de Segur was filled with a desire to evangelize among the people of the capital, notable for its lack of religious adherence. To this end, he was in contact with like-minded ecclesiastics like Genevan bishop Mermillod, who appointed de Segur president of the central governing committee for his lay Association of St. Francis de Sales. Archbishop de Segur contacted fellow bishops all over Europe and convinced forty dioceses to sponsor the association. By the time of his death, worldwide membership of the lay group was estimated at close to two million. Its goals were the defense of the faith against the Protestant challenge and the reanimation of faith among a de-Christianized and religiously indifferent French society.

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Pierre-Marie Mermier, Joseph-Marie Favre, Pierre-Joseph Rev, And The Missionaries Of St. Francis De Sales Of Annecy by Joseph F. Chorpenning, OSFS

The Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales of Annecy (also known as the Fransalians) were founded in 1838 by Pierre-Marie Merrier (1790-1862), a priest of the Diocese of Annecy. They were the first religious congregation ever to bear the name and be under the patronage of St. Francis de Sales. In addition to Merrier, two others played key roles in the Fransalians' founding: Joseph-Marie Favre (1791-1838), a

priest of the Archdiocese of Chambery-Geneva, and Pierre-Joseph Rey (1770-1842), the second bishop of Annecy.

Historically, the foundation of the Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales came about as a response to the pastoral crisis precipitated by the French Revolution in Savoy, the birthplace of St. Francis de Sales (1567-1622), Salesian spirituality, and the Order of the Visitation of Holy Mary (founded in Annecy in 1610). The Revolution broke out in 1789, and three years later it arrived in Savoy, which was then part of the kingdom of Sardinia. France had long coveted Savoy because of its strategic position as the gateway to Italy. Invaded by the French army on September 22, 1792, Savoy was subsequently annexed to France.

The Revolution's policy of systematic de-Christianization was vigorously prosecuted in Savoy. Priests who refused to take the oath of loyalty to the Civil Constitution of the Clergy (1790) were compelled to leave the country or face deportation to Guyana in South America: 690 out of 750 priests serving in the area that later became the Diocese of Annecy went into exile. Monasteries were closed. Roadside crosses and church bells were pulled down. Churches were plundered and converted into prisons, grain stores, stables, or military hospitals.

With the ascent of Napoleon Bonaparte (1769-1821) to first consul, effectively making him dictator of France, in November 1799, the Revolution finally ended. The Concordat of 1801 between Napoleon and Pope Pius VII (1742-1823; reigned 1800-1823) stipulated that Catholicism could operate freely but was not the state religion. However, the restoration of religious practice faced significant challenges. There was an acute shortage of priests, and, consequently, standards were lowered for admission to holy orders. Jansenism and Gallicanism, well established in seminaries before the Revolution, continued to influence priestly formation and thus negatively impacted pastoral practice through moral rigorism in the confessional and aversion to frequent reception of communion.

Most priests were unprepared and thus ill equipped to respond meaningfully to the post-Revolution state of parish life. An entire generation was unevangelized, and religious indifference was widespread. There were, however, exceptions, such as Merrier and Favre. The childhoods of both men had unfolded in the shadow of the Revolution, with their family homes serving as safe havens for priests on the run from the civil authorities. In the seminary, Merrier was a good and hardworking student, while Favre excelled, even refuting Jansenism by employing the new theological ideas of St. Alphonsus Liguori (1696-1787), whose works were forbidden in the seminary at the time. (Merrier was also a devotee of Liguori.) Ordained a priest in 1817, Favre became renowned as a preacher, catechist, and confessor. In 1819, he was assigned to organize missions in the diocese, and it was in this context that he and Merrier first collaborated, setting in motion the process leading to the Fransalians' founding.

Ordained to the priesthood in 1813, Mermier's first assignments included both parochial and educational ministries. In 1819, he was appointed pastor of the parish in the prosperous market town of Le Chatelard-en-Bauges. Merrier enthusiastically threw himself into this ministry: he visited his parishioners, preached, taught catechism, started a parish school, and built a chapel in a distant village. While appreciative of his efforts, his parishioners remained apathetic. This led Merrier to ask Favre for help in overcoming the religious indifference of his parishioners by conducting a parish mission. While success was not guaranteed, the mission's ultimate positive outcome was seen by both Merrier and Favre as confirmation of their vocation as mission preachers.'

Merrier and Favre, assisted by several other priests, now dedicated themselves exclusively to parish missions. After each mission, the group would assess its effectiveness and their conduct, in order to refine and improve their methods. The group also greatly benefited from Favre's experience in the apostolate. For example, he urged his confreres to cultivate a welcoming demeanor and to be generous and magnanimous in dealing with parish priests, so they became collaborators rather than adversaries. Of paramount importance was that Favre and Mermier's diagnosis of the state of religion in Savoy led them to discover in St. Francis de Sales as the Apostle of the Chablais the inspiration and model for their missionary apostolate.

Favre and Merrier did not invent the parish mission. For example, it was an important element of the renewal of Catholicism after the Council of Trent (1545-63) that aimed to win over Protestants and lukewarm Catholics. The Capuchins, Jesuits, and Vincentians (also known as Lazarists) excelled in the ministry of rural missions. By the end of the eighteenth century, however, the parish mission was in decline. Favre and Merrier revived the parish mission because they believed that it was the only effective means for remedying the dire state of parish life. In short, the missioner's vocation was to proclaim the word of God to people who had never heard it before, as well as to those who having heard it had practically forgotten it.

Favre and Merrier shared the conviction that the pastoral crisis that they faced was not unprecedented in their native Savoy: it was comparable to what Francis de Sales faced when he sought to win the Chablais region back to Catholicism, which had lapsed into Protestantism. Thus, they looked to recover the distinctive pastoral method that Francis developed during his four-year mission in the Chablais (1594-98). This mission's initial phase (1594-97) had been disappointing. Preaching to anyone who would listen, hours of individual religious instruction, and debates on theological issues had yielded only a handful of converts. A fresh approach was needed, and this took the form of staging three sumptuous, lavish, and visually stunning Forty Hours celebrations in 1598 in Annemasse (September 7-9) and Thonon (September 20-22 and October 1-3): words, images, actions, and sounds in the form of rituals, processions, and theatrical performances appealed to people's senses instead of their intellects, thus stirring emotions that had been buried by Calvinism's emphasis on introspection. The result was dramatic: much of the populace returned to the Catholic fold, and Francis was henceforth acclaimed as the "Apostle of the Chablais."

Favre especially had a masterful grasp of this facet of the Salesian approach. In a letter to Merrier of October 7, 1824, Favre detailed the various ceremonies that their parish missions were to include, assuring Merrier that he had personally tried and found these ceremonies effective. Of particular interest is Favre's evaluation of some ceremonies. This letter is of unique importance in the Fransalian tradition because it is the most complete extant description of the parish mission apostolate, which was the first and foundational ministry of the Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales. It opens a window on the Fransalian parish missions as no other source material does, and thus its historical importance is singular. While many of these ceremonies had long been staples of the parish mission repertoire, Favre and Merrier incorporated these into their ministry in their own particular and distinctive manner.

The Family Of Don Bosco: Salesians, Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, Salesian Cooperators by Joseph Boenzi, SDB

Beginning in 1796, Napoleon Bonaparte had brought the French Revolution to Italian soil through the rapid conquest of the peninsula. Italy at the time was a patchwork of independent kingdoms, duchies, cities, and states. Revolutionary ideas followed the conquest including anticlerical movements. But the pendulum swung back after Napoleon was defeated at Waterloo in 1814 and revolutionary impulses were supplanted by efforts to restore elements of the older order, including the monarchy. 1815 thus ushered in the period of the pan-European Restoration (1815-48).

That year was momentous for European politics; the Congress of Vienna (November 1814-June 1815) created a new map of political power in which France, Austria, Russia, Prussia, the Netherlands, Spain, and Great Britain emerged dominant. The future of divided Italy was decided by outside forces, and each of the ten separate nation states was governed by different foreign rulers. Among these, in the Kingdom of Sardinia, composed of Piedmont, Savoy—the region of Francis de Sales's birth and ministry—Nice, and the Island of Sardinia, Victor Emmanuel I of the House of Savoy was restored to the throne. The capital was located in the city of Torino (Turin), at the heart of an area undergoing the process of industrialization that was generating a newly influential middle- and working class and supplanting the local nobility.

Eighteen fifteen was also a harbinger year for what would become the Salesian Pentecost. This was the year in which John Bosco, a Piedmontese peasant, was born in the town of Castelnuovo d'Asti. He would be one of the leading lights of the spiritual flame, first lit by Francis de Sales two centuries prior, that would catch fire across the continent in the nineteenth century.

Bosco came into the world of the Restoration, but during his lifetime latent revolutionary ideals fueled by a flowering spirit of Romanticism would create a new political-cultural climate on the peninsula. The Risorgimento (1848-70) would dawn, an era in which the ten radically diverse nation-states on the peninsula eventually endorsed the ideal of a unified Italy. The implications of this idea would bewilder and occupy the minds and hearts of the era. Monarchy or republic? What of the Catholic Church? And what of the pope and the Papal States, which formed one of those nations? Could one be both a loyal Catholic and a loyal Italian? The impact of the Risorgimento on the church and the implications of the great cultural movements of the century, including industrialization, would come to shape Bosco's world and later educative pastoral ministry.

However, the beginning of the story of Don Bosco's Salesian family, with its headquarters named the Oratory of St. Francis de Sales, are modest, rural, and seemingly far removed from the swirling political and cultural affairs that would later surround that family. In middle age, in the year 1874, Bosco himself drew up an account of the first forty years of his life and ministry with the intent that for his Salesian family, this "will be a record to help people overcome problems that may come in the future by learning from the past. It will serve to make known how God himself has always been our guide."'

As his quote suggests, this hindsight narrative, known as the Memoirs of the Oratory, is saturated with a keen sense of the guiding presence of the divine, a sense that sustained Bosco throughout his lifetime.

Mary De Sales Chappuis, Louis Brisson, Leonie Frances De Sales Aviat, And The Oblate Sisters And Oblates Of St. Francis De Sales by Joseph F. Chorpenning, OSFS

The flames of the Salesian Pentecost blazed brilliantly and intensely in nineteenth-century Troyes, the capital and largest city of the department of Aube, located southeast of Paris in the Champagne region. It was there, under the auspices of a triad of remarkable individuals, that two distinctive religious communities emerged to carry forward the spirit of St. Francis de Sales (1567-1622). The Oblate Sisters of St. Francis de Sales were cofounded in 1871 by Louis Brisson (1817-1908) and Lennie Frances de Sales Aviat (1844-1914), and the Oblates (priests and brothers), in 1875 by Brisson. However, neither religious congregation would have come into existence if it were not for Mother Mary de Sales Chappuis (1793-1875), the Swiss-born superior of the Troyes monastery of the Order of the Visitation of Holy Mary, who is often referred to in the Oblate and Visitandine families as the "Good Mother." It was through her influence that Brisson, the monastery chaplain, and Aviat, a former student-boarder at the Visitation school, were imbued with Salesian spirituality and inspired to respond with apostolic action to the complex religious and social issues of their era. The "inspiration" for the founding of a religious community ordinarily comes through the founder, but, in the case of the Oblates, it was transmitted through Mother Chappuis, who likewise played a primary role in the foundation of the Oblate Sisters.

Born into a devout Catholic family, Marie-Therese Chappuis's early years were spent in the shadow of the French Revolution, during which her native village of Soyhieres in the Swiss Jura Mountains was annexed to France. Her most vivid memory of this time was her elderly priest-uncle celebrating clandestine midnight Masses in her parents' home. At twelve years of age, Marie-Therese was sent by her parents to the boarding school of the Visitation Monastery in Fribourg to complete her formal education. She eventually entered the monastery, receiving the name Mary Francis de Sales at her clothing with the religious habit. During her novitiate year (1815-16), she received a series of "lights;' or revelations, from the Lord about "His designs for her work" as an apostle of the Salesian spirit. Sister Mary de Sales totally immersed herself in the writings of Francis de Sales, fully appropriated the Salesian spirit, and came to be regarded as the authentic interpreter of the Salesian spirit in her day. Her profound understanding of, and ability to communicate, Salesian spirituality was quickly recognized, and scarcely a year after her profession, she was sent to reestablish the Visitation Monastery in Metz. When she returned to Fribourg, she was appointed novice mistress, her youth notwithstanding. In 1826, she became superior of the Visitation of Troyes, which was in urgent need of effective leadership. Complicating the situation, "Troyes was a diocese full of problems, not easy to resolve by simple fiat."

The Troyes Visitation had been disbanded during the French Revolution and restored in 1807. Moreover, it had been deeply influenced by Jansenism for nearly a century, with the nuns refusing to go to confession or to receive holy communion. But it was not an outlier in the Diocese of Troyes, which was a Jansenist stronghold. The liturgical books used in the diocese were permeated by Jansenist doctrine. Gallicanism also thrived in nineteenth-century Troyes, with Gallicans and Ultramontanes bitterly divided over the restoration of the Roman liturgy Exacerbating this state of affairs, French Catholicism generally had developed a pathological obsession with damnation, hellfire, and the small number of the saved. This was communicated in the pulpit by a theologie fierce (ferocious theology) and pastorale de la peur (religion of fear), and in the confessional by moral rigorism, with absolution often being withheld or delayed. The result was an "uncompromising and frightening picture of the Catholic

faith, based on fear rather than on divine love" According to Ralph Gibson, who pioneered study of this phenomenon, "In some ways this was part of the influence of Jansenist austerity, but Jansenists and bitter anti-Jansenists alike shared a vision of a judicial and even vengeful God, one to be feared, rather than of a loving God, an everpresent help in time of trouble." Preaching about divine punishment and eternal damnation aimed to get Catholics into the confessional, but for many the sacrament had little appeal.

Simply stated, French Catholicism had lost sight of the gospel's core message that "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:17 NRSV). This was the ecciesial-pastoral context for the revelation to the young novice Sister Mary de Sales that "God has looked into Himself and He has decided to open up new sources of graces" by completing "the work of sanctification that [St. Francis de Sales] began on earth" As Brisson would later express it, "St. Francis de Sales was a man of his time, but he is even more truly of our time than his ^wn" While not officially declared a doctor of the church until 1877, Francis de Sales had been acclaimed as the Doctor of Divine Love from at least the time of his beatification (1661).17 The Doctor of Divine Love's teaching that holiness is accessible and adaptable for people in all walks of life, that "God's great mercy...is infinitely greater. ..than all the sins of the world" and that the Savior "forgets nothing to prove that 'His mercy reaches out to all that He has made' [Ps 144:9],... and He wishes `all to be saved' [1 Tim 2:4] and none be lost," and pastoral method of attracting and winning hearts through gentle persuasion were uniquely suited to addressing the specific challenges confronting nineteenth-century French Catholicism.

Caroline Carre De Malberg, Henri Chaumont, And The Society Of The Daughters Of St. Francis De Sales by Suzanne C. Toczyski

> It was marvelous to see all three of us holding council to discuss the most timely and practical ways to set the world on fire with devotion to our patron saint. —Fr. Henri Chaumontl

Founded in 1872 by Mme Caroline Carre de Malberg and Fr. Henri Chaumont, the Society of the Daughters of St. Francis de Sales came into existence as a formal means by which ordinary laywomen might consecrate themselves to lives of holiness and virtue. Fed by the Salesian Pentecost that was already taking hold across Europe, and embracing the teachings of St. Francis de Sales, especially as they were laid out in the Introduction to the Devout Life, the Society encouraged its members to pursue personal sanctification by practicing the "little virtues" that the saint identified as key to uniting their will to the will of God. Encouraging its members to seek out and nurture spiritual friendships with like-minded individuals (another Salesian principle), the association also promoted an apostolic mission of evangelization. The work of the Society of the Daughters of St. Francis de Sales continues to the present day, with communities found throughout the world.

The older of the two founders of the Society of the Daughters of St. Francis de Sales, Caroline Carre, nee Colchen, was born in Metz, France, on April 8, 1829, and received an early introduction to the works of the saint in part because the Introduction to the Devout Life was her mother lisabeth-Charlotte's favorite book. At the age of twelve, Caroline was enrolled at a local boarding school run by religious of the Visitation Order; under the sisters' care, Caroline's knowledge and appreciation of Salesian spirituality and spiritual direction took firm root. Leaving the school in 1846, Caroline returned home and, three years later, in 1849, married her cousin Paul Carre.

Paul's military career obliged the couple to move frequently, making any long-term spiritual direction very difficult for Caroline to establish. In the interim, her school mentors—the abbes Jegou and Spitz and the religious of the Visitation—encouraged Mme Carre to be faithful to the teachings of St. Francis de Sales by focusing her energy on what they called her devoirs d'etat, the everyday duties of familial life. This was in keeping with the saint's dictum that attention to the little virtues (especially humility, gentleness, patience, and kindness) even in matters as ostensibly trivial as household obligations, can lead one to holiness: "My object is to teach [the principles of the devout life] to those who are living in towns, at court, in their own households, and whose calling obliges them to a social life," he wrote. In her relationship with Paul, Caroline would have ample opportunity to be challenged in all of these areas, but most especially in terms of patience.

The couple moved to Paris in 1862. In addition to their frequent social obligations, which took them all over the city, Paul Carre's temperament made him a difficult man to live with. Moreover, like many Frenchmen of his generation, Paul was not a frequently practicing Catholic, yet he was not hostile to religion; he promised to begin attending Mass again before their first child was born and kept that promise even though the baby died after just a few days. Years of careful zeal and constant prayer on the part of his wife would eventually bring the recalcitrant military man back to wholehearted participation in the church by the time of his retirement in 1879, and by the time of her death, Paul Carre fully embraced his wife's life of holiness.

Throughout her life, Caroline Carre felt special devotion to the Holy Spirit, to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and to the Virgin Mary, and held a particular place in her heart for Sts. Francis de Sales, Jane de Chantal, and Mary Magdalene. Passionate about her familial duties and frequenting the sacraments (particularly daily communion, which was unusual at the time but eminently Salesian), Mme Carre worked constantly to unite her own will to the will of God, taming her personal pride and desire for control in order to better serve as a model for kindred souls seeking sanctification in a politically turbulent time. It was a personally tumultuous time as well, and three of the couple's four children died before 1864. Indeed, it was Caroline's entry into the confessional of diocesan priest Fr. Henri Chaumont precisely during a period of intense grief that spurred the formation of the Society of the Daughters of St. Francis de Sales.

Nine years younger than Mme Carre, Henri Chaumont's vocation to the priesthood revealed itself early in his life. As a young child, Henri loved to read stories from the Annals of the Propagation of the Faith, and at a very young age proclaimed his desire to be a Christian missionary. On the evening of his first communion, at age twelve, Henri was introduced to Msgr. Louis Gaston de Segur, who would become a tremendous mentor to the young man. At the Seminary of Issy, Chaumont read a collection of St. Francis de Sales's letters, a "revelation" to him;4 later, at the Seminary of Saint-Sulpice, he listened as the biography of St. Francis de Sales was read aloud during mealtimes. Chaumont would undertake a study of the saint's works that lasted throughout his lifetime, appreciating in particular "the gentle yet strong manner which allowed [St. Francis de Sales] to lead the worldly to perfection, even those bound by the bonds of marriage." Deciding early on to assimilate to the best of his ability the methods of the saint in the area of spiritual direction, Chaumont focused upon the Introduction to the Devout Life; over the course of his life, he would distill from the writings of the saint a series of treatises composed entirely of quotations addressing individual Christian virtues, a work culminating in his Spiritual Directions of Saint Francis de Sales.

While still at Saint-Sulpice, Chaumont began to conceive of an association that would allow him to bring his practical program of sanctification based on Salesian spirituality to the world. After his ordination to the priesthood in 1864, Fr. Chaumont was assigned to the parish of St. Marcel-de-l'^^pital in a relatively poor neighborhood of Paris; there, he was able to put to practice St. Francis de Sales's teachings—most notably, the notion that everyone, rich and poor, male and female, can pursue a life of holiness. It was during his tenure at St. Marcel that Fr. Chaumont, having sketched out a Rule of Life based on the Introduction to the Devout Life,' first offered this plan for a life of perfection to his female directees, women whose social statuses ranged from simple postal worker to countess. The Rule is imbued with the spirit of St. Francis de Sales, covering specific topics such as dilection [A loving; preference], humility, love of God, meditation, consolation, and spiritual friendship. Although the early groups formed by Fr. Chaumont would eventually disperse, some of the women active during his ministry at St. Marcel would one day come to join the Society of the Daughters of St. Francis de Sales.

The archive of the Daughters of St. Francis de Sales in Paris possesses a copy of the Rule developed by Fr. Chaumont and written in the hand of one of the early Daughters, Mlle Stiltz, who chose the name Sister Mary of Jesus and who would serve as Mother of the Society after the death of Mme Carre; a more extensive version of the Rule was published in book form in 1896. The rule offers guidelines for personal sanctification as well as for sanctification of one's neighbor. <>

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