

COMPLEXITIES OF RELIGIOUS BELIEF

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Table of Contents

<u>Purpose and Procedure.....</u>	<u>1</u>
<u>(1) Four Genres of Belief.....</u>	<u>6</u>
<u>(1.11) Doxastic Belief.....</u>	<u>8</u>
<u>(1.12) Apodexic Belief (Belief(a)).....</u>	<u>10</u>
<u>(1.13) Believing In.....</u>	<u>13</u>
<u>(1.14) Sympheric Belief.....</u>	<u>17</u>
<u>(1.141) Secular Humanism.....</u>	<u>19</u>
<u>(1.15) Key Expository Concepts.....</u>	<u>24</u>
<u>(1.151) States of Affairs (SOAs).....</u>	<u>26</u>
<u>(1.152) Propositions and Propositional truth.....</u>	<u>36</u>
<u>(1.153) Facts(s) and Facts(p).....</u>	<u>44</u>
<u>(1.154) Other Senses of Truth.....</u>	<u>46</u>
<u>(2) Religious Belief.....</u>	<u>47</u>
<u>(2.1) Belief(a): Horizons of Expectation in Religious Belief.....</u>	<u>49</u>
<u>(2.111) Angels in the OT.....</u>	<u>51</u>
<u>(2.112) Other Spiritual Beings in the OT: Spirits.....</u>	<u>54</u>
<u>(2.113) Other Spiritual Beings in the OT: Devils.....</u>	<u>61</u>
<u>(2.114) Summary of OT's Horizon of Expectation.....</u>	<u>66</u>
<u>(2.121) Angels in the NT.....</u>	<u>66</u>
<u>(2.122) Spirits in the NT.....</u>	<u>70</u>
<u>(2.123) Evil Spirits and Exorcism in the NT.....</u>	<u>74</u>
<u>(2.124) The Devil in the NT.....</u>	<u>78</u>
<u>(2.1251) The Holy Spirit: OT Antecedents.....</u>	<u>85</u>
<u>(2.1252) The Holy Spirit: its Role as Enabler.....</u>	<u>90</u>
<u>(2.1253) The Holy Spirit: its Role as Sanctifier.....</u>	<u>93</u>
<u>(2.1254) The Holy Spirit: its Indwelling Role.....</u>	<u>104</u>
<u>(2.2) Belief(d): Its Place in Religious Belief.....</u>	<u>108</u>
<u>(2.21) The Accommodation of Belief(d) in Various Forms of Discourse.....</u>	<u>110</u>
<u>(2.22) Religious Discourse and Belief(d).....</u>	<u>135</u>
<u>(2.23) Belief(d) and Doctrines Based on NT Teachings.....</u>	<u>151</u>
<u>(2.3) Believing(n) and Religious Faith.....</u>	<u>198</u>
<u>(2.31) Believing(n) and the Christian Creed.....</u>	<u>200</u>
<u>(2.4) Sympheric Belief and its Proper Object.....</u>	<u>205</u>
<u>(2.41) The Christian Worldview Compared with that of Secular Humanism.....</u>	<u>208</u>
<u>(2.42) Merging Personal Life-Stories with Religious Narratives.....</u>	<u>212</u>
<u>(3) Individual Life-Stories.....</u>	<u>217</u>
<u>(3.1) Why Life-Stories are not Autobiographies.....</u>	<u>219</u>
<u>(3.2) Self-Awareness.....</u>	<u>221</u>
<u>(3.21) Subject-Self and Object-Self.....</u>	<u>231</u>

(3.22) Self-Awareness and Personal Identity.....	233
(3.23) Memory.....	241
(4) Religious Narrative.....	270
(4.1) Merging of Life-Story and Religious Narrative Revisited.....	273
(4.2) The Christian Narrative.....	276
(4.21) The Narrative’s Key Components.....	277
(4.22) Component (A): The Garden of Eden Story and its Sequel.....	282
(4.23) Component (B): Christ’s Life as Preparation for the New Covenant.....	310
(4.24) Component (C): The Individual Journey to Eternal Life.....	378
(4.25) Component (C) Continued: Individual and Community.....	459
(5) Synopsis of the Christian Narrative, with Addenda.....	500
(5.1) The OT Background.....	502
(5.11) The Creation Story.....	510
(5.12) Establishment of the Old Covenant.....	513
(5.13) OT Anticipations of Jesus.....	515
(5.14) OT Practices of Blood Sacrifice.....	520
(5.15) The Jews’ Animus toward Jesus for Healing on the Sabbath.....	521
(5.16) Jesus’ Avoidance of Capture until his Hour had Come.....	528
(5.17) Termination of the Old Covenant: an OT Perspective.....	530
(5.2) Jesus’ Life as Juncture between the Two Covenants.....	531
(5.211) Termination of the Old Covenant: a NT Perspective.....	532
(5.22) Jesus’ Virgin Birth.....	536
(5.23) His Baptism.....	538
(5.24) His Three Temptations.....	543
(5.25) Building His Church.....	548
(5.26) Instituting the Lord’s Supper.....	555
(5.27) His Betrayal.....	561
(5.28) His Trial.....	567
(5.29) His Crucifixion.....	569
(5.3) The Open-Ended Progression of the New Covenant.....	573
(5.31) Christ’s Resurrection and Ascension.....	574
(5.32) The Pervasive Influence of Love in the NT.....	581
(5.33) Participation in Christ’s Sacrifice.....	592
(5.34) Eternal Life: Its Temporal Counterpart.....	596
(5.35) Eternal Life: Its Timeless Status.....	600
(5.36) Eternal Life: Its Personal Aspect.....	605
(5.37) Eternal Life: Its Conceptual Basis.....	610
(6) Account of Religious Belief Summarized, with Addenda.....	616
(6.1) The Doxastic Ingredient of Christian Belief.....	619
(6.12) The Apodexic Aspect of Christian Belief.....	625
(6.131) Belief in God, Church, and Holy Writ.....	630
(6.132) Creedal Profession of Belief.....	636
(6.14) Christian Conviction as a Form of Symphoric Belief.....	643

<u>(6.2) An Individual Person’s Life-Story</u>	<u>647</u>
<u>(6.21) Self-Awareness.....</u>	<u>649</u>
<u>(6.3) The Merger Revisited.....</u>	<u>667</u>
<u>(6.31) Remarks on a Meaningful Christian Life.....</u>	<u>670</u>
<u>(6.32) The Depths of Neighborly Love.....</u>	<u>673</u>
<u>(6.33) The Merger’s Contribution to Eternal Life</u>	<u>678</u>
<u>(6.4) The Present Account of Religious Belief in Practice.....</u>	<u>682</u>
<u>(6.41) Benefits of the Christian Narrative’s Nonhistorical Character</u>	<u>685</u>
<u>(6.42) The Specious Conflict between Religion and Science.....</u>	<u>688</u>
<u>(6.43) Benefits Pertaining to Christian Worship.....</u>	<u>692</u>
<u>(6.5) The Eucharist Reviewed from a Nonpropositional Perspective.....</u>	<u>704</u>
<u>(6.51) Changes in Bread and Wine Effected by Consecration</u>	<u>710</u>
<u>(6.52) The Terminology of Transubstantiation.....</u>	<u>713</u>
<u>(7) Why Catholic?.....</u>	<u>716</u>

Purpose and Procedure

This project began about the time I retired from teaching philosophy at the University of Notre Dame. I had joined the Catholic Church some twenty years earlier, and with retirement was becoming increasingly active in its affairs. The Mass, in which I frequently served as Cup Minister, had already become a high point of my week. I occasionally experienced an eerie feeling that the Holy Spirit was becoming a personal friend.

At the same time, I rejected the notion that because I was Catholic I should believe everything Catholics generally are assumed to believe. My copy of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1994, imprimatur by Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger) is bigger than a standard dictionary, and contains nearly 2,900 doctrines of Catholic faith. Apart from the compilers, surely, very few Catholics will have read them all, and not even the compilers will have committed them to memory. It struck me as grotesque that anyone would have to check such an enormous compilation to find out what he or she believes.

Even worse, there are articles of faith in the *Catechism* that struck me as simply incorrect. One is that “human reason ... is capable by its own natural power ... of attaining to a true and certain knowledge of the one personal God” (entry 37). Another concerns the means by which such knowledge might be attained, namely “The existence of God the creator can be known with certainty through his works, by the light of human reason” (entry 286). As someone who wrote his PhD thesis on theory of knowledge, and who taught this topic to graduate students for decades afterwards, I found these doctrines beyond honest belief.

With misgivings like these to contend with, I realized that there were questions to be answered about my Catholic faith. While never regretting my decision to join the Church, I wanted to gain clarity about what my Catholic belief actually amounts to. In addition to the uncertainty in my own situation, I was raising my youngest son as a Catholic and wanted to be sure I was doing so responsibly. And then there were my three older sons, who had been confirmed as Catholics but had stopped practicing in college. If I were to get my own religious house in order, it seemed at least possible that one or more of them might follow suit.

These considerations provided incentive to use some of the time left free by my retirement to undertake a careful examination of the issues at hand. The present study is the result of that undertaking. The purpose of the present study, in brief, is to gain clarity on the nature of religious belief, with a focus on my own Catholic belief in particular.

Given that general background, I should say something about the beginning stages of the undertaking in question. As best I can recall, it began with thoughts that occurred to me repeatedly during Mass. Although I joined in most of the responses without reservation, the Creeds (Apostles and Nicene) continued to distract me when I reflected on their meaning. The Apostles Creed includes a line about Christ descending into hell after his death on the cross. This struck me as dubious for several reasons, one being its evident incompatibility with *Luke 23:43*, where Jesus tells the repentant thief that before the day ends they will be together in paradise. While Christ's purported descent into hell is absent from the Nicene Creed, this latter posed other problems of its own. In reciting this Creed, one professes belief in Jesus Christ being "consubstantial with the Father"

(*consubstantialem Patri* in Latin). And the Latin term *consubstantialem* acquires its meaning from a metaphysical system to which I do not subscribe.

There were puzzles in the phrasing of the two Creeds as well. Both begin in Latin with the term *credo*, the proper English translation of which is “I believe in.” Thus one professes: “I believe in one God, the Father almighty.” But then about halfway through, both Creeds shift into some other mode of believing, with words referring to Christ saying “on the third day he rose again, ... ascended into heaven,” and “sits at the right hand of the Father.” The sense of belief here, clearly enough, is not *believing in* Christ’s rising, ascending, and sitting, etc., whatever that might mean. Believing in connotes trust; and one does not *trust* activities like rising and sitting.

The sense of these affirmations, and those in the lines immediately following, seems closer to what philosophers often call “propositional belief.” Propositional belief amounts to *believing that* something is the case. A common example in philosophic literature is someone believing that the cat is on the mat. There is a proposition representing the state of affairs of a certain cat being on a certain mat, and someone believes that this state of affairs is the case. This is equivalent to believing that the proposition representing the cat being on the mat is true. In the Creeds, similarly, one seemingly is invited to think of a state of affairs consisting of Christ sitting at the right hand of the Father, and to express belief that a proposition to this effect is true.

Anyone who has thought carefully about such matters, however, is likely to find this a very peculiar kind of proposition. As illustrated by the proposition that a given cat is on a given mat, genuine propositions correspond (or fail to correspond) to facts that make them true (or false). Such facts incorporate the states of affairs represented by the

propositions in question. For a given proposition to be intelligible, the state of affairs it represents must be such that qualified observers can determine whether it is the case or is not the case. And it is hard to think of Christ's sitting on the right hand of the Father as a state of affairs that qualified observers could determine either to be or not to be the case. Whatever Christ's sitting on the right hand of the Father amounts to, it is not an observable state of affairs.

It follows that there is no intelligible proposition affirming that Christ is sitting at the right hand of the Father, and hence no genuine propositional belief that this is the case. This is not to say that expressing belief regarding Christ's position in heaven is nonsense. It is to say only that belief in this regard is not propositional belief.

To be sure, there are components of both Creeds that correspond to observable states of affairs, and hence admit of propositional belief. One such is the affirmation that Christ was crucified under Pontius Pilate. That Christ died under Pontius Pilate is an observable state of affairs, and hence a suitable object of propositional belief. According to the Biblical account, many observers were present when Christ died on the cross. Given the testimony of these observers, the propositional belief that Christ died under Pontius Pilate seems most likely to be true. But things are otherwise with the creedal affirmation that Christ is seated at the right hand of the Father. Since there is no observable state of affairs consisting of Christ sitting at the right hand of the Father, it follows that someone reciting this part of the Creed is not professing a propositional belief. We turn shortly to look at other forms of belief that might be involved.

These complexities associated with creedal belief are symptomatic of a much broader range of quandaries affecting religious belief in general. Among these further

quandaries, to mention just a few, are (1) that of the relation between religious belief and sacred script, (2) that of the role of theological speculation in providing structure to religious belief, (3) that of the communal status of religious belief, and (4) that of the way religious belief is implicated in the daily lives of individual believers. The present study is guided by the conviction that issues of these various sorts are interrelated, and will proceed accordingly.

The method pursued in this study is eclectic, reflecting the wide variety of topics it encompasses. As the work progresses, it will become amply clear that it was written by a philosopher. While I have little specialized training in other disciplines relevant to this study—including history, psychology, theology, and literary composition, for example—I am familiar with these disciplines and shall attempt to abide by their standard guidelines and procedures.

From one perspective, the method of this study might be characterized as a remote cousin of Descartes' method of doubt. Instead of systematic doubt, however, this method focuses on exposing assumptions and taking nothing for granted. It also stresses clarity and precision of expression, features that seem to have gone out of fashion in contemporary philosophic writing.

Speaking metaphorically, the present method might be described as putting religious belief through a wringer. The aim of this exercise, however, is not to make the subject drier, but rather to render it in more practicable form. Although a certain amount of debris might be left behind as lint, my hope is that the emerging fabric will have been made more durable by the process.

Central to the first major section of the study is an account of propositions and states of affairs that shows obvious indebtedness to Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*. This will be acknowledged, when relevant, at appropriate places in the text. In general, the present study eschews footnotes and relies on parenthetical citations. Justification for this practice, if needed, is that my purpose does not require an extensive review of scholarly literature.

There are two additional respects in which this work is indebted to Wittgenstein. One is that interconnected sections are numbered in a manner similar to his numbering of paragraphs in the *Tractatus*. The other is the comfort I find in thinking of this work as resembling his in ranging "over a wide field of thought" that "criss-cross[es] in every direction" (*Philosophical Investigations*, ix). Unlike either the *Tractatus* or the *Investigations*, however, this work was not written for standard scholarly publication.

(1) Four Genres of Belief

From Plato to the present, the relation between belief and knowledge has been a standard topic of philosophic discussion. Plato thought of belief (*doxa*) and knowledge (*epistēmē*) as exercises of distinct cognitive faculties, and as directed toward different objects. In his famous image of the Divided Line, belief is represented as directed toward changing states of affairs, whereas knowledge is directed toward changeless Forms or Ideas. Contrary to most recent epistemologists, I agree with Plato in holding that belief and knowledge are directed toward different objects.

To be specific, most recent epistemologists think that belief and knowledge are functions of the same cognitive faculty, and that both are directed toward propositions. The standard view is that knowledge is equivalent to justified true belief. According to

this view, propositions are the proper objects of belief, and the objects remain the same in the case of beliefs that are both true and justified. Counterexamples have been contrived in which justified true belief falls short of knowledge, posing the so-called “Gettier Problem.” But with rare exceptions, purported solutions to this problem retain the assumption that both belief and knowledge are directed toward propositional objects.

Traditional and more recent epistemologists agree, however, in thinking that belief in persons and institutions constitutes a separate kind of belief. Since persons and institutions are not propositions, belief in such takes different objects than propositional belief. Lacking a propositional object, a given person’s belief in capitalism is neither true nor false. Believing in also involves qualities of character that are not expressly cognitive, such as trust and empathy. Belief in God typically does not result from a cognitive evaluation of available evidence.

I am convinced that there are other forms of belief that epistemologists have mostly ignored. One such form resembles propositional belief, save that it is directed toward states of affairs rather than propositions. It amounts to accepting certain states of affairs as given and behaving accordingly. When a mother sees her baby son crying, for instance, she rushes to his side to comfort him. If she should pause to consider the matter, she would arrive at the propositional belief that the child is uncomfortable. But the mother does not pause for consideration in this instance, and does not formulate a propositional belief about the circumstances of her child’s discomfort. Instead, she suddenly becomes aware of her child’s discomfort and comes to his aid without thinking. Propositional belief might come later, if it comes at all.

Another form of belief typically overlooked by epistemologists falls on the other end of the spectrum. The mother's rushing to her child's side is a specific response to a particular set of circumstances. On the other end of the spectrum is a person's pervasive acceptance of a general worldview, and of the circumstances that such a view encompasses. There is the general view, for example, according to which everything that happens is subject to scientific explanation. Someone who accepts this view of the world typically believes that life's origin eventually will be explained, along with the cognitive faculties themselves by which explanation is accomplished.

The general view that everything is subject to scientific explanation, however, is not itself an object of propositional belief. There is no observable state of affairs consisting of everything being subject to such explanation, and accordingly no meaningful proposition to that effect. To be sure, there are people who believe that everything can be explained scientifically, but the belief in question is not propositional and cannot itself be established by scientific inquiry.

Belief that everything can be explained scientifically belongs to a category of nonpropositional belief that includes religious belief as well. To prepare for further exploration of the main topic at hand, we need to look more carefully at the several forms of belief involved.

(1.11) Doxastic Belief

This first kind of belief has a standard name in epistemology. It is referred to as *doxastic belief*, borrowing from the Greek term *doxa* used by Plato. We shall label it "belief(d)"

for short. The defining characteristics of belief(d) are that it is directed toward propositions, and that it shares the truth-values of its propositional objects.

As noted previously, belief(d) plays a central role in recent epistemology. According to the once-standard analysis, knowledge consists of (i) justified (ii) true (iii) belief; and the belief in question is belief(d). The factor that holds these three components together is the proposition toward which belief(d) is directed. Thus belief(d) is also referred to as propositional belief.

One standard example has already been introduced, namely the proposition affirming (for a particular cat and a particular mat) that the cat is on the mat. If someone believes that the cat is on the mat, if the cat indeed is on the mat (i.e., the proposition is true), and if the person has adequate evidence for accepting that proposition as true, then the person knows that the cat is on the mat. According to this view, in short, knowledge is belief(d) that is both adequately justified and true.

Although philosophic approaches to knowledge have changed over recent decades, most epistemologists still think that knowledge contains belief(d) as a necessary ingredient. Along with this goes the assumption that knowledge is directed toward propositions as objects. This assumption is challenged in my 1997 publication *Belief and Knowledge*, which argues that knowledge is directed toward states of affairs instead. Whereas propositions are either true or false, states of affairs either are the case or are not the case. By definition, in my view, knowledge is a state of mind directed toward states of affairs that in fact are the case.

As far as belief(d) is concerned, however, the traditional analysis is correct. Belief(d) is directed toward propositions, propositions represent specific states of affairs

as being the case or as not being the case, and a proposition is true if and only if the concerned state of affairs actually has the status the proposition represents it as having.

This brief description of belief(d) incorporates a number of technical terms that require further clarification. These include ‘true and false’, ‘proposition’, and ‘state of affairs’. We turn to a more detailed discussion of these terms in a later section.

(1.12) Apodexic Belief (Belief(a))

A characteristic of belief generally is that it involves some sort of acceptance. As an instance of belief(d), believing that the cat is on the mat is tantamount to accepting a proposition to that effect as being true. In the second kind of belief distinguished above, the mother accepts the baby’s crying as a sign that he needs help. Regarding belief in people and institutions, belief in free-market capitalism amounts to accepting that economic model as a suitable context for doing business. And subscribing to the principle that everything is subject to scientific explanation is equivalent to accepting that principle as a template for viewing the world generally.

Let us consider further the acceptance illustrated by the case of the mother rushing to the aid of her baby. One common Greek word for acceptance is *apodechomai*. Since the mother and her distressed child illustrate acceptance in its simplest form, we shall refer to this form as apodexic belief, or belief(a) for short.

The key components in this illustration are (i) the state of affairs (SOA) of the baby crying in his crib, and (ii) the mother accepting this SOA as an indication that her

child needs help. The mother's belief(a) consists in her accepting that SOA as being the case, which acceptance results in her rushing spontaneously to his side.

One might think initially that the mother's response is an inborn maternal reflex. Parents are genetically wired, as it were, to protect their offspring. There will be many occasions during its infancy, however, when the mother is unperturbed by the baby's crying. He often cries when his diapers need changing, or when he has gas on the stomach and needs burping. The focus of this illustration is not the mother's response, but rather her mental state preceding that response. The mother hears the baby crying, spontaneously comes to believe(a) that he might need help, and acts accordingly.

It also might be tempting to think of the mother's response as a result of operant conditioning. That is to say, one might think of it as a form of behavior the mother has learned from past occasions in which she has been rewarded for responding to the baby's crying. But the present case, we may assume, is one in which the mother has never received any particular reward for attending to her baby's needs. There is of course the indiscriminate reward of maternal satisfaction. But potential satisfaction of the mother is irrelevant to the example at hand. The main point of the example is not the cause of the her response, but rather the belief(a) that happens to provide its occasion.

Other commonplace examples of belief(a) are readily available. Think of the pedestrian traffic during rush hour at a busy city intersection. For the most part, people manage to walk briskly around each other with only occasional bumps and stumbles. An experienced city pedestrian can anticipate the path of a nearby person on the basis of that person's motion a moment earlier. In becoming aware of such previous motion, an alert walker enters into a state of belief(a). Without hesitation, and with no thought of the

circumstances, the alert pedestrian moves smoothly through the crowded intersection. If the pedestrian is preoccupied with a cell phone, on the other hand, he or she risks bumping into other people. Distractions like this prevent formation of the beliefs(a) that guide a person through a crowd without impediment.

Being subject to distractions like this, it is important to note, is not a failure of doxastic belief. When things proceed normally, the alert pedestrian has no time for thought of the sort that would generate belief(d). Distracted or not, propositional belief is incidental to a pedestrian's successful negotiation of a crowd. An undistracted pedestrian is enabled to move successfully through a crowd by a timely and apposite set of apodexic beliefs. The consequence of distraction, accordingly, is the absence of a coping set of beliefs(a), not the absence of any relevant belief(d).

There are common cases in which a specific belief(a) is initially engaged and subsequently withdrawn. Imagine walking up a mountain path at dusk into a clearing where unfamiliar forms and shapes are lurking. You are familiar with the area and know that bears are sometimes encountered there. As your eyes become accustomed to the twilight, you spot a bear-like shape and immediately freeze in place. In initially accepting the shape as that of a bear, you have entered into a state of belief(a).

Then observing that the shape remains motionless, you move cautiously to another vantage point. From that different angle you realize that the shape is that of a small hawthorn bush instead. This subsequent realization disengages your previous belief(a), meaning that you no longer accept the shape as that of a threatening bear. Further observation generates the verified belief(d) that the object indeed is a hawthorn bush, and that your first impression was just a misapprehension. Relegating the first

impression to the status of mere appearance, however, does not reverse the fact that you previously accepted it at face value. You initially accepted, as being the case, the state of affairs of a bear appearing nearby. This initial acceptance retains its status as a belief(a), regardless of its being subsequently withdrawn.

In the case of the bear-appearance, the presence of the deceptive state of affairs is accompanied by explicit acceptance. There are other cases of belief(a) in which neither the state of affairs nor its corresponding acceptance emerge explicitly within the subject's ongoing awareness. On a typical workday, for instance, I walk up a steel and concrete staircase to my office, implicitly accepting the structure as capable of bearing my weight. That is, I implicitly engage the belief(a) of accepting, as being the case, the state of affairs of the stairway being capable of supporting my weight. When I enter the office I unthinkingly sit down on my desk chair, implicitly accepting as being the case the state of affairs of the chair being structurally sound. When the phone rings a few minutes later, I implicitly accept as being the case that a message for me is forthcoming and automatically pick up the receiver.

Examples like these highlight the fact that countless implicit beliefs(a) are embodied in our daily experience. Accepting such states of affairs as being the case often amounts to little more than not consciously rejecting them.

(1.13) Believing In

The third kind of belief under consideration is designated by the gerund "believing in," alternatively by the abbreviated nominative "belief(n)." We should look at a few examples before attempting a general characterization. One set of examples has to do

with people believing in other people. With a few exceptions, I believe in the physicians I entrust with my health care. I also believe in my tax consultant, in the current mayor of my city, and in the candidate I am backing in the forthcoming election. Believing in these people goes beyond merely trusting them personally. I trust most of the people I encounter on a daily basis. But I maintain a special confidence in my personal physician and the other persons just mentioned. I accept these people as men and women I can rely on to support what I consider to be worthy causes and interests. Believing in these people amounts to accepting them as trustworthy in relevant respects.

Another set of examples has to do with believing in institutions. I believe in the overall integrity of the United Nations. I believe in the system of checks and balances instituted by the US Constitution. With qualification, I believe in the academic institutions at which I have studied, and in the general effectiveness of their educational policies. Belief in such institutions can wax and wane, and can vary significantly from person to person. I concur with a probable majority of retired academics, however, in retaining a diminished level of belief in our respective colleges and universities.

Other institutions in which many people believe include capitalism and socialism, democracy and constitutional monarchy. Institutions of yet other sorts from which examples can be drawn include the nuclear family, the free press, and the international banking system. To believe in democracy is to accept that form of government as trustworthy in meeting the needs of the people governed by it. To believe in the nuclear family is to accept that living arrangement as reliable in providing for the wellbeing of those engaged in it. And so forth and so on for the other institutions mentioned.

There is also the matter of believing in sources of information. Belief in newspapers, in broadcasting media, and in Internet websites all fit in this category. People of one political stripe tend to believe in the *New York Times* and in National Public Radio, for instance, while others reside confidence in the *Wall Street Journal* and in the Fox News Channel instead. As far as websites are concerned, even seasoned scholars now tend to agree that Wikipedia is a good place to begin when gathering specialized information.

Like both belief(d) and belief(a), as already noted, belief(n) is a form of acceptance. To believe in a given person, a given institution, or a given source of information, is to accept that particular person or thing as reliably capable of contributing to causes one supports or of meeting needs one recognizes. Belief(n) differs from belief(d), however, in not being directed toward propositions, and from belief(a) in not being directed toward SOAs.

Inasmuch as belief(n) is not directed toward propositions, it is neither true nor false. This does not prevent it from being right or wrong, correct or mistaken, nor appropriate or inappropriate. Various people might think that belief in the United Nations is wrong because that institution lacks adequate enforcement powers, that belief in capitalism is mistaken because it distributes wealth unfairly, or that belief in the nuclear family is inappropriate because it discriminates against gay people. And in each case, of course, other people might arrive at the opposite assessment. The point is not that belief(n) cannot be assessed, but rather that truth and falsehood are not available as terms of assessment.

There nonetheless are instances of belief(n) that depend for their correctness on how things stand in the world. While not true or false themselves, these beliefs(n) engage assumptions that certain beliefs(d) are true. Consider, for example, the question “Do you believe in ghosts?” Unlike queries regarding one’s belief in persons or institutions, this is not a question about confidence and trust. The matter in question is not one’s reliance on ghosts to perform this or that beneficial function. The matter at issue, rather, is whether one thinks that such entities exist. If one thinks that ghosts exist, the proper answer to the question is “Yes.” Otherwise, the answer is “No.” In the context of a normal conversation, asking whether someone believes in ghosts is tantamount to asking whether that person believes(d) that ghosts exist.

There is a rhetorical dimension to the question, however, that keeps belief in ghosts distinct from belief that ghosts exist. In many societies today, belief in ghosts is considered superstitious. In such contexts, the question whether one believes in ghosts might convey a threat of disapproval if answered affirmatively. The question whether one believes that ghosts exist, on the other hand, is more likely to come across as a request for one’s opinion on a debatable topic. If one is discussing the topic with a person from a culture espousing animism, for instance, asking whether this person believes that ghosts exist might seem less provocative than asking whether he or she believes in ghosts.

Interestingly enough, there is a similar question of believing(n) under discussion today where the rhetorical thrust works in the opposite direction. By way of context, interest has been growing recently within the scientific community in the question whether life exists on other planets. Authorities in relevant disciplines (astronomy, astrophysics, biology, etc.) are generally agreed on what the presence of extraterrestrial

life would amount to. There is a working agreement, that is to say, on what would count as the presence of life on a distant planet and on what would count as its being absent. These scientists know what they are looking for, and are in the process of trying to find it.

The question at issue is whether life exists on other planets. Those who support a positive answer believe(d) that it does, those who support a negative answer believe(d) that it doesn't. In either case, the belief(d) involved is either true or false. The rhetorical thrust in question takes effect on the level of believing(n). Among nonscientists generally, believing in extraterrestrial life often counts as a mark of solidarity with the scientific community, whereas not believing in such counts as a rejection of scientific authority. In neither case is the belief(n) involved true or false. Given the prestige of science in the civilized world today, however, belief in extraterrestrial life is likely to be viewed more favorably than its opposite. This imparts rhetorical heft to the positive belief(n) regarding the existence of extraterrestrial life.

(1.14) Sympheric Belief

As noted initially, the primary concern of this essay is the nature of religious belief. While typically incorporating belief(d), belief(a), and belief(n) as constituents, I want to argue, religious belief as such is a much more far-reaching form of acceptance. Belief(d) is acceptance of specific propositions as being true under specific circumstances, belief(a) is acceptance of certain states of affairs as being the case on particular occasions, and belief(n) is acceptance of particular persons or institutions as well-suited for serving particular interests that one backs personally. A mark of religious belief, on the other

hand, is the general overview it provides of the human condition that fosters the conduct of a meaningful human life.

Lacking a better label, let us refer to this more general form of acceptance as “sympheric belief,” or “belief(s)” for short. The term ‘sympheric’ here comes from the Greek *sumpherō*, meaning to bring together. English near-equivalents include ‘consolidating,’ “all-inclusive,” and “universal.”

Whereas belief(d) is directed toward propositions, belief(a) toward states of affairs, and belief(n) toward persons or institutions, belief(s) is directed primarily toward one of another comprehensive worldview. Christianity is an example. Belief(s) can also be directed toward specific components of a given worldview. Christ’s resurrection, for instance, is a component of Christianity. Because of this standing, Christ’s resurrection counts as an object of belief(s). Inasmuch as his resurrection has no standing apart from Christianity, however, it cannot serve independently as an object of another form of belief.

Believing(d) that the cat is on the mat is tantamount to accepting a proposition to that effect as true. Believing(a) the bear-appearance in the mountain glen is tantamount to accepting that appearance as a genuine state of affairs. And believing(n) the New York Times is tantamount to accepting that publication as a reliable source of information. Believing(s) Christianity, in turn, is tantamount to accepting that worldview as a guide for one’s journey through life. Derivatively, believing(s) Christ’s resurrection is tantamount to accepting that event as an integral component of a worldview that one accepts on a more general level.

Another worldview that people sometimes accept as an object of belief(s) is secular humanism. Before returning to Christianity for a more thorough consideration, let us explore the ins and outs of secular humanism in this regard.

(1.141) Secular Humanism

The qualifier ‘secular’ is important here, because there are religiously oriented forms of humanism as well. Like the term ‘religion’ itself, the meaning of ‘humanism’ has varied extensively with changes in social context. During its heyday in the Renaissance, humanism was generally considered to be an integral part of Christian culture. Two of its most prominent spokesmen during that period were closely associated with the Catholic Church. Francesco Petrarch, the renowned poet and scholar of the 14th century, was a minor cleric who spent most of his adult life in Church employment. And Desiderius Erasmus, sometimes called “the prince of the humanists,” was a priest who translated the Gospels into Latin from their original Greek.

Humanism did not take a distinctly secular turn until the Enlightenment of the 18th century, with its rejection of authority and its emphasis on the primacy of human reason. Freedom of choice and self-determination entered the mix in the first half of the 20th century, through the advocacy of French philosophers such as Jean-Paul Sartre, Albert Camus, and Simone de Beauvoir. Secular humanism took roots in the U.S. at about the same time with the first “Humanist Manifesto,” signed by various academicians and Unitarian ministers including John Dewey and Roy Wood Sellars. Among the articles of this document is a rejection of “any supernatural or cosmic guarantees of human values,”

and an assertion that “the end of man’s life” is “the complete realization of human personality.”

Adopting secular humanism as a worldview involves acceptance of various key tenets having to do with the purpose and the conduct of human life. In this context, the goal of an individual human life is the realization of that individual’s potentials as a human being. Among these potentials are freedom, autonomy, and reason, along with an altruistic care for other persons. The value placed on human life generally leads the secular humanist to embrace causes promoting “freedom, equality, and solidarity” of all people, reminiscent of the signature values of the French Revolution. No less important is the authority given to human reason, not only in the pursuit of altruistic goals but in the conduct of everyday human affairs. The worldview of secular humanism, in short, provides a comprehensive set of goals and values that purportedly enable its adherents to live a meaningful human life.

It is in this respect that secular humanism resembles Christianity, and like Christianity stands as an object of belief(s). While differing radically in content, both worldviews have the scope and intuitive appeal to transform the personal and the communal lives of individual people. There may be other worldviews that fit under this category as well. Marxism and existentialism are plausible candidates. The point of this comparison with secular humanism in particular is to show that religious belief is not sui generis. One can participate in this form of acceptance without engaging a worldview that is specifically religious.

(1.1411) Belief(n) and Belief(d) in Secular Humanism

Among the various kinds of belief(n) examined above, two stand out as particularly relevant to acceptance of secular humanism as a worldview. One is acceptance of institutions and information sources as worthy of trust, the other acceptance of certain things as actually existing. Previous examples of the former include belief in democracy as a form of government and belief in the *New York Times* as a source of information. Previously mentioned instances of the later include belief in ghosts and belief in life on other planets. Let us consider the roles played by these two kinds of belief(n) when one adopts the worldview of secular humanism.

Illustrations of the first appear in *Humanist Manifesto II* issued in 1973, with a statement that every human individual should be “a citizen of a world community.” This amounts to an affirmation of belief in an institution similar in purpose and scope to the present-day United Nations. The same document proclaims that “every individual must experience a full range of civil liberties in all societies,” which reads like an endorsement of belief in a political order of individualism (as opposed to political institutions such as collectivism, socialism, and tyranny). Along the same lines, *Humanist Manifesto III* of 2003 endorses the goal of working toward a society that “maximizes individual happiness, which also amounts to some form of institutionalized individualism.” *Manifesto III* also affirms that science is the best method of obtaining “knowledge about the world.” This is equivalent to endorsing belief in science as a predominant source of information.

Other passages in the 1973 version illustrate the sense of belief(n) pertaining to existence. At one point the authors write that they “believe in the right to universal

education,” spelled out as the right everyone has “to the cultural opportunity to fulfill his or her unique capacities and talents.” The point is that they believe this right exists.

Turning the existence-claim around, the authors elsewhere say that they “find insufficient evidence for belief in the existence of a supernatural [sic].” The supernatural, they go on to say, is “either meaningless or irrelevant to the question of survival and fulfillment of the human race.”

Doxastic belief is acceptance of a proposition as being true. Accepting secular humanism as a worldview engages a number of basic beliefs(d). One such is the belief(d) that all happenings in the world as it stands can eventually be explained by physical science. Physical science here includes physics, chemistry, and biology, along with biophysics, biochemistry, and so forth. This basic belief(d), accordingly, is one secular humanism shares with the ontological theories of physicalism and scientific materialism, both of which maintain that physical science can account for everything that exists.

Other basic principles of secular humanism affirm autonomy on the part of the human individual and altruism in the treatment of other people. These principles amount to beliefs(d) that human individuals are autonomous and that other people are to be treated altruistically.

There are other beliefs(d) of secular humanism that perhaps are less basic but that have far-reaching consequences for the conduct of human life.. According to the *Humanist Manifesto* of 1933, these include: (1) that humankind is part of nature and emerged through natural processes, (2) that mind-body dualism should be rejected, (3) that all human institutions exist for the fulfillment of human life, and (4) that our current society based on acquisition and profit has shown itself inadequate. Added in the 1973

version are beliefs(d) including: (5) that all moral values derive from human experience, (6) that discrimination based on race, religion, sex, age, or national origin should be eliminated, and (7) that birth control, divorce, and abortion should be generally available. The 2003 version returns to the foundational belief(d) (8) that human life is guided by reason, inspired by compassion, and informed by human experience.

(1.1412) Belief(a) in Secular Humanism: its “Horizon of Expectation”

Secular humanism, like other worldviews, has its own characteristic horizon of expectation. The concept “horizon of expectation” (translating the German *Erwartungshorizont*) comes from Hans Robert Jauss’ theory of literary reception, and pertains to the interpretive presumptions a reader brings to a literary work. Different cultural and symbolic conventions are brought to bear by readers of a given text during different cultural periods. This amounts to approaching the text with different horizons of expectation. Insofar as the concept applies to secular humanism, its horizon of expectation is set by the view that the world at large can be explained according to naturalistic principles. Other possible modes of explanation, so to speak, fall beyond its horizon of expectation.

The view that everything can be explained by naturalistic principles is a generic view that finds application in various specific circumstances. This view corresponds to a generalized version of apodictic belief to the effect that events in the world are naturalistic in character. Compare this general belief with my particular belief(a) that the stairway leading to my office will support my weight. This latter is a specific instance of my general expectation that physical structures I encounter on a daily basis will continue to

perform in a reliable manner. Let us refer to this general expectation as a “generic belief(a),” meaning the general acceptance of states of affairs of particular types that come into play under various specific circumstances. In the case of the secular humanist, the generic belief(a) that the world is naturalistic throughout corresponds to a prominent aspect of his or her horizon of expectation. For present purposes, talk of generic beliefs(a) and talk of horizons of expectation are interchangeable.

Broadly speaking, the secular humanist accepts as being the case only states of affairs that accord with the humanistic values of reason, freedom, and human autonomy. Acceptance of such states of affairs constitutes beliefs(a) that are characteristic of secular humanism. These beliefs(a) are part and parcel of secular humanism’s overall horizon of expectation.

Christianity has its own horizon of expectation, providing room for immaterial entities that the secular humanist explicitly rejects. Such entities include angels and devils, and the three Persons of the Trinity as well. We turn presently to assemble a detailed inventory of Christianity’s horizon of expectation.

(1.15) Key Expository Concepts

Let us review. Doxastic beliefs are directed toward propositions. Propositions stand as their objects. A proposition is a representation of a state of affairs (SOA) as being the case or as not being the case. Being the case is a status occupied by SOAs, and not being the case likewise. A proposition, accordingly, is a representation of a SOA as having a certain status. Thus to engage in belief(d) is to accept a certain proposition as being true,

which is to say accepting it as representing a SOA that has the status the proposition represents it as having.

Snow's being white provides a standard illustration. The proposition that snow is white represents the SOA of snow's being white as being the case. The proposition is true if snow's being white indeed is the case, and is false otherwise. In general, a proposition is true if and only if the SOA it represents has the status it is represented as having. A belief(d), in turn, has the same truth-value as the proposition toward which it is directed. Thus the proposition that snow is white is true if its propositional object is true. Put otherwise, acceptance of a given SOA as having a particular status is true if and only if the concerned SOA actually has that particular status.

Key concepts in the exposition covered by this brief review are those (1) of proposition, (2) of state of affairs (SOA), (3) of being (and not being) the case, and (4) of truth and falsehood.

The concepts of SOA and of being the case are implicated in belief(a) as well. To exercise apodexic belief that a bear is present on the mountainside is to accept a certain SOA as being the case. The object of a particular belief(a) is a SOA, and the belief(a) itself treats that SOA as being the case. In the examples of belief(a) given previously, including those of the crying child and the bear-appearance, no propositions are involved. In these examples, accordingly, belief(a) is unaccompanied by belief(d).

For the most part, belief(n) also is free from doxastic belief. Exceptions come with cases like belief in ghosts and in life on other planets. Belief in extraterrestrial life borders on belief(d) that life exists on other planets. In such cases, there is a sense in

which the belief(n) concerned is either true or false. But this does not infringe on the general distinction between belief(d) and belief(n).

Belief(s) is acceptance of a comprehensive worldview. As the foregoing discussion of secular humanism illustrates, belief(s) brings belief(d) to bear as well. In upshot, all four forms of belief currently under discussion have something to do with SOAs. Let us begin our discussion of expository concepts with a careful consideration of the concept of a SOA.

(1.151) States of Affairs (SOAs)

The concept of a SOA is far from pellucid, as are those of being and of not being the case. I shall attempt to elucidate the significance of these concepts as used in the present context. For the most part, this elucidation will follow the guidelines laid down in chapter 7 of my *Belief and Knowledge*.

There are numerous discussions of SOAs in current philosophic literature, including articles, PhD theses, edited collections, and full-length books. Most of these develop what might be called “theories” of SOAs, with little agreement emerging among them. Although most cite Wittgenstein’s *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, few consider this work to have been on the right track. In my view, however, the *Tractatus* comes closer to getting things right than do most recent accounts containing criticisms of it. This makes it a good place to start.

The *Tractatus* comprises seven primary propositions (Wittgenstein’s sense), each followed by a series of elucidations. Proposition [1] is: “The world (*Die Welt*) is all that is the case (*was die Fall ist*).” This is followed by elucidations [1.1] “The world is the

totality of facts (*Tatsachen*), not of Things (*Dinge*);” and [1.2] “the totality of facts determines what is the case, and also whatever is not the case.” SOAs enter with [2]: “What is the case—a fact—is the existence of states of affairs (*das Bestehen von Sachverhalten*).” Next come [2.01] “A state of affairs is a combination of objects (things) (*Gegenständen (Sachen, Dinge)*);” [2.02] “An object is simple;” and [2.03] “In a state of affairs objects fit into one another like links in a chain.” The sequence continues with [2.04] “The totality of existing states of affairs (*bestehenden Sachverhalte*) is the world;” and [2.06] “The existence and non-existence of states of affairs is reality (*die Wirklichkeit*).” The sequence concludes with [2.063]: “The sum-total of reality is the world.”

These propositions specify the nature of SOAs and explain how SOAs in combination constitute the world. Simple objects constitute the substance (*die Substanz*) of the world [2.021]. SOAs are composed of simple objects somehow linked to each other. SOAs either exist (are the case) or do not exist (are not the case). The world consists of all SOAs that are the case (the totality of facts). What is the case determines what is not the case ([1.2], [2.05]). Reality (the status, distinct from what occupies the status) comprises both being the case and not being the case. What is the case determines what occupies this status. What is the case thus determines “the sum-total of reality,” which by [2.063] is identical with the world. What constitutes the world, accordingly, is keyed to what is the case. Specifying what is the case is tantamount to specifying the make-up of the world. In briefest terms, “The world is all that is the case.”

In the *Tractatus*, as these passages make clear, SOAs are conceived in a manner that depends on a complex ontological theory. The same holds for SOAs in more recent

theories, such as those that treat SOAs as bearers of modalities (like necessity and possibility) and those that conceive them as constituents of possible worlds. For someone who does not subscribe to the relevant theories, conceptions of SOAs like these are of little practical use. For present purposes, we need a conception of SOA that is not beholden to any particular ontological view of the world. We need a conception of SOA that is ontologically neutral, one that applies regardless of how the world is conceived.

As understood for purposes of the present study, a SOA is an aspect of the world. Contrary to the view in the *Tractatus*, SOAs are not among the world's constituents. To hold that SOAs are constituents of the world is to maintain an ontological theory. And by intent, at least, the present conception of SOAs is ontologically neutral. The present account nonetheless assumes a viable distinction between the world as it is and the world as it might be. An actual SOA is an aspect of the world as it is, and a possible SOA is an aspect of the world as it might be. Aspects of the world as it is have the status of being the case; whereas SOAs are not the case if they are aspects of the world as it might be but not of the world as it is.

There is a familiar sense in which everything actual must also be possible. Inspired by Leibniz, one might say that the actual world is the best of all possible worlds. For present purposes, however, actual and possible SOAs do not overlap. Examples of actual SOAs include Rome's being south of Paris and Indiana's being adjacent to Michigan, along with the sun's being hot and the Earth's being roughly spherical. But there are possible SOAs beyond any that are actual. Examples of SOAs that are possible but not actual (as of late-2015) include Magic Johnson's being president of the U.S. and

Barack Obama's being a point guard in the NBA. Being possible, these latter two SOAs are aspects of the world as might be, but not aspects of the world as it is.

An actual SOA is one that is the case, a possible SOA one that is not the case. This exhausts the alternatives. All SOAs are either the case or not the case. There is no third available status. In particular, there is no such thing as an "impossible" SOA. As far as being the case is concerned, an actual SOA is one that might not have been the case (might have been merely possible) but as matters stand is the case instead.

(1.1511) Being and Not Being the Case

Synonyms for 'is the case' include 'is how things stand', 'is what obtains', and (with the *Tractatus*) simply 'exists' ('is existent'). Thus we might say "Things so stand that the earth is spherical," "It so obtains that the earth is spherical," or "What exists includes the earth's being spherical." Given the awkwardness of these alternatives, however, the locution "The earth's being spherical is the case" seems generally preferable. As far as not being the case is concerned, we might say "The earth's being ovoid is not how things stand," "The earth's being ovoid does not obtain," or "The earth's being ovoid is not an existent state of affairs." Again, however, the simplicity of "The earth's being ovoid is not the case" is normally preferable.

In *Tractatus* [1.1], as noted previously, the world is defined as the totality of facts. From its immediate context, it is obvious that the facts intended are states of affairs (in Wittgenstein's sense) that are the case. The seeming simplicity of the Tractarian treatment of facts, however, is compromised in proposition [2.06] with a distinction between positive and negative facts. In [2.06] the author says: "We also call the existence

of states of affairs a positive (*positive*) fact and their non-existence a negative fact (*negative Tatsache*).” Wittgenstein’s reason for introducing negative facts was to account for the sense of negative propositions. Since there are other ways of accounting for the sense of negative propositions (one of which is laid out in chapter 7 of *Belief and Knowledge*), however, we can break step with the *Tractatus* and restrict reference of the term ‘fact’ to SOAs that are actually the case. Later in this study, another common use of the term ‘fact’ will be acknowledged in which it refers to a true proposition. At that point we shall distinguish between facts(s) pertaining to SOAs and facts(p) pertaining to propositions.

Once again, SOAs are aspects of the world that either are or are not the case. As it stands, this characterization is compatible with there being a domain of impossible things, like three-dimensional lines and square circles. Not being aspects of the world as it is or might be, impossible things could not be SOAs. If such a domain is to be recognized as containing anything at all, what it contains neither is the case nor is not the case. The status of its contents is at best equivocal. Let us refer to this accordingly as the “equivocal domain.” Other potential members of this domain will be discussed momentarily.

An important question for present purposes concerns the difference between not being the case and being equivocal in status. Along with their actual counterparts, SOAs that are not the case are genuine SOAs. There are members of the equivocal domain, however, that may appear genuine at first but instead are imposters. For present purposes, it is important to maintain firm boundaries between the fake and the genuine.

The question is complicated by the diverse membership of the equivocal domain. On one hand are three-dimensional lines and square circles, which are unproblematically

described as impossible. The boundary between genuinely possible SOAs and impossibilities of this sort may be left to logic. On the other hand are ersatz SOAs whose equivocal status is due to circumstances of a quite different sort. A generic description of this second kind of imposter is that its anomalous character derives from an irregular use of language.

Let us consider a few examples of genuine SOAs in comparison with anomalies of this second sort. Consider first the SOA of the sun's being hot. This SOA is designated by the expression "the sun's being hot," along with other expressions with equivalent meaning. The fact that we are able to designate it in such an unequivocal manner indicates that the SOA in question is an unequivocal aspect of the world. Being an aspect of the world as it is, the sun's being hot is an actual SOA. Unequivocally possible SOAs, in turn, include the earth's being ovoid and Rome's being north of London. Now consider, on the other hand, the locution "mome raths outgrabe" (from Louis Carroll's *Jabberwocky*). It is evident that this locution is nonsensical. There is no recognizable aspect of the world as it is or might be to which this locution corresponds. The locution, so to say, lacks a discernible referent. The expressions "the sun's being hot" and "the earth's being ovoid" represent genuine SOAs, whereas the locution "mome raths outgrabe" does not.

Other expressions that represent genuine SOAs are "Indiana's being adjacent to Michigan" (actual) and "Hilary Clinton's being President of the USA" (possible but not actual). Other locutions without discernible referents are "nothing noths" (paraphrasing Heidegger) and "an irresistible force displacing an immovable object." Yet others will be added in due course.

Compiling these examples is the first step in our effort to establish a defensible distinction between genuine SOAs and linguistically generated imposters. Our next concern is to establish a criterion for distinguishing between the two.

(1.1512) Criteria for Individuating States of Affairs

To recognize that “the sun’s being hot’ picks out a genuine SOA, and that “mome raths outgrabe” does not, a person must have a certain degree of linguistic competence. He or she must be a competent member of a linguistic group within which there is general agreement about the status of these two expressions. Access to criteria used to distinguish the status of these two expressions goes along with competence in the relevant language. Although a competent member of the linguistic group may not be able to articulate these criteria explicitly, he or she learns to abide by them in learning to employ the terminology of the language concerned.

Membership in a group with shared linguistic resources is an important condition in the present account. Criteria of the sort in question are not available in what philosophers sometimes term a “private language.” A private language, in the relevant sense, is an artificial symbol-system (one not occurring naturally) devised for use in referring to contents of private experience (sensations, sense data, and the like). Since the referents of such symbols are private, the language itself cannot be used in communication with other people. The reason criteria of the relevant sort are not available in a private language is that these criteria are rooted in those aspects of a language that enable people to use it in communicating with one another.

Communicating in a shared language requires a shared understanding of what expressions in that language represent. This holds generally for expressions representing physical objects, abstract concepts, subjective experiences, and other entities about which a given group communicates. It holds in particular for expressions representing actual and possible SOAs. Communicating in terms of these expressions requires a shared understanding of what they represent, and this in turn requires a shared understanding of what constitutes the corresponding SOAs.

Understanding what constitutes a given SOA, furthermore, entails a shared understanding of how to determine the status of the SOA in question. With regard to an actual SOA, there must be a shared understanding of what constitutes its actual presence. Regarding a SOA that is possible but not actual, there must be a shared understanding of what would count as its being present should it actually occur. And understanding what counts as its being present carries with it an understanding of what counts as its not being present as well.

In the case of a given SOA, the criterion that marks its being the case is the shared understanding of the linguistic group of what counts as its being present. If circumstances obtain which the group understands as constituting its presence, the criterion is met; and if the criterion is met, the SOA in question is the case. If the criterion is not met, the SOA is not the case. The availability of such criteria is a necessary condition for the intelligible use by a linguistic group of expressions purporting to represent genuine SOAs.

Circumstances that constitute the actual presence of a given SOA evolve with the development of language's capacity to represent them. Neither has developmental priority over the other. On one hand, reality is not cut up into distinct SOAs until means

are developed for their communal representation. Put more traditionally, SOAs lack individual identity prior to being individuated with respect to linguistic expressions representing them. When translated from one language to another, presumably, such expressions might carry “previously individuated” SOAs with them (enabling “snow is white” and “la neige est blanche,” for example, to represent the same SOA). But reality is not divided into distinct SOAs prior to the formulation of communal means to represent them.

On the other hand, expressions purporting to represent SOAs function as actual representations only when there are distinct aspects of reality for them to represent. Actual representation requires the concomitant availability of a corresponding SOA. This adds up to a pair of necessary conditions: no representation unless there is something to represent, and nothing to represent unless there are means of representing it.

Although this pair of conditions may at first seem tautological, it rules out an eventuality that otherwise would have adverse consequences. Namely, it rules out using an expression in a seemingly representational role as a means of *generating* (bringing into being) a SOA for the expression to represent. Thus articulating the expression “nothing noths” in an affirmative manner does not produce a SOA consisting of (sic) no thing’s noth-ing, nor does affirming “mome raths outgrabe” produce a SOA somehow corresponding to that nonsensical expression. Stating that something was created from nothing does not generate a SOA amounting to something’s being created from nothing. And claiming that the whole world is an illusion does not bring into being a SOA by which the accuracy of that claim can be determined. The constitution of SOAs proceeds

hand-in-hand with the development of language capable of representing them, entailing that neither can result from the prior occurrence of the other.

The question that led to this discussion is how to identify purported representations of aspects of reality that correspond to genuine SOAs. An answer to this question is now at hand. “The earth’s being spherical,” “the earth’s being ovoid,” “the sun’s being hot,” and “snow’s being purple” represent genuine SOAs because there is a shared understanding of the circumstances that would constitute the actual occurrence of the SOAs they represent. “Nothing noths” and “something’s being created from nothing,” on the other hand, fail to represent genuine SOAs, due to the lack of a shared understanding of what would constitute their actual occurrence.

A world in which the earth’s being spherical is the case is different from a world in which this SOA is not the case. Similarly, a world in which the sun’s being hot is the case is different from a world in which this is not the case; and so forth for the other examples we have been considering. A common understanding of what the difference between being the case and not being the case amounts to is the hallmark of a representation that picks out a genuine SOA.

Let us summarize. SOAs correspond to expressions in natural language that serve to represent them. Natural language is a means by which members of linguistic groups communicate internally with each other. To communicate effectively about SOAs, members of a linguistic group must have a shared understanding of what counts (or would count) as the actual presence of these SOAs in the world as it is, or as their possible presence in the world as it might be. This shared understanding serves as the criterion that determines whether a given SOA is or is not the case.

A group's shared understanding of what the world would be like if a given SOA is the case also serves as a criterion of whether or not a putative representation picks out a genuine SOA. The mark of a genuine SOA is a language group's agreement regarding what the world would be like if the SOA in question in fact were the case. A putative SOA is genuine if and only if there is a shared understanding of the circumstance under which it is or is not the case.

Returning to our illustrative examples, we note that "the sun's being hot" and "the sun's being cold" both correspond to genuine SOAs because there is a shared understanding of what constitutes the occurrence and the nonoccurrence of the SOAs in question. "Mome raths outgrabe" and "something was created from nothing," on the other hand, do not correspond to genuine SOAs because there is no shared understanding of circumstances that would constitute the existence or nonexistence of their putative referents.

(1.152) Propositions and Propositional truth

As conceived for present purposes, a proposition consists of a representation of a SOA accompanied by a status-ascription. By way of illustration, consider the proposition that the sun is hot. This proposition can be rendered in many different forms, including the English sentence "the sun is hot," the French sentence "le soleil est chaud," the German sentence "die Sonne ist heiss," and so forth. In the English rendition, the sentence "the sun is hot" both (1) represents the SOA of the sun's being hot (reading 'is' as predicative) and (2) assigns the status of being the case to that SOA (reading 'is' as existential). An English version that makes this more explicit is "the sun's being hot is the case."

It will be helpful to have a standard format for discussing propositions that makes these two components explicit. The format we shall adopt is ‘[.../___]’, in which ‘...’ is replaced by a representation of a SOA and ‘___’ is replaced by a status-ascription. Thus [the sun’s being hot/is the case] is the proposition that the sun is hot. More accurately, that formulation is a *token-instance* of the proposition-type that the sun is hot. We turn momentarily to the distinction between proposition-tokens and proposition-types. Other propositions in this format are [snow’s being white/is the case] and [the earth’s being spherical/is the case], both of which are true, and [snow’s not being white/is the case] and [the earth’s being spherical/is not the case], both of which are false.

This format does not require that SOAs be represented by expressions in natural language. The SOA of the sun’s being hot could be represented by a stylized drawing of a circular object emitting heat waves, which commonly would be recognized as a picture of the intensely hot sun. If such a drawing were inserted in the first blank of the format ‘[.../___]’, with a status-ascription following, the result would be a token-instance of the proposition that the sun is hot. Spatial proximity of representation and status-ascription is standard but not necessary. The format can be generalized to accommodate nonspatial mental representation as well. Since we entertain thoughts about such matters, there must be some neurological means of directing attention specifically to the SOA of the sun’s being hot. Accompanied by a status-ascription of similar kind, a mental representation of that SOA would constitute another token-instance of the proposition in question.

The format can be further generalized in a manner allowing discussion of propositions without recourse to particular examples. Let us adopt ‘[X/yes (no)]’ for that purpose, understanding ‘X’ as a variable ranging over representations of SOAs and ‘yes’

(or ‘no’) as short for ‘is the case’ (or ‘is not the case’). Thus the token-proposition [snow’s being white/is the case] results from [X/yes] with substitution of ‘snow’s being white’ for ‘X’ and replacement of ‘yes’ by ‘is the case’. And [snow’s being purple/is not the case] results from [X/no] with the substitution of ‘snow’s being purple’ for ‘X’ and replacement of ‘no’ by ‘is not the case’.

A generalized explication of conditions under which propositions in this format are true and false follows (employing ‘iff’ as short for the biconditional ‘if and only if’):

[X/yes] is true iff X is the case, and false otherwise

[X/no] is true iff X is not the case, and false otherwise.

This set of biconditional statements constitutes a definition of propositional truth (and falsehood) in terms of being (and not being) the case. The definition is not tautological because being true is an attribute of propositions, and hence distinct from being the case which is an attribute of SOAs. It bears an obvious resemblance to Aristotle’s definition in *Metaphysics* 1011b26-27, which reads: “To say of what is that it is not, or of what is not that it is, is false, whereas to say of what is that it is, and of what is not that it is not, is true.”

The biconditionals above define propositional truth by stating the conditions under which propositions are true or false. These are known as the “truth-conditions” of the propositions involved. The truth-condition of [the sun’s being hot/yes] is its being the case that the sun is hot. But this is also the truth-condition of [le soleil étant chaud/oui] and of [die Sonne ist heiss/ja], along with equivalent propositions in other languages. Indeed, these several propositions are equivalent *because* they share the same truth-condition. Regarding truth-conditions alone, the various propositions are

indistinguishable from each other. As philosophers of language like to put it, these various propositions are all tokens of the same proposition-type.

To provide a convenient notation for the type corresponding to a given proposition-token, we shall prefix an asterisk to the standard notation for that token. An example is:

*[the sun's being hot/yes].

Since all token-propositions with the same truth-condition are tokens of the same type, it is indifferent which token-notations among them are used to form a notation for that type.

Type-notations equivalent to that above, accordingly, include:

*[le soleil étant chaud/oui],

*[die Sonne ist heiss/ja], and so forth.

In general, *[X/yes(no)] is the proposition-type corresponding to a given token-proposition in the format [X/yes(no)]. The same proposition-type corresponds in like fashion to all other token-propositions with the same truth-condition as the given token. The proposition-type receives its identity from the truth-condition shared by all its token instances.

Just as a class (e.g., of vertebrates) receives its identity from the property shared by all its members (having a spinal column), so too *[the sun's being hot/yes] is identified by the truth-condition its tokens share in common. Like classes of natural objects, moreover, proposition-types themselves are not characterized by the features that identify their membership. The class of vertebrates itself does not possess a spinal column, and the proposition-type *[the sun's being hot/yes] does not possess a truth-value. Nonetheless, it is often convenient to say things like “the vertebrate possesses a

spinal column,” understanding ‘the vertebrate’ as referring to the class of vertebrates.

Similarly, occasions might arise on which we say things suggesting that proposition-types have truth-values (e.g., “it is true that self-reference is paradoxical”).

Attributing property P to the class of things with property P can be made intelligible by a version of what Gregory Vlastos called “Pauline predication” (“A Note on ‘Pauline Predications’ in Plato,” *Phronesis* 19, 2 (1974)). Whereas Pauline predication originally applied to Platonic Forms, the present version applies to classes. According to the present version, to say that the vertebrate possesses a spinal column is understood to mean that all members of the class of vertebrates have spinal cords. Thus understood, the attribution is true. Similarly, to say that the proposition-type *[X/yes]no] is true (false) is understood as meaning that all tokens of that type are true (false). Thus the assertion that self-reference is paradoxical should be understood as attributing the character of being paradoxical to all self-referential statements.

Thus understood, *[X/yes(no)] is true if and only if X is (is not) the case, and otherwise is false.

(1.1521) Tensed Propositions

The English sentence ‘the sun is hot’ expresses the untensed (timeless present) proposition that the sun is hot. In the previous section, that proposition was rendered in standard form by distinguishing two roles played by the verb ‘is’ in the English sentence. There is (1) the predicative use of ‘is’ functioning as a gerund in ‘the sun’s being hot’, and (2) the existential use of ‘is’ in the status-ascription ‘is the case’. These two uses of ‘is’ are explicit in the standard-form proposition [the sun’s being hot/is the case].

A similar analysis fits tensed propositions about current weather conditions. The English sentence ‘snow is currently falling outside’ yields the gerund ‘falling’ and the existential ‘is’ to form [snow’s currently falling outside/is the case]. In like fashion, the sentence ‘ice is currently forming on the windows’ provides the ingredients of [ice’s currently forming on the windows/is the case]. Analysis of other propositions in the present tense follows suit. Thus ‘Tom is hungry’ yields [Tom’s being hungry/is the case], ‘my car is in the garage’ yields [my car’s being in the garage/is the case], ‘clouds are forming on the horizon’ yields [cloud’s forming on the horizon/is the case], and so forth.

The proper conversion of propositions in past and future tenses into standard form is less obvious. Consider the sentence ‘heavy rain fell here yesterday’. A proposition contains two components, a representation of a SOA and a status-ascription. The question to be faced is which of the two components should contain the tense indicator. Should ‘yesterday’ (or its equivalent) be made part of the status-ascription, in effect reshaping the original sentence to read ‘heavy rain’s falling| was the case yesterday’? Or should the original be paraphrased as ‘heavy rain’s falling here yesterday| is the case’?

Consider in turn the sentence ‘the sun will shine here tomorrow’. To arrive at an expression in standard propositionial form, should this be paraphrased as ‘the sun’s shining| will be the case tomorrow’, or as ‘the sun’s shining here tomorrow| is the case’? Both formulaions make sense grammatically, and both are fully intelligible. If either is preferable to the other, it is for reasons other than style of composition.

A relevant consequence of assigning the tense indicator to the status-ascription is that there would be no limit to the number of different status-ascriptions required to express the propositions of a given natural language. A decisive advantage of confining

tense indicators to the representational component of the proposition, on the other hand, is that just two status-ascriptions are needed as a result. With the latter, we can retain our definitions of an actual SOA as an aspect of the world as it is, and of a possible SOA as an aspect of the world as it might be. Thinking of an actual SOA as one that is the case, we can retain the Tractarian-inspired conception of the world as the totality of what is the case. Possible SOAs can still be conceived as SOAs that are not the case, but that might be the case if the world were otherwise. No less importantly, we can continue to work with the standard propositional format that provides only two statuses for SOAs to occupy, those of being the case and of not being the case.

The proposition-type *[heavy rains falling here yesterday/is the case] is true iff the world is such that heavy rains fell here yesterday. The proposition-type *[the sun's shining here tomorrow/is the case] is true iff the world is such that heavy rains will fall here tomorrow. So forth and so on for other propositions regarding the past and the future. As with propositions regarding the present, the truth of propositions regarding past and future depends on what is the case in the world as it is.

Regarding the status of past SOA, the condition of the world as it is never changes. The past becomes fixed when it changes to present. Regarding the status of future SOAs, on the other hand, the world as it is remains fluid. Laws of nature might associate future events with past events in some kind of invariable regularity. But whether those laws will hold in a given case cannot be determined in advance. There is no natural law that laws of nature hold invariable over time.

To be sure, there are metaphysical theories according to which everything that happens in the future is determined by what happened in the past. But these theories

themselves do not determine what actually happens. Theories are beholden to actual facts for their abstract plausibility, but facts are not beholden to theories for their actual occurrence.

Perhaps inspired by Aristotle's *De Interpretatione* 18b9-25, someone might mount an argument for determinism on the claim that either the sun will shine here tomorrow or the sun will not shine here tomorrow. The argument requires the proposition (p) that the sun will shine here tomorrow, its negation (-p) that the sun will not shine here tomorrow, and the law of excluded middle. Both p and -p are proposed (asserted) today at time t. According to the law of excluded middle, either p is true or -p is true. If p is true, it is the case at t that the sun will shine the next day. If -p is true, it is the case at t that the sun will not shine tomorrow. Either way, what happens tomorrow is already determined today. Since the argument can be repeated for any SOA and any time t, everything that is the case has been determined previously.

The same argument can be formulated in terms of propositions with temporally indexed status-ascriptions. Proposition p is [the sun's shining here/will be the case tomorrow at t_i], with -p rendered [the sun's shining here/will not be the case tomorrow at t_i]. Since either the initial proposition or its negation is true, what is the case at time t_i is predetermined at time t.

When temporal indices are confined to representations of SOAs, however, the argument is forestalled from the beginning. If the initial proposition is [the sun's shining here at t_i /is the case], its negation is [the sun's shining here at t_i /is not the case]. Insofar as the status of the future is fluid, however, neither the initial proposition nor its negation is true at time t. The law of the excluded middle is an abstract principle of logic that holds

for propositions without temporal indices. It holds, that is to say, for propositions whose truth-values do not depend on when they are asserted.

The world at present time t is such that either the sun shines tomorrow at time t_i or it does not. This much is tautologous. But the world at t is not such that what happens tomorrow at t_i is predetermined. What will happen at t_i is logically independent of what has already happened by t . In this respect, *Tractatus* [2.061] is correct: “States of affairs are independent of one another.”

(1.153) Facts(s) and Facts(p)

Propositional truth has been defined as follows:

[X/yes] is true iff X is the case, and false otherwise

[X/no] is true iff X is not the case, and false otherwise.

In these formulae, ‘X’ stands for SOAs, ‘yes’ for being the case, and ‘no’ for not being the case. For example, [the sun’s being hot/is the case] is true if and only if the sun’s being hot is the case. These formulae constitute a definition of being true in terms of being the case. Since being the case is an attribute of SOAs and being true an attribute of propositions, the definition is neither tautologous nor circular.

A definition to the same effect can be formulated in terms of facts. The term ‘fact’ carries two meanings in ordinary English. One is that of a true proposition. For an illustration, take the generally accepted fact that all mammals are vertebrates. In standard notation, what is generally accepted is that *[all mammal’s being vertebrates/is the case] is true. When a child is instructed by a parent to “tell all the facts” about a problematic

episode, the child is expected to respond in a series of true propositions. Let us refer to facts in the sense of propositional truths as ‘facts(p)’.

Facts in this sense are logically related in that some entail or are entailed by others. The fact(p) of *[some mammal’s being vertebrates/is the case] being true is entailed by the fact(p) of *[all mammal’s being vertebrates/is the case] being true, which in turn entails the fact(p) of *[all non-vertebrates’ being non-mammals/is the case] being true. It is the case, moreover, that all facts(p) are mutually consistent. By definition, all facts(p) are true propositions, and all true propositions are consistent with each other. It also is that case that facts(p) cannot be related by inconsistency, inasmuch as inconsistent propositions cannot be true simultaneously.

The other sense of ‘fact’ is that of an actual SOA. This is the sense employed in *Tractatus* [4.016], where Wittgenstein speaks of “hieroglyphic script, which depicts the facts that it describes.” Such a fact is a SOA that actually exists, or is the case. To “face the facts” in this sense is to face what actually happened, which is not at all the same as facing true propositions (whatever that means). An existing SOA will be designated a ‘fact(s)’.

Unlike facts(p), which admit consistency and entailment, facts(s) are logically unrelated to each other. This is because SOAs are neither true nor false, being either the case or not the case instead. The world is such, to be sure, that whenever it is the case that all mammals are vertebrates then some mammal’s being vertebrates is the case as well. But this is due to how things stand in the world, and has nothing directly to do with entailment. Similarly, all facts(s) in the world at a given moment exist simultaneously, but this has nothing directly to do with consistency.

Facts(s) are SOAs that are the case, in contrast with facts(p) which are true propositions. This enables fact(p) to be defined in terms of fact(s), without tautology or circularity:

[X/yes] is a fact(p) iff X is a fact(s).

For example, [all mammal's being vertebrates/is the case] is a fact(p) iff it is a fact(s) that all mammal's being vertebrates is the case. Since a fact(p) is a true proposition, this formula constitutes a definition of propositional truth.

(1.154) Other Senses of Truth

The term 'truth' carries meanings in English beyond that involved in propositional truth. A meaning closely related to the truth of propositions is that in the designation 'truth-value'. Propositional logic is a branch of logic in which propositions admit just two truth-values, namely true and false. Thus falsehood is a truth-value. In effect, the designation 'truth-value' means value regarding truth and falsehood.

There are other uses of the term, outside of logic, in which truth is conflated with being the case. We say of a character like Sherlock Holmes that "he finally discovered the truth of the matter." What Holmes discovered is not a set of true propositions, but rather the facts(s) that resolve his case. For another example, we in the academic say things like "scholarship is dedicated to a search for the truth." Although we occasionally might issue publications containing a few facts(p), the intended sense is that scholarship is dedicated to finding how things stand in the world. Like Sherlock Holmes, serious scholars are (or should be) devoted to the discovery of specific facts(s).

There is another domain of human interest in which reference of the term ‘truth’ is directed away from the specific toward the transcendent. Plato was probably the first on record to associate the Good with the True and the Beautiful (*Republic* 508E1-5). Although Plato did not refer to these Forms explicitly as transcendent, he clearly considered them to be accessible only by intellect or mind. In his view, the Good is the cause (*aitian*, 508E3) of the True and the Beautiful, while the True is the cause of everything true in the world. Following Plato, the theme of the Good, the True, and the Beautiful has played a prominent role in Western thought up to the present.

Musings on truth in the public arena generally concern truth in the abstract rather than particular truths. Thus the remark by Johnathan Swift: “Falsehood flies, and truth comes limping after it.” Thus the wisdom of Albert Einstein: “Whoever is careless with the truth in small matters cannot be trusted in important matters.” Thus the affirmation of Mohatma Gandhi: “I believe in the fundamental truths of all great religions of the world.”

Thus also: “You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free” (Jesus in *John* 8:32). Thus also: “I am the way, the truth, and the life” (Jesus in *John* 14: 6). Thus again the challenge to Jesus by Pontius Pilate: “What is truth?” (*John* 18:38). None of these remarks, from Johnathan Swift to Pontius Pilate, can be parsed in terms of facts(s) or facts(p) without loss of meaning.

(2) Religious Belief

Plato’s *Statesman* is an exercise in philosophic definition. Its method calls for a paradigm with which the art of statecraft can be compared. The paradigm chosen is the art of weaving. Weaving and statesmanship are comparable in that both are arts of combination. The weaver combines warp and woof, whereas the statesman combines courageous

(aggressive) and well-behaved (peaceful) citizens. By defining weaving first, the discussion leader acquires guidelines for the definition of statecraft that follows. Use of weaving as a paradigm in the definition of statecraft provides a paradigm in turn for the use of paradigms in philosophic definition generally.

There is one respect in which Plato's *Statesman* provides a paradigm for use in the present study. The previous discussion of secular humanism serves as a model to follow in the ensuing discussion of Christianity as a religious worldview. Like acceptance of humanism as a secular worldview, acceptance of Christianity is an exercise of symphoric belief (belief(s)). Acceptance of Christianity, furthermore, is like acceptance of secular humanism in its incorporation of the other kinds of belief distinguished previously. We turn in the next section to its incorporation of apodexic belief (belief(a)). Discussions of belief(d) and belief(n) as they pertain to the acceptance of Christianity follow in due course.

Comparison with the *Statesman* is also instructive in underscoring its differences from the present study. The purpose of the present study, to repeat, is to gain clarity on the nature of religious belief. One difference from the *Statesman* is that the desired clarity would not result from a definition. Even if a suitable definition were forthcoming, itself unlikely, it would do little to illuminate the role of religious belief in the life of an individual believer. The clarity regarding religious belief at which the present study aims requires a focus on individual human lives rather than on abstract philosophic definitions.

A second major point of difference has to do with the fixed nature of Plato's Forms. In Plato's way of thinking, the Form of Statesmanship has a nature that is invariant over time. Like Platonic Forms generally, it retains the same character under

varying conditions. In the case of religious belief, however, its character varies with changing social and cultural circumstances. To the extent that religious belief has a nature at all, this nature itself is subject to change with changes in human circumstances over time. Thus religious belief in the time of Moses varied substantially from contemporary Jewish belief (the latter, for example, does not call for blood sacrifice). And Christian belief in the early churches of Jerusalem and Antioch varied significantly from the belief of contemporary Christians (the former was not influenced by centuries of tradition).

The central theme of the study from this point forward is that Christian belief on the part of an individual person consists in the merger of that person's life-story with the Christian narrative. Another way of putting it is that Christian belief consists in the incorporation of the Christian narrative within an individual person's life-story. In subsequent sections of the study I shall attempt to elucidate both the nature of an individual life-story and the contents of the Christian narrative itself. In the second major section now underway, we consider ways in which acceptance of the Christian worldview (that particular belief(s)) implicates beliefs(a), beliefs(d), and beliefs(n).

(2.1) Belief(a): Horizons of Expectation in Religious Belief

Every system of religious belief has a characteristic horizon of expectation. As introduced previously, an horizon of expectation is equivalent to a generic belief(a), which in turn is a generalization of proclivities and suppositions characteristic of particular instances of belief(a). The horizon of expectation of secular humanism, as characterized above, incorporates the view that the world at large can be explained

according to naturalistic principles. Supernatural occurrences are excluded from the secular humanist's horizon of expected events.

The horizon of expectation associated with a typical religious belief-system, by contrast, will make room expressly for supernatural occurrences. For the religious believer, there is more to the world at large than the world of nature. How much more depends on the particulars of one's belief. But most of the world's major religions (Confucianism notably excluded) are premised on the existence of a supernatural God. Acceptance of God is the central pillar of most religious belief-systems. And acceptance of God is a viable option only in belief-systems admitting things that exist beyond the realm of nature.

Although a horizon of expectation admitting supernatural entities of some sort is essential for most religious belief-systems, the particular entities in question depend on the religion involved. Islam, Judaism, and Christianity alike admit the existence of a creator God. But there is considerable disagreement among these world religions regarding other inhabitants of the supernatural realm. Among the three, Islam is most distinctive in this regard. In addition to Allah, Islam maintains the existence of both Jinn and angels. Jinn (singular jinni, or genie) are fire-like creatures that can interact physically with humans. Like humans, they have free will and thus are capable of both good and evil. Angels rank higher than Jinn among Allah's creatures and lack ability to act contrary to his bidding. In Islam, accordingly, there is no such thing as a fallen angel. The closest equivalent to Satan in Islam is Iblīs, a jinni who refused to prostrate himself before Adam out of pride. Among the few angels mentioned in the Quran, two share names with the archangels Gabriel and Michael of Judaism and Christianity.

(2.111) Angels in the OT

Angels figure prominently in the narrative of the Old Testament (OT). In the Septuagint OT, the term *angelos* carries a range of meanings that vary with circumstance of use. One meaning goes into English as “messenger,” in the sense of envoy or courier. This is also the standard meaning of the term outside of a religious context. A passage in the Septuagint where it carries this standard meaning is *2 Samuel* 11:22-23, which refers to the messenger (*angelos*) that brought word from Joab to David that Uriah (husband of Bathsheba) was dead. Another is *2 Kings* 10:8, which tells of the messenger (*angelos*) who informed Jehu of the arrival at his gate of the heads of Ahab’s 70 sons who had been executed as Jehu ordered. These *angeloi* are ordinary people with nothing supernatural about them.

Yet another such passage is *Haggai* 1:13. The short book of *Haggai* consists mainly of the Lord’s discourse about rebuilding the temple, channeled through the prophet Haggai. In verse 1:13, Haggai refers to himself explicitly as “the messenger of the Lord” (*ho angelos kuriou*). This is one of the few times a human *angelos* is mentioned by name in the OT. Another is at *Malachi* 2:4-7, where the Lord alludes to his covenant with Levi and refers to Levi as “the messenger of the Lord of hosts” (*angelos kuriou pantokratoros*). As before, however, the messengers in question are not supernatural beings. Apart from being messengers of the Lord, Haggai and Levi were as human as those to whom their messages were delivered.

In most other OT references to “the angel of the Lord” (*ho angelos kuriou*) or “the angel of God” (*ho angelos tou theou*), the messenger in question is clearly endowed with

supernatural characteristics. Yet even here there are differences among these characteristics. In some cases, the messenger conveys a dispatch from God in much the manner that a human counterpart conveys a message from a human sender. The job of the messenger is only to serve as a channel of communication, having nothing to do with the implementation of the message. An example appears in chapter 22 of *Genesis*, which tells of Abraham's preparation to sacrifice his only son on the altar as God had commanded. At the crucial moment an "angel of the Lord" (*angelos kuriou*, 22:11) spoke to Abraham from heaven, telling him to leave Isaac unharmed. Convinced that Abraham fears the Lord, God then has the "angel of the Lord" (*angelos kuriou*, 22:15) call to Abraham a second time to inform him that his descendants (through Isaac) would number "as the stars of heaven" (*ōs tous asteras tou ouranou*, 22:17).

There are other cases, however, in which the angel is more than a messenger, instead serving as an instrument of God's will. As recorded in chapter 24 of *2 Samuel*, for instance, the Lord was angry with David and his people, and has David choose among three forms of punishment. David chose what he sees as the least of the three evils, which was three days of pestilence in the land of Israel. After 70,000 men had died in the pestilence, "the angel of the Lord" (*ho angelos kuriou*, 24:16) was about to destroy Jerusalem. But then the Lord relented and instructed the angel to withhold further damage. When David saw "the angel who was striking the people" (*ton angelon tuptonta en tō laō*, 24:17), he confessed to the Lord that he had sinned and set about building an altar to make amends. The angel here is more than the voice of God, being instead a means to implement God's vengeance.

There are even cases where the angel of the Lord seems so powerful that he is hard to distinguish from the Lord himself. Consider the well-known story of Moses and the burning bush. While Moses was tending sheep in the wilderness, the “angel of the Lord” (*angelos kuriou, Exodus 3:2*) appeared to him as a flame in the midst of a bush that was burning without being consumed. Once Moses’ attention had been engaged, however, the voice that spoke to him from the bush was that of God himself. God called Moses by name from out of the bush and told him to remove his shoes, for he was standing “on holy ground” (*gē hagia, 3:5*). Then the voice from the bush said: “I am the God of your father” (*egō eimi ho theos tou patros sou, 3:6*), the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. When Moses asks God his name, God answered “I Am Who I Am” (*egō eimi ho ōn, 3:14*). It is as though God addressed Moses first through an intermediary, but soon shifted into dialogue on a first-name basis.

The passages cited above all speak of the Lord’s angel in singular voice. There are a few passages in which the plural *angeloi* is used instead. Most specific in this regard is *Genesis 28:12*, which recounts Jacob’s dream of “the angels of God” (*hoi angeloi tou theou*) who were going up and down the ladder that reached to heaven. Another case is *Psalms 91:11*, which celebrates the Lord’s promise to those who take refuge in him, namely that he will command his angels (*angelois*) “to guard you in all your ways” (*en pasais tais hodois sou*). There is also a vague reference at *Genesis 19:1* to “the two angels” (*hoi dou angeloi*) who came to Lot, advising him to flee Sodom before it was destroyed by fire and brimstone. Most other uses of plural *angeloi* in the OT refer to a plurality of human messengers.

In some sense higher than the angels, cherubim and seraphim are celestial attendants (as distinct from messengers) of God. Cherubim are first mentioned in *Genesis* 3:24 as being charged by God with preventing Adam and Eve from reentering the Garden of Eden. *Psalms* 18:10-11 portrays God as descending from heaven astride a cherub, flying “swiftly on the wings of the wind” (*epetasthē epi pterugōn anemōn*). According to *Ezekiel* 10:21, cherubim have four wings along with four faces and four hands under the wings. Verse 10:2 of *Ezekiel* tells of the whirling wheels beneath the cherubim (actually wheels within wheels, so described in verse 10:10).

Seraphim, on the other hand, are unaccompanied by whirling wheels, but have six wings and are more immediately present to the Lord. As portrayed in *Isaiah* 6:2, each seraph has two wings covering his face, two covering his feet, and two used for flying. In *Isaiah*’s vision, the seraphim stood above the throne of the Lord, but one flew down to touch *Isaiah*’s lips with a burning coal, thereby cleansing his sins. In the estimation of some theologians, additional wings and closer proximity to the throne earn seraphim a higher ranking than cherubim in the hierarchy of supernatural beings.

(2.112) Other Spiritual Beings in the OT: Spirits

The term *pneuma* (spirit) is commonly used in the OT to designate supernatural beings of a sort quite different from angels. Within the general class of spirits, moreover, there are various subclasses of spiritual powers. There are the *pneumata* that bring life to animate beings, the *pneumata* of individuals that endure after death, and certain *pneumata* engaged to do the will of the Lord. There are other uses of the term *pneuma*, however,

that have nothing to do with the supernatural. Let us survey the various senses of *pneuma* that figure in the OT.

One common meaning is that of breath, the aspiration that sustains life in living creatures. This is the sense of *pneuma* at *Genesis* 6:17 and 7:15. At *Genesis* 6:17, an irate God informs Noah of his intent to flood the earth and to destroy all flesh containing the “breath of life” (*pneuma zōēs*). As the story of the flood develops, of course, we learn at 7:15ff. that Noah was saved by the ark, along with his entourage of paired creatures representing every kind (birds, beasts, reptiles) in which the “breath of life” (*pneuma zōēs*, 7:15) was present. The standard translation of *psuchēn zōsan* at *Genesis* 2:7, incidentally, is also “breath of life.” *Genesis* 2:7 tells how the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground and imparted life by breathing into his nostrils. Use of *psuchen zōēs* in this passage is foreshadowed by use of the same expression at *Genesis* 1:30, where it also is commonly translated “breath of life.” This latter is the passage in which God is credited with providing food for birds, beasts, reptiles, and everything endowed with *psuchen zōēs*. When these passages are read together, it becomes clear that the *pneuma* of life at 6:17 and 7:15 is the same as the *psuchen* of life at 1:30 and 2:7. The *pneuma* in these passages, that is to say, is not just biological aspiration but rather the God-given principle bringing life to living creatures.

The term *pneuma* also conveys the sense of breath at *Genesis* 1:2, its first occurrence in the OT. In the beginning, when darkness was over the face of the deep, the “spirit of God” (*pneuma theon*) was hovering (*epephereto*) over the face of the waters. There is no reason to think that *pneuma* means anything essentially different here than it does in nearby passages of *Genesis* that we have already noted. Despite what theologians

and other biblical scholars might want to make of it, the *pneuma theon* at 1.2 must be the principle of life that God breathes into the nostrils of living creatures at *Genesis 2:7*. It is “hovering” in the sense of being at readiness for that purpose. The Latin equivalent of *pneuma* here is *anima*, the principle of animation.

It should be noted in passing that the breath of God at *Genesis 1.2* cannot be identical with the entity designated *Spiritus Sanctus* in Latin and “Holy Spirit” in English. For exegetical reasons, it is a matter of some importance whether the Holy Spirit figures in the OT. In the context of the New Testament, the Holy Spirit is the Third Person of the Trinity, and is usually designated by the Greek term *pneuma hagion*. Although indeed there are three occurrences in the OT of the expression *pneuma to hagion*, none can plausibly be translated to refer to the Holy Spirit of the NT.

One occurrence is in *Psalms 51:11*, where David beseeches God not to take away his *pneuma to hagion*. This passage is flanked by 51:10, in which David petitions God to renew a “right spirit” (*pneuma euthes*) within him, and by 51:12 in which he asks God to maintain within him a willing spirit (*pneumati hēgemonikō*). It seems wholly unlikely that *pneuma* would refer to David’s spirit in 51:10 and 51:12, but to the Third Person of the Trinity in 51:11.

The other two occurrences of *pneuma to hagion* are in *Isaiah 63:10* and 63:11. Verses 7 through 14 of chapter 63 recall God’s mercy in days of old, following verses 1 through 6 dealing with his wrath and vengeance. After God redeemed his people (Israel) with love and pity, the following took place. His people rebelled against and vexed “his holy spirit” (*to pneuma to hagion autou*, 63:10), and God turned against them as an enemy. Then God reflected on his previous role as champion of his people and wonders

(to himself, as it were) what had become of the one who brought his “holy spirit” (*to pneuma to hagion*, 63:11) into the midst of his people. The holy spirit here is that of a vindictive God who had become hostile toward his people. Once again, this cannot be the Holy Spirit of the Christian Trinity. We turn later to the question whether the Holy Spirit might be present in the OT under a different designation.

Other uses of *pneuma* in the OT convey the sense of skill or ability. In *Exodus* 28:3, for example, God tells Moses of the “spirit of skill” (*pneumatōs sophias*) in garment making he has imparted to those who will produce vestments for Aaron when he is consecrated into God’s priesthood. Another example appears in *Exodus* 31:3-4, where the Lord informs Moses of the talent for working precious metals and jewels that came with the “spirit of God” (*pneuma theion*) that the Lord imparted to Bezalel of Judah.

Yet another range of meanings pertain to dispositions and character traits. A specific instance is the “spirit of intelligence” (*pneumatōs suneseōs*) that filled Joshua, according to *Deuteronomy* 34:9, as a result of having been blessed by Moses. A “spirit of intelligence” (*pneuma ek tēs suneseōs*) also figures in *Job* 20:3, where Zophar (a friend of Job) credits this spirit with advising tolerance in the face of insult. A wider variety of virtues are mentioned as coming from “the spirit of the Lord” (*pneuma tou theou*) in *Isaiah* 11:2. Among these are the “spirit of wisdom” (*pneuma sophias*), the “spirit of counsel” (*pneuma boulēs*) and the “spirit of knowledge” (*pneuma gnōseōs*), along with the aforesaid “spirit of intelligence” (*pneuma suneseōs*) itself.

These beneficial spirits stand apart from negative counterparts that are responsible for pernicious character traits. One remarkable instance is recorded in *1 Kings* book 22. Ahab king of Israel has sought counsel whether to join Johoshaphat, king of Judah, in

attacking the Aramean city of Ramoth-gilead. He was advised by a large number of false prophets that victory would be his. But then he sent for the guileless prophet Michiah, who told Ahab of a vision in which the Lord was plotting disaster for the Israelites. When the Lord in the vision asked who would trick Ahab into attacking Ramoth-gilead, a nameless spirit (*pneuma*, 22:21) appeared and said he would do the job. He would trick Ahab by entering the mouths of all those prophets as a “lying spirit” (*pneuma pseudēs*, 22: 22-23). Displeased by the implications of this vision, Ahab put Michiah in prison and left for a battle from which he did not return alive. The Lord’s purpose in the vision was thus fulfilled with the help of a malicious spirit. This story apparently was so engrossing that it recurs verbatim in *2 Chronicles* book 18.

Another malicious spirit is featured in *Isaiah* chapter 19. Toward the end of a litany of misfortunes he will visit on Egypt, the Lord forewarns that he will mingle (*ekerasen*, 19:14) within her a “spirit of aphasia” (*pneuma planēseōs*, 19:14). Having previously confounded the counsel they receive from their “Egyptian character” (*pneuma tōn Aiguptiōn*, 19:3), the Lord thus will cause the “Egyptians to stagger in all they do” (*eplanēsan Aigupton en pasi tois ergois*, 19:14) like a drunken man staggers in his vomit.

Numbers book 5 contains a disquisition on how to deal with adulterous wives, called into reckoning by a “spirit of jealousy” (*pneuma zēlōseōs*, 5:14, 30) on the part of a suspicious husband. Even if the woman is not guilty, the husband’s suspicions are enough to initiate a test of fidelity. Administered by a priest, the test consists in feeding the woman a poison that will render her incapable of childbearing if she is guilty, but will have no lasting effect if she is innocent. If guilty, the woman will be held accountable. But even if his wife is proven innocent, the man bears no sin for initiating the test.

The Lord is more tolerant toward women and less toward men in *Hosea* chapters 4 and 5, where he chastises Israel for having been led astray by “a spirit of whoredom” (*pneumati porneias*, 4:12). I will not punish your daughters “when they play the whore” (*hotan porneusōsi*, 4:14), the Lord says, nor your brides when they “commit adultery” (*hotan moicheusōsin*, 4:14), because the men themselves “go aside with prostitutes” (*meta tōn pornōn sunephuronto*, 4:14). It is the “spirit of whoredom within them” (*pneuma porneias en autois*, 5:4) that has made them do it. Upon such men, the Lord proclaims, “I will pour out my wrath like water” (*ekcheō hōs hudōr to hormēma mou*, 5:10).

Yet another meaning conveyed by *pneuma* in the OT is that of individual soul or animating spirit. This sense is related to the breath of life at *Genesis* 2:7 by which Adam and his descendents became living creatures. But that breath is generic, whereas the animating *pneuma* of individual human beings is specific. In *2 Kings* 2:15, for example, when witnesses observed that “the spirit of Elijah rests on Elisha” (*epanapepautai to pneuma Ēliou epi Helisaie*), the *pneuma* in question is the spirit of Elijah specifically and not just the generic breath of life. And when the Lord stirred up “the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia” (*to pneuma Kurou basileōs Persōn*, *2 Chronicles* 36:22) to fulfill a prophesy of Jeremiah, the *pneuma* stirred up was that of King Cyrus in particular.

The generic and the specific are distinguished in some memorable passages of *Ecclesiastes*. The book of *Ecclesiastes* is a collection of proverbs compiled late in life by the son of David, presumably Solomon. The second verse sets the theme of the book: “Vanity of vanities; all is vanity” (*mataiotēs mataiotētōn to panta mataiotēs*, 1.2). One vanity is man’s prideful perception of his preeminence over beasts. But man and beast

alike “all have the same breath” (*pneuma hen tois pasi*, 3:19). The author continues the theme by intoning “All are from the dust” (*ta panta egeneto apo tou choos*, 3:20), and to dust all return. Addressing the general presumption that the human soul returns to God, the author points out that this is something we really don’t know: “Who knows whether the spirit of ... man itself goes upward” (*tis oiden pneuma ... tou anthrōpou ei anabainei auto eis anō*, 3:21) and that of beasts “returns to earth?” (*katabainei ... katō eis gēn*, 3:21) The *pneuma* of 3:19 shared by man and beast is the generic breath of life, whereas that of 3:21 presumably is the breath of specific living beings.

The author of *Ecclesiastes* is less skeptical about the destiny of the human soul in the final chapter of the book. Remember your Creator in the “days of your youth” (*en hemerais neotētos sou*, 12:1), he advises his reader, before the end of your days draws nigh. The end is marked by the return of your dust to the earth and “the return of your spirit to the God who gave it” (*to pneuma epistrepsē pros ton theon hos edōken auto*, 12:7). This latter will be the spirit of the particular individual (*sou* at 12:1, *huie* at 12:12 below) to whom the advice is addressed.

Ecclesiastes ends with the advice to “fear God and keep his commandments” (*ton Theon phobou kai tas entolas autou phulasse*, 12:13), because this is “the whole [duty] of man” (*pas ho anthrōpos*, 12:13). “My son” (*huie mou*, 12:12), says the author, beware of anything beyond this. In particular, beware of excessive writing and study. For “of making many books there is no end, and much study is a weariness of the flesh” (*poiēsai biblia polla ouk estin perasmos kai meletē pollē kopōsis sarkos*, 12:12). So ends the book of *Ecclesiastes*, compiled by Solomon in all his wisdom.

(2.113) Other Spiritual Beings in the OT: Devils

There are numerous passages in the OT that depict God as being in league with pernicious spirits. Some have been examined previously. To recapitulate, there is the lying spirit of *1 Kings* 22:22-23 that the Lord put into the mouths of the false prophets who persuaded Ahab to enter the battle that ended his life. And there is the spirit of aphasia of *Isaiah*, chapter 19, which the Lord employs to bring confusion to Egypt, causing it to stagger like a drunken man in his vomit. To these sources can be added *2 Kings* 19:7 citing the spirit imposed by the Lord on the king of Assyria, leading him to leave Judea and to die by the sword in his own country. There is also the “evil spirit” (*pneuma ponēron*) of *Judges* 9:23, which God sent to secure the downfall of Abimelech who had killed 70 of his brothers to gain kingship over Shechem.

Devils, it may be presumed, also fall under the category of evil spirits. The term *diabolos* occurs in roughly one dozen passages of the Septuagint OT. In most of these, the term is generally translated “Satan,” although “adversary” and “enemy” occasionally are used as well. Let us look at several of these passages, with an eye in particular toward how the *diaboloī* in question relate to God the Lord and Creator.

An early occurrence of the term is at *Numbers* 22:32, in the context of the story of Balaam’s ass. Balak, king of Moab, was intimidated by the hordes of Israelite refugees descending from Egypt, and called upon the prophet Balaam to bring a curse on them to help drive them away. Balak sent a delegation of elders to Balaam who delivered his request and stayed overnight for an answer. During the night, God came to Balaam and told him not to curse the Israelites whom God had already blessed (*eulogēmenos*, 22:12). Upon hearing Balaam’s refusal, Balak sent a second delegation to negotiate for Balaam’s

curse on more favorable terms. Once again they were asked to stay overnight while Balaam awaited God's instructions. Seemingly peeved at the repeated request, God told Balaam to accompany the delegates back to Balak if he must, but "to do only what I tell you" (*lalēsō pros se touto poiēseis*, 22:20). Enticed by the favorable terms, Balaam saddled his donkey in preparation for the journey.

But "God's anger was roused" (*ōrgisthē thumō ho theos*, 22:22) because Balaam decided to go, and "the angel of God" (*ho angelos tou theou*, 22:22) took a stand to oppose (*endiaballein*) him on the way. More perceptive than Balaam at first, the donkey saw the angel standing in the road with sword in hand and swerved from the path. Balaam hit the animal to steer it back on course. The next time the ass saw the angel, it bolted to the side and pressed Balaam's foot against a wall. This resulted in another blow. On the third sighting there was no place for the animal to move, so it lay down with Balaam still on it. This time Balaam hit it with his staff. Whereupon the donkey spoke to Balaam (!), asking why he "had hit it these three times" (*pepaikas me touto triton*, 22:28). Balaam's answer was "because you have made a fool of me" (*hoti empepaichas moi*, 22:29).

After this conversation with the donkey, the Lord opened Balaam's eyes so that he too saw the angel of the Lord in his path. And the angel addressed Balaam, first asking why he had struck his donkey, and then pronouncing: "behold, I have come to be a devil to you" (*idou egō exēlthon eis diabolēn sou*, 22:32), because "your way is in opposition to mine" (*he hodos sou enantion mou*). The term *diabolēn* here is commonly rendered "adversary" or "hindrance" in translation. And indeed, it reflects the verb *endiaballein* at

22:22, translated “to oppose” above. In 22:22 and 22:32 the angel of the Lord serves as a *diabolos* in the sense of adversary or opponent.

There are other passages in the OT, however, where the same term refers to some sort of explicitly evil being. *First Chronicles* 21:1 tells how “Satan stood against Israel” (*estē diabolos en tō Israēl*) and “incited David” (*epeseisen ton David*) to count its fighting forces. The context was a war against the Philistines (at one point involving Goliath) that David wanted to escalate. This displeased God, who sent a pestilence on the people of Israel that killed 70,000 men. As an “angel sent by God” (*apesteilen ho theos angelon*, 21:15) was about to destroy Jerusalem in further retribution, the Lord relented and told the angel to spare the city. In these passages, God and the angel are obviously distinct entities. Distinct from them in turn is the *diabolos* of 21:1. Although *diabolos* here is occasionally rendered “adversary,” the more common translation is “Satan” as above. In *I Chronicles* chapter 21, a malicious Satan stands apart from both God and his angel.

The term *diabolos* appears ten times in the first two chapters of *Job* alone, where English translations almost invariably render it “Satan.” Careful reading of these passages leaves it unclear whether Satan is to be considered one of God’s angels. What is amply clear, however, is that Satan and God are entities with opposing interests. Job’s afflictions are a consequence of bargains struck between *ho theos* and *ho diabolos*. These bargains are interesting in themselves. An account of them follows.

The interaction between God and Satan begins at *Job* 1:6 with reference to a time when “the angels of God” (*hoi angeloi tou Theou*, often translated “sons of God”) presented themselves to him, with Satan (*ho diabolos*) conspicuously present among

them. The Lord asked Satan where *he* came from, to which Satan answered something vaguely to the effect that he came from going here and there and walking up and down the earth. His interest piqued, the Lord then asks whether Satan has encountered Job during his peregrinations—Job, a “blameless, upright, and god-fearing man” (*anthrōpos amemptos, alēthinos, theosebēs*, 1:8). Satan responds insidiously by suggesting that Job might curse God, instead of worshiping him, if God no longer protected Job and his possessions and no longer “blessed the works of his hands” (*ta erga tōn cheirōn autou eulogēsas*, 1:10). Rising to the bait, the Lord gives Satan leave to afflict Job as he sees fit, on condition that he not lay hands on Job’s person.

With this concession, “Satan left the presence of the Lord” (*exēlthen ho diabolos para tou kuriou*, 1:12). In the days that followed, Job received message after message in rapid sequence saying that his cattle, and then his sheep, and then his camels had been raided, and that the servants attending these herds had been killed. Worst of all was the message saying that all his sons and daughters had died when the building in which they were partying collapsed in a desert storm. In each case the messenger found time to gasp out “I alone have escaped to tell you” (*egō monos elthon tou apangeilai soi*, 1:15, 16, 17, 19). Job responded to these messages by tearing his robe, shaving his head, and worshipping the Lord on his knees, saying “the Lord gave and the Lord has taken away ... blessed be the name of the Lord” (*ho kurios edōken, ho kurios apheilato ... eiē to onoma kuriou eulogēmenon*, 1: 21).

Once again there was a time when Satan presented himself to God in the company of the angels. This second encounter is recorded in the opening verses of chapter 2. The conversation between Satan and God is repeated as in chapter 1, with God asking again

whether Satan has encountered Job while wandering the face of the earth. Although you have incited me to afflict him “without reason” (*dia kenēs*, 2:3), God tells Satan, he has remained a “blameless, innocent, upright, and god-fearing man” (*anthrōpos akakos alēthinos amemptos theosebēs*, 2: 3). Satan’s response this time is brief and peremptory: “Skin for skin!” (*derma huper dermatos*, 2:4; compare “tit for tat”); a man will give anything to save his life! But if you afflict his very bone and flesh, “he will surely curse you to your face” (*mēn eis prosōpon se eulogēsei*, 2:5; *eulogēsei* here used euphemistically with opposite meaning). Again rising to the bait, the Lord puts Job in Satan’s hands with the sole proviso that his life be spared.

So once again Satan left the Lord’s presence, and tormented Job with “grievous sores” (*helkei ponērō*, 2:7). Job scraped himself with a piece of pottery while sitting “on a dung heap” (*epi tēs koprias*, 2:8). Then his wife chided him for trying to maintain his integrity, urging him “instead to raise his voice against the Lord and die” (*alla eipon ti hrēma eis kurion kai teleuta*, 2:9). After chastising his wife for being foolish, Job ended the conversation by pronouncing faithfully: “if we receive good things from the hand of God, should we not endure evil” (*ei ta agatha edexametha ek cheiros kuriou, ta kaka ouch hupoisomen*, 2:10) as well.

At this point Satan retires from the narrative, leaving Job to reflect with his friends on the lessons to be gained from his afflictions. In the end, the Lord is pleased with Job’s response, and rewards him by restoring his flocks at twice their initial number and by bringing his ten children back to life. After this, the penultimate verse tells us, Job lived an additional 140 years. The upshot seems to be that fidelity is rewarded by

handsome benefits at the end, taking the edge off the seemingly intended message that fidelity to God is an end in itself.

The term *diabolos* also occurs at *Esther* 7:4, *Esther* 8:1, and *Proverbs* 6:24. In none of these, however, does it refer to a spiritual being, evil or otherwise. These occurrences thus are extraneous to our present concern, which has been to survey the range of supernatural beings in the OT.

(2.114) Summary of OT's Horizon of Expectation

Let us summarize. Along with the Lord God himself, the spiritual realm of the OT comprises angels (*angeloi*), spirits (*pneumata*), and adversaries (*diaboloï*). In the book of *Job*, Satan emerges as a *diabolos* of a particularly insidious sort. These spiritual entities all fit within a horizon of expectation shaped to accommodate supernatural beings.

Angels (messengers), spirits (character traits), and adversaries (opponents) occur within the natural realm as well, making it sometimes difficult to distinguish the natural from the supernatural in the context of the OT. In the NT, by contrast, the line between the natural and the supernatural is more distinctly drawn. We turn now to the horizon of expectation within which events in the NT take place.

(2.121) Angels in the NT

In general, the horizon of expectation of the NT provides room for supernatural entities and for the occurrence of supernatural events. This it shares with the horizons of all world religions premised on the existence of the supernatural. More specifically, the NT's horizon of expectation agrees with that of the OT in accommodating angels, spirits, and

diabolic entities. It differs from that of the OT, however, in the range of angels and spirits it accommodates, and in the way malicious demons relate to God their creator. There is a wider variety of angels in the NT, for instance, and a more extensive involvement of spirits in human affairs. As far as demons are concerned, there is a much sharper opposition between forces of good and forces of evil than suggested by anything in the OT. Let us consider first the roles played by angels in the NT.

Angels are far more numerous in the New Testament than in the Old. In *Luke's* version of the nativity story, the author mentions an angel of the Lord (*angelos kuriou*, 2:9) that appeared to the shepherds "bringing them news of great joy" (*euangelizomai humin charan megalēn*, 2:10), namely that a Savior is born who is "Christ the Lord" (*Christos kurios*, 2:11). After telling them where the child can be found, the angel suddenly was joined by "a great' heavenly host" (*plēthos stratias ouraniou*, 2:13) praising God and reciting verse to his glory. In the passage immediately following their "Gloria," the members of the host are designated "angels" (*hoi angeloi*, 2:15) and thereupon said to depart for heaven.

There also is reference to a large number of angels in the description of Jesus' arrest according to the gospel of *Matthew*. In a vain attempt to protect Jesus, one of the disciples (Simon Peter; see *John* 18:10) had cut off the right ear of Malchus (*John* 18:10), a slave (*doulon*, *Matthew* 26:51) of the high priest. Jesus told the disciple to sheath his sword, reattached the ear of the slave, and informed all present that his Father would send "more than twelve legions of angels" (*pleiō dōdeka legiōnas angelōn*, 26:53) to protect him if Jesus requested. In the Roman army, a legion consisted of 3,000 to 6,000 men. This means that Jesus could call on more than 36,000 angels if he saw fit.

The number of angels on call is increased even further at *Revelation* 5:11. In his vision, the author John heard the “voice of many angels” (*phōnēn angelōn pollōn*) numbering “myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands” (*muriades muriadōn kai chiliades chiliadōn*). In terms of actual numbers, thousands of thousands is several million angels. The expression “myriads of myriads,” in turn, is a way of saying more than can be numbered. This answers to the “myriads of angels in festive gathering” (*muriasin angelōn, panēgurei*) at *Hebrews* 12:22. Although *Hebrews* contains reflections on the days of Moses and Joshua, these are reflections from a NT perspective. In the OT proper, by way of contrast, there is no hint of anything approaching “myriads” of angelic beings.

Another feature distinguishing angels in the NT from those in the OT is their hierarchical ordering. Some angels in the NT rank higher than others. Highest in rank, presumably, are the archangels Gabriel (mentioned in *Luke* 1:26) and Michael (*Jude* 9, *Revelation* 12:7). Michael is designated “archangel” (*archangelos*) explicitly in *Jude* 9, a designation that establishes his high rank. In *Revelation* 12:7 there is mention of the “war in heaven” (*polemos en tō ouranō*) which “Michael and his angels” (*Michaēl kai hoi angeloι autou*) waged against “the dragon” (*hō drakōn*). As members of Michael’s angelic corps, these other angels must be inferior in rank to Michael himself. Hierarchical order is also indicated in *1 Timothy* 5:21, where Paul invokes Jesus Christ and “the elect angels” (*tōn eklektōn angelōn*) in imposing some (distinctly misogynous) rules regarding the marriage of widows. Although nothing in the text says so explicitly, Michael and his angels presumably are among these elect.

The most substantial dimension of diversity among angels in the NT, however, pertains to which side they take in the conflict between good and evil. Combatants in the war cited in *Revelation* 12:7 include angels not only in Michael's corps but on the dragon's side as well. Given the identification of the dragon as "Devil and Satan" (*ho Diabolos kai ho Satanas*) at *Revelation* 12:9, defeat of "the dragon and his angels" (*hō dragōn ... kai hoi angeloi autou*, 12:7) was a major victory for the forces of good.

Angels on the side of evil are often classified as fallen angels. Jesus referred to Satan as fallen in response to the report of his seventy-two emissaries that even "the demons are obedient to us in your name" (*ta diamonias hupotassetai hēmin en tō onomati sou*, *Luke* 10:17). Jesus' response at *Luke* 10:18 was "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven" (*Etheōroun ton Satanan hōs astrapēn ek tou ouranou pesonta*). As far as anonymous angels are concerned, we infer from *2 Peter* 2:4 that God cast "angels who had sinned" (*angelōn hamartēsantōn*) into the darkest reaches of hell (*tartarōsas*) to be held for judgment. Angels cast into hell assuredly are fallen angels.

Angels in hell presumably pose no immediate threat to human welfare. More ominous in this respect are the angels mentioned in *Romans* 8:38. In this and adjacent verses, Paul assures his Roman audience that nothing can separate them from the love of God in Jesus Christ. There are influences that threaten separation, however, among them "angels, rulers (principalities), [and] powers" (*angeloi ... archai ... dunameis*). Another text in which angels are listed among potentially pernicious influences is *1 Peter* 3:22. The burden of this passage is that "angels and authorities and powers" (*angelōn kai exousiōn kai dunameōn*) have been subjected to Jesus Christ through his resurrection. In *Ephesians* 6:12, principalities (*archas*) and authorities (*exousias*) are reckoned among

“spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places” (*pneumatika tēs ponērias en tois epouraniois*). By this reckoning, the angels of *Romans* 8:38 and *1 Peter* 3:22 should count as “spiritual forces of evil” as well.

These passages indicate what appears to be a reasonably well-ordered hierarchy of angelic beings in the NT. On the good side of the divide we have Michael and Gabriel, the angels of Michael’s heavenly forces, and then the “elect angels” of *1 Timothy* 5:21. On the negative side, starting from the bottom, we have the angels awaiting judgment in the darkest reaches of hell, the angels grouped with the “principalities and authorities” that threatened separation from the love of God, and then the angels fighting with Satan in the war between good and evil. If Satan himself counts as an angel (left uncertain by *Job* 1:6 and 2:1 as already noted), he would assume top rank in the hierarchy of evil. This contributes to the significance of the battle between St. Michael and Satan as envisioned by John of Patmos in *Revelation* 12:7. The conflict between Michael and Satan, supported by their respective angelic hosts, epitomizes the cosmic battle between good and evil.

(2.122) Spirits in the NT

The term *pneuma* occurs more than 350 times in the NT. As we shall see, the term carries at least one-half dozen distinct meanings in this particular context. If these meanings have anything in common, it has to do with things that transcend the realm of nature. What these meanings have in common, that is to say, is concern with the supernatural.

In this regard, it is interesting to note that the term *pneuma* in the NT almost never carries the nature-oriented meaning of “wind.” While use of the term in this sense is

fairly common in the OT (*Genesis* 8:1, 41:6, *Job* 1:19, 15:2, *passim*)), the only NT use in this sense appears in an aphorism at *John* 3:8. After advising his reader in the two previous verses that one must be “born anew” (*gennēthēnai anōthen*, 3:7) “of the spirit” (*ek tou pneumatos*, 3:6), the author compares the person born of the spirit to “the wind [that] blows where it wishes” (*to pneuma hopou thelei pnei*). In effect, this sole reference to *pneuma* in the natural sense at *John* 3:8 is used to embellish a supernatural point.

Also interesting in this regard is the absence of a sharp distinction in the NT between spirit as a general principle of animation and the personal spirits of individual human beings. As we have seen, there is recurring reference in the OT to a *pneuma* that imparts life to human and nonhuman creatures alike. At *Genesis* 6:17, for example, God informs Noah of his intent to destroy all flesh containing the “breath of life” (*pneuma zōēs*), which includes birds, beasts, and reptiles as well as people. In the NT, on the other hand, there is no mention of an animating spirit that imparts life to living creatures generally. Nor is there a clear reference to a spirit that animates human beings specifically. At *John* 6:63, to be sure, we find Jesus telling his disciples that “the spirit is what gives life” (*to pneuma estin to zōopoioun*). But he goes on to say that the spirit in question is “the words I have spoken to you” (*ta hrēmata ha egō lelalēka humin*). Jesus’ words to his disciples do not constitute a *pneuma* that brings life on the occasion of biological birth.

In the NT generally, the principle that brings life to human individuals is indistinguishable from the spirit that imparts personal identity. *Luke* 8:40-56 tells of Jesus restoring life to the daughter of Jairus, ruler of the local synagogue. Jesus took her by the hand and called out “Child arise” (*Hē pais egeire*, 8:54). Then “her spirit returned”

(*epestrepseō to pneuma autēs*, 8:55), and she got up immediately. The spirit that returned was the *pneuma* of Jairus' daughter specifically; and the previously dead girl was reanimated by its return independently of some general principle of life. Another illustration comes with the death of Stephen by stoning, as recorded in *Acts* 7:59. His last words were "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit" (*Kurie 'Iēsou, dexai to pneuma mou*). Stephen departed from life with the departure of his individual *pneuma*. The same point is illustrated by the death of Jesus himself. As recorded in *John* 19:30, Jesus received the sour wine and uttered his final words: "It is finished" (*Tetelestai*). Whereupon he bowed his head and "gave up his spirit" (*paredōken to pneuma*). Death in each of these cases comes with loss of the person's individual *pneuma*, with no general principle of life involved.

The point illustrated by these examples is that the *pneuma* unique to a given individual is also the principle that brings life to that individual person. In the OT, there is an animating spirit that brings life to man and beast alike. This is distinct from the spirit that imparts identity to individual human persons. In the NT, however, the animating *pneuma* and the *pneuma* that imparts personal identity are indistinguishable. Moreover, there is no mention in the NT of a *pneuma* that imparts life to creatures other than human beings.

In our previous discussion of spirit in the OT, we noted that the Greek terms *pneuma* and *psuchē* are sometimes used synonymously. For example, both *pneuma zōēs* at *Genesis* 7:15 (where it means life-principle of living things generally) and *psuchēn zōsan* at *Genesis* 2:7 are commonly translated "breath of life." This use of *psuchē* to designate the life-giving principle is found in the NT as well. Thus in the parable of the

foolish rich man in *Luke* 12:15-21, the man observes that he has ample goods to last for many years and decides the time has come to “eat, drink, and be merry” (*phage, pie, euphrainou*, 12:19). God responds, saying: “Fool! This very night your soul will be demanded back from you” (*Aphrōn, tautē tē nukti tēn psuchēn sou apaitousin apo sou*, 12:20). The man is about to lose the *psuchē* that keeps him alive, which is the same as the *psuchē* that makes him an individual person.

There is also the story of the young man who fell to his death as a result of Paul’s incessant oration. Paul was talking to a gathering at Troas and prolonged his speech until midnight. As he continued talking, a young man named *Eutuchos* sank into a deep sleep, fell out of a third story window, and was “picked up dead” (*ērthē nekros, Acts* 20:9) from the street below. Then Paul went down, took the young man in his arms, and said to the onlookers: “Do not be alarmed, for his life is in him” (*Mē thorubeisthe, hē gar psuchē autou en autō estin, Acts* 20:10). Having resuscitated the young man, Paul went back upstairs and continued talking until daybreak. At the end of the episode, we are told, *Eutuchos* was carried away alive (*zōnta, 20:12*). The young man’s *psuchē*, which Paul restored, was the principle involved in his return to life.

As in the case of *pneuma* (spirit) discussed above, moreover, there is no mention in the NT of a *psuchē* (soul) that brings life to animals other than human. Nonhuman life belongs to the natural realm, whereas the NT is preoccupied with the supernatural.

A quite different sense of *pneuma* in the NT pertains to status, attributes, and character traits. In his letter to the Romans, for instance, Paul reassures its recipients that they had not received “the spirit of bondage” (*pneuma douleias, Romans* 8:15) that leads to fear, but rather had received “the spirit of adoption” (*pneuma huiiothesias, 8:15*). In

relation to God, that is to say, their status was not that of slaves but rather that of adopted children. Reassurance is also stressed at *2 Timothy* 1:7, where Paul reminds Timothy of God's gift, which is not a "spirit of fear [or cowardice]" (*pneuma deilias*) but one of "strength and love and temperance" (*dunameōs kai agapēs kai sōphrovismou*) instead. Strength, love, and temperance are attributes Paul considers suitable for a faithful follower of Christ. There are passages as well in which Paul endorses the character trait of gentleness or meekness. In *Galatians* 6:1, he says that a person "overtaken in any transgression" (*prolēmphthē ... en tini paraptōmati*) should accept correction by his neighbors "in a spirit of gentleness" (*en pneumati prautētos*). Gentleness is also stressed in *1 Corinthians* 4:21, where Paul promises the recipients of his letter that he will visit them "in love and in a spirit of gentleness" (*en agapē pneumati te prautētos*).

(2.123) Evil Spirits and Exorcism in the NT

Paul is also concerned with spirits of negative traits that need correcting. A curious example is his dealing with the "spirit of divination" (*pneuma puthōna*), described in *Acts* 16:16-18. When Paul and his companions (including Silas and maybe Timothy) were in Philippi, they encountered a slave girl who had this spirit of divination and made lots of money for her owners by telling fortunes. The girl started following Paul and his companions with loud shouts, proclaiming them servants of the most high God who preached the way of salvation. After several days of this clamor, Paul became "greatly annoyed" (*diaponētheis*, 16:18), turned around, and said to the spirit: "In the name of Jesus Christ, I command you to come out of her" (*Parangellō soi en onomati Iēsou*

Christou exelthein ap' autēs, 16:18). The spirit came out that very hour. Paul has just performed what may have been his first exorcism (others are suggested in *Acts* 19:12).

The story continues with Paul soon paying for his impatience. Deprived of income from her fortune-telling, the slave girl's owners persuaded the local magistrates that Paul and Silas were Jews and were disturbing the peace. Whereupon Paul and Silas were stripped of their garments, beaten with rods, and thrown shackled into prison. During the earthquake that ensued around midnight, the prisoners were mysteriously freed from their shackles. Then Paul and Silas, who had remained in the prison, prevented the jailer from committing suicide, went to the jailer's house for dinner, baptized the jailer and his family, and returned to prison before daybreak. Next day the magistrates, having found out that Paul and Silas had Roman citizenship (hence could not be jailed without trial), came to the prison to apologize and to officially release them. Paul and Silas soon left Philippi and headed toward Thessalonica.

Acts of exorcism are attributed to other apostles in *Acts* 5:12. Peter's reputation as an exorcist among early believers in Jerusalem receives special mention in *Acts* 5:15. Sick people would be laid on mats in the street in hopes that Peter's shadow might fall on them when he passed by. Verse 5:16 reports that people from nearby towns would bring their sick and "those afflicted by unclean spirits" (*ochloumenous hupo pneumatōn akathartōn*) to the apostles for healing. The verse concludes with the note that "all these were healed" (*hoi tines etherapeuonto hapantes*).

These acts of exorcism by the apostles occurred after Jesus' ascension. They manifest the power bestowed by Jesus reported in *Matthew* 10:1. According to this report, Jesus gave his disciples "authority over unclean spirits" (*exousian pneumatōn*

akathartōn), enabling them to cast out these spirits and “to heal every disease and every affliction” (*therapeuein pasan noson kai pasan malakian*).

Perhaps needless to say, however, the vast majority of exorcisms reported in the NT were the work of Jesus himself. In the period just before his baptism, we read in *Luke* 7:19-21, Jesus healed “many people of diseases and plagues and evil spirits” (*pollous apo nosōn kai mastigōn kai pneumatōn ponērōn*, 7:21). In *Luke* 6:17-19, we are told that when Jesus came down from a night of prayer on the mountain a “great multitude of people” (*plēthos polu tou laou*, 6:17) came to be healed from their diseases. Not only were “those troubled by unclean spirits cured” (*hoi enochloumenoi apo pneumatōn akathartōn etherapeuonto*, 6:18), but moreover “power came out” (*dunamis ... exērchetō*, 6:19) of Jesus that healed everyone who touched him.

There are notable occasions on which Jesus drove out a plurality of evil spirits by a single act of exorcism. One is recorded in *Mark* 5:2-13. Immediately after disembarking from a boat, Jesus encountered a man with an “unclean spirit” (*pneumati akathartō*, 5:2) coming out of some nearby tombs. The man’s bodily strength was such that no one could subdue him with shackles and chains. Upon seeing Jesus from a distance, the man ran up to him, fell before his feet, addressed him as the Son of God, and begged Jesus not to torment him. For Jesus already had begun to rid the man of his “unclean spirit” (*to pneuma to akatharton*, 5:8). When Jesus asked his name, the spirit(s) replied: “My name is Legion, for we are many” (*Legiōn onoma moi, oti polloi esmen*, 5:9). Desiring earnestly not to be sent “out of the country” (*exō tēs chōras*, 5:10), the spirits begged Jesus to send them into a nearby herd of pigs. The herd numbered “about 2,000” (*hos dishilioi*, 5:13). Jesus complied, and “the unclean spirits” (*ta pneumata ta akatharta*,

5:13) left the man and entered into the pigs. The pigs then rushed down the steep cliff and drowned in the sea.

Another multiple exorcism of note is recorded in *Luke* 8:1-3. Jesus was travelling through cities and villages spreading the “good news” (*euangelizomenos*, 8:1) of the kingdom of God. He was accompanied by his disciples and by a retinue of women who provided (*diēkonoun*, 1:3) for the men out of their own means. Included among these women were Mary Magdalene, Johanna the wife of Herod’s household manager, an otherwise unknown Susanna, and “many others” (*heterai pollai*, 8:3). Mary Magdalene, we are told in passing, had been relieved of “seven demons” (*diamonia hepta*, 8:2). According to *Mark* 16:9, Mary Magdalene was the person to whom Jesus first appeared when he arose from the tomb. The text adds that it was from her that Jesus “had cast out seven demons” (*ekbeblēkei hepta daimonia*, 16:9).

In brief, there are many occasions recorded in the NT on which Jesus casts out demons and unclean spirits. There is no explicit record there, however, of the devil himself being cast out by an exorcist. The only mention of the Devil being cast out occurs at *Matthew* 12:26 (repeated at *Mark* 3:23), where Jesus alludes hypothetically to the possibility that “Satan cast out Satan” (*ho Satanas ton Satanan ekballei*). This, the text continues, would amount to his being “divided against himself” (*eph’ heauton emeristhē*). Let us look further at the complex network of roles played by the devil in the NT.

(2.124) The Devil in the NT

The devil goes by several names and descriptions in the NT. In addition to ‘Satan’ and ‘Beelzebub’ (*Beelzeboul, Matthew 12:24*), there are the names *Abaddōn* (Hebrew, meaning destruction) and *Apolluōn* (Greek, meaning destroyer) that appear in *Revelation 9:11*. Evocative descriptions (as distinct from names) include “adversary” (*antidikos, 1 Peter 5:8*), “tempter” (*peirazōn, Matthew 4:3*), “Great dragon” (*ho drakōn ho megas, Revelation 12:9*), and “angel of the bottomless pit” (*angelon tēs abusou, Revelation 9:11*).

The devil appears in every major book of the NT (excluding *Galatians* and several other short books). There is only one narrative sequence, however, in which he has a speaking role. This is the temptation sequence recorded at both *Matthew 4:1-11* and *Luke 4:1-12*. For the most part, the words spoken by the devil are almost verbatim between the two passages, as are the words Jesus speaks in response. The only major difference is the reversal of the second and third temptations in the two contexts. I shall rely on both sources in recounting the narrative.

Returning from his baptism in the Jordan, Jesus was “full of the holy spirit” (*plērēs pneumatos hagiou, Luke 4:1*). The Spirit led him into the wilderness to be “tempted by the devil” (*peirasthēnai hupo tou diabolou, Matthew 4:1*). After 40 days and 40 nights without food, Jesus was hungry. The tempter then came to him saying: “If you are the Son of God” (*Ei huios ei tou theou, Matthew 4:3*), command these stones to become bread. Jesus responded, saying:

It is written (*Deuteronomy* 8:3), “Man does not live by bread alone (*Ouk ep’ artō monō zēsetai ho anthrōpos*, *Matthew* 4:4), but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.

Then the devil took him to Jerusalem, set him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said “If you are the Son of God” (*Ei huios ei tou theou*, *Matthew* 4:6), throw yourself down, for it is written (*Psalms* 91:11-12):

He will command his angels concerning you; ... on their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.

Jesus responded:

Again it is written (*Deuteronomy* 6:16), “You shall not put the Lord your God to the test” (*Ouk ekpeiraseis kurion ton theon sou*)” (*Matthew* 4:7).

Next the devil took him up “onto a very high mountain” (*eis oros hupsēlon lian*, *Matthew* 4:8) and showed him all the kingdoms of the world “in a moment of time” (*en stigmē chronou*. *Luke* 4:5). Then the devil said to Jesus that all this had been granted him “to give to whom I will” (*hō ean thelō didōmi autēn*, *Luke* 4:6), and that if Jesus “would fall down and worship me” (*proskunēsēs enōpion emou*, *Luke* 4:7) it would all be his.

Jesus responded, saying:

“Be gone, Satan” *Hupage, Satana*. *Matthew* 4:10)! For it is written (*Deuteronomy* 6:13-14), “You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve” (*Kurion ton theon sou proskunēseis kai autō monō latreuseis*, *Matthew* 4:10).

Then the devil departed from Jesus, “until an opportune time” (*ap’ ... achri kairou*, *Luke* 4:13); “and behold, angels came and ministered to him” (*kai idou angeloi prosēlthon kai diēkonoun autō*, *Matthew* 4:11).

There are interesting differences in the temptation sequence as recorded in *Mark* 1:12-13. One is its relative brevity, being (in Greek) only four lines long. Another is its lack of conversational structure. Both *Matthew* 4:1-11 and *Luke* 4:1-12 present a dialogue between Jesus and the devil, whereas *Mark* 1:12-13 is just a perfunctory description of their interaction. Yet another is use of the term *ekballei* in the account of *Mark* (1:12). This term is used frequently in the NT to signify forceful ejection. In *Luke* 13:32, for instance, certain Pharisees are instructed to convey Jesus’ words to Herod, namely: “Behold I cast out demons” (*’Idou ekballō daimonia*). And in *Matthew* 21:12 we hear of the memorable occasion on which Jesus “drove out all who bought and sold in the temple” (*exebalen pantas tous pōlountas kai agorazontas en tō hierō*). The same term is used in *Mark* 1:12, which tells us that immediately after his baptism “the [Holy] Spirit drove him [Jesus] out into the wilderness” (*to pneuma auton ekballei eis tēn erēmon*). The Holy Spirit provides the occasion of Jesus’ temptation, as it were, by ensuring his presence in the desert to endure it. In the brief account of *Mark*, moreover, the temptation continued throughout the forty days and nights, rather than at the end of this period as in the other two accounts. Then at the end of the temptation, *Luke* 1:13 tells us, Satan left, and angels came to care for Jesus (as in *Matthew* but not in *Luke*).

These three gospels depict the temptation of Jesus in a way reminiscent of the torment of Job in the OT described previously. In the gospels, Jesus is manipulated by the devil in collaboration with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit drives Jesus into the

wilderness, where he is subjected to the devil's enticements. This is parallel to the manipulation of Job by Satan with the Lord's collaboration. The Lord authorizes Satan to torment Job as he sees fit, subject to restrictions that become more lenient as the torment progresses. In the OT, the divine and the diabolic cooperate in devising a torment aimed at tempting Job to renounce the Lord. The divine (the Holy Spirit) and the diabolic (Satan) cooperate again in the NT in setting up a temptation that must have brought extreme torment to Jesus in turn.

Another intriguing parallel in these accounts, pertaining to the respective trials of Job and Jesus, has to do with the uniqueness of their conversational format. The conversation between Satan and the Lord in *Job* chapters 1 and 2 is the only time a character explicitly identified as the devil speaks in the OT. (The snake in Eden seems to be equated with the devil in *Revelation 12:7-9*, but that doesn't count as an explicit identification.) Likewise, the conversation between the devil and Jesus as depicted in *Matthew 4:3-11* and *Luke 4:3-12* is the only speaking part the devil plays in the NT. One might conjecture that, in some manner or another, these two episodes were sufficiently central to the storyline of the Bible to warrant their being presented to the reader in conversational immediacy.

In the temptation scenes of *Matthew* and *Luke*, of course, the devil converses with Jesus person to person. There are a few other passages in the NT where the devil engages in person-to-person interaction, but without speaking. One striking example is *Luke 22:3*, which has "Satan entering into" (*Eisēlthen de Satanas eis*) Judas Iscariot. After being possessed, Judas bargains with the chief priests to betray Jesus for thirty pieces of silver (*Matthew 26:15*), and sets about to arrange an appropriate opportunity. By this account,

Judas was possessed by Satan before Jesus' last supper with his disciples. A parallel version in *John*, however, describes the possession as taking place during the meal itself. In this version, Jesus hands Judas a morsel of bread, whereupon "Satan entered into him" (*eisēlthen eis ekeinon ho Satanas*, 13:27) and he quickly left the room. Whatever the sequence of meal and possession, Jesus was betrayed in Gethsemane that very night. Versions of the betrayal appear also in chapter 26 of *Matthew* and in chapter 14 of *Mark*, but without direct mention of Satan's involvement.

Another well-known passage involving Satan is *Matthew* 16:23. This passage is part of a sequence in which Jesus explains to his incredulous disciples that he must suffer under the Jewish authorities in Jerusalem, be killed, and be raised again on the third day. Peter rebukes (*epitiman*, 16:22) Jesus, saying: "this most surely will not happen to you" (*ou mē estai soi touto*, 16:12). Reading the double negative (*ou mē*), one can almost see Peter clenching his fists to protect his Lord from death. In effect, Peter threatens to prevent Jesus from fulfilling his mission on earth. This also was the intent of the devil in subjecting Jesus to the three temptations. With this parallel in view, it is not surprising that Jesus' response to Peter at *Matthew* 16:23 was essentially the same as his response to the devil at *Matthew* 4:10. On both occasions, Jesus bluntly instructed Satan to "Back off!" (*Hupage*). His words directed toward Peter specifically are "Back away from me, Satan" (*Hupage opisō mou, Satana*).

An intriguing question of exegesis is whether these words are addressed to Peter or to the devil personally. Jesus is responding to something Peter said, and his response seems directed to the person who said it. Yet at the same time his response is addressed to Satan by name; and it is Satan, not Peter, whom Jesus tells to back off. There are two

ways of reading this interchange. According to one, the devil has taken possession of Peter and is the author of the words Jesus reacts to so vehemently. Jesus' response, in effect, tells Satan to vacate Peter and to leave his presence. According to this reading, *Mathew* 16: 22-23 joins *Luke* 22:3 and *John* 13:27 as a passage in which someone possessed by the devil appears in the presence of Jesus personally. And it joins *Mathew* 4:3-11 and *Luke* 4:3-12 as a passage in which Jesus speaks to the devil directly and verbally rejects his pernicious influence.

According to the alternative reading, Peter's aggressive reaction upon hearing of Jesus' impending death was due more to ignorance than to malicious intent. Peter has not actually been possessed by the devil, according to this reading, but has fallen under the devil's influence in giving voice to sentiments contrary to Jesus' mission. When Jesus faces Peter and commands "Back away from me, Satan," he is not addressing the devil as such but rather warning Peter to distance himself from the devil's doings. According to this interpretation, use of the term *Satana* at *Mathew* 16:23 refers to an evil principle rather than to an individual that might be encountered on a one-to-one basis.

If this second reading is correct, *Mathew* 16:23 joins several other passage in the NT where *Satana* refers to a malicious principle rather than to the devil as a distinct individual. One such passage is *Mark* 4:15, following the parable of the seed that fell on rocky ground. As a result of indiscriminate sowing, it may be recalled, some seed fell along the path where birds devoured it, some fell among thorns that choked it, and some fell on rocky ground where it developed shallow roots and was scorched by the sun. Only seed that fell on good soil yielded a return of new grain. As Jesus explained the parable, the seed represents the word (*logon*, 4:14) of God, which falls both on ground where it is

nourished and on ground where it is wasted. When the word falls on a hard path, “Satan comes immediately and takes it away” (*euthus erchetai ho Satanas kai airei*, Mark 4:15). The birds in the parable represent Satan snatching the word of God off the path before it has a chance to germinate. Satan here must be a general principle of evil rather than a specific character proceeding bird-like to dispose of stray seed.

Another passage in which Satan figures as an evil influence that resists personification is *Romans* 16:20. In the final verses of his missive to the Romans, Paul urges its recipients to stay clear of dissidents (*tas dichostasias*, 16:17) and of “those who deceive the hearts of the innocent” (*exapatōsin tas kardias tōn akakōn*, 16:18) by glib talk and flattery. Figuratively lumping these evildoers together under the name of Satan, Paul tells the Roman faithful that “the God of peace quickly will crush Satan under your feet” (*ho de Theos tēs eirēnēs suntripsei ton Satanan hupo tous podas humōn en tachei*, 16:20). The image of a personified devil being stomped upon by a group of Roman converts is a vision that borders on the absurd. Other passages in which the figure of Satan seemingly resists personification include *1 Thessalonians* 2:18 and *1 Timothy* 1:20.

True to his polymorphic character, by way of summary, the devil of the NT appears in a variety of forms. In the temptation sequence, he is as much a personal presence as Jesus himself. In the betrayal of Jesus by Judas, the devil is not a distinct character by himself but possesses Judas’ person in a distinctively diabolical way. When Peter offends Jesus by denying his mission, it is unclear whether the Satan that Jesus tells “to be gone” is the devil himself or a more generic principle of evil. When Paul tells the Romans that Satan will soon be crushed under their feet, however, it seems clear that the

Satan in question is not a distinct individual but rather a force of evil Paul thinks soon will be overcome.

(2.1251) The Holy Spirit: OT Antecedents

The expression *pneuma hagion* (Holy Spirit or Holy Ghost) appears approximately 90 times in the NT. In a large majority of these cases, the expression can plausibly be read as referring to the Third Person of the Trinity. As noted previously, on the other hand, there are only three occurrences of the same expression in the OT, none of which can plausibly be read as referring to the Holy Spirit of the NT. While *pneuma hagion* is the designator most frequently used for the Holy Spirit in the NT, that is to say, it never carries that meaning in the Greek Septuagint.

It does not follow from this fact alone, however, that the Holy Spirit plays no role in the OT. There are other expressions commonly read as referring to the Holy Spirit in the NT that occur in the OT as well. One is *pneuma kuriou* (Spirit of the Lord), another *pneuma theou* (Spirit of God). Let us turn directly to the question whether the Holy Spirit is mentioned in the OT, beginning with several representative occurrences of these two expressions in the Septuagint.

By way of background, we should review several OT passages in which *pneuma* is used in reference to the breath of God. In *Psalms* 33:6, the psalmist proclaims that the heavens were made by “the word of the Lord” (*Tō logō tou kuriou*) and the entire host contained within them “by the breath of his mouth” (*tō pneumati tou stomatos autou*). This harks back to the creation story of *Genesis*, inviting substitution of the more specific “the breath of God’s mouth” for the ambiguous “breath (or spirit) of God” (*pneuma*

theou) at *Genesis* 1:2. Thus the breath of God's mouth entered the nostrils of man to make him a living creature (*Genesis* 2:7). Once creation had been accomplished, the breath of God could have destructive force as well. *Second Samuel* tells of the foundations of the world being laid bare "by the blast of the breath of the Lord's nostrils" (*kuriou, apo pnoēs pneumatos thumou autou*, 22:16). And *Job* 4:8-9 speaks of troublesome people who "perish by the breath of the Lord" (*kuriou apolountai, apo de pneumatos*).

In these passages, the breath of the Lord moves like a blast of wind. This wind imagery blends well with certain descriptions in *I Samuel* of the Spirit of the Lord "rushing upon" those who receive it. After Samuel anoints David (son of Jesse) king, we read at 16:13, "the Spirit of the Lord rushed upon David" (*ephēlato pneuma kuriou epi David*) and remained with him from that day forward. According to *I Samuel* 16:12, David had replaced Saul as King of Israel. In anticipation of Saul's previous anointing, his father Samuel had foreseen that "the Spirit of the Lord will rush upon you [Saul]" (*ephaleitai epi se pneuma kuriou*, 10:6) and that God would give Saul "another heart" (*kardian allēn*, 10:9) suitable for a king. Shortly after becoming king, Saul heard that a small town in Israel (Jabesh-gilead) was under siege by Nahash the Ammonite. Upon hearing this, "the Spirit of the Lord rushed upon Saul" (*ephēlato pneuma kuriou epi Saoul*, 11:6) and he marshaled a force of several hundred thousand men to save the village.

It is reasonable to expect that a spirit capable of rushing about like this would be capable of doing physical work. An illustration with a tinge of humor can be found in *I Kings* chapter 18. Ahab has sent his servant Obadiah to find Elijah in hopes Elijah (a

reputed miracle worker, *1 Kings* 17:18-24) could rescue the land from drought. Obadiah has looked far and wide, and has reported his continuing lack of success to an increasingly frustrated Ahab. Then Elijah appears unexpectedly before Obadiah and instructs him to notify his master that the missing person (Elijah himself) has been found. This makes Obadiah fear for his life, he tells Elijah, expecting that “the Spirit of the Lord will carry you [Elijah] one knows not where” (*pneuma kuriou arei se eis tēn gēn hēn ouk oida*, 18:12) by the time Ahab has actually been notified. Elijah assures Obadiah that this would not happen and remains put long enough to strike a bargain with the desperate Ahab. Although it is deemed capable of whisking Elijah away, the Spirit of the Lord leaves him be on this occasion to the great relief of Obadiah.

A more physically manifest accomplishment of the Lord’s Spirit is recorded in *Ezekiel* chapter 37. It has to do with bringing breath to “the dry bones” (*ta osta ta xēra*, 37:4) representing the defunct “house of Israel” (*oikos Israēl*, 37:11). Operating “by means of the Lord’s Spirit” (*en pneumati kurios*, 37:1), the “hand of the Lord” (*cheir kuriou*, 37:1) brought Ezekiel to the middle of a valley full of bones. The Lord instructed Ezekiel to “prophesy over these bones” (*prophēteuson epi ta osta*, 37:4), saying that he (the Lord) will bring “the breath of life to them” (*eis humas pneuma zōēs*, 37:5). In addition to putting breath in them, the Lord says, his Spirit will add sinews to the bones and cover them with flesh and skin. Thus brought back to life, he proclaims, the dry bones of Israel “will know that I am the Lord” (*gnōsesthe hoti egō eimi kurios*, 37:6).

The Spirit of the Lord that rushes around and brings life to otherwise inanimate creatures, it seems clear, is not the Third Person of the Trinity. Furthermore, although there are several occurrences of *pneuma kuriou* in the NT, none appears to designate the

Holy Spirit in this context either. One occurrence is at *Acts* 5:9, where Peter accuses the wife of Ananias of “testing the Spirit of the Lord” (*peirpasai to pneuma kuriou*) by withholding money from the local community of believers, an offense for which Ananias himself had been struck dead (presumably by the Spirit of the Lord, 5:3) a few hours earlier. Another is *Acts* 8:39, where “the Spirit of the Lord carried Philip away” (*pneuma kuriou hērpasen ton Philippon*) after he had baptized the Ethiopian eunuch. These physical acts are reminiscent of the *pneuma kuriou* of the OT, and seem contrary to the nature of the Holy Spirit whose influence is exercised not on the believer’s body but rather on his heart (*Romans* 5:5, *2 Corinthians* 1:22).

The other expression sometimes read as designating the Holy Spirit that is shared by the OT and the NT alike is *pneuma theou* (Spirit of God). Not surprisingly, the Spirit of God in the OT shares salient characteristics with the Spirit of the Lord in that context. In particular, the Spirit of God has a way of rushing about inducing behavior considered eccentric by the viewing public. *First Samuel* 10:10, for example, tells how “the Spirit of God came mightily upon [Saul]” (*hēlato ep’ auton pneuma theou*), inspiring him to prophesy (*eprophēteusen*) to the bafflement of assembled onlookers. *Judges* 6:34, in turn, tells how “the Spirit of God came upon Gideon” (*pneuma theou eneduse ton Gedeōn*), leading him to sound his trumpet and to marshal the aroused Abiezrites under his leadership. Then in *2 Chronicles* 24:20, we read that “the Spirit of God came upon Zechariah” (*pneuma theou eneduse ton Azarian*), causing him to rebuke his listeners for having forsaken the Lord. His resentful listeners subsequently stoned him to death.

A spirit that induces poorly received public behavior of this sort is an unlikely candidate for precursor of the Holy Spirit in the NT. As with the *pneuma kuriou*

considered previously, this *pneuma theou* is not a probable OT counterpart to the Third Person of the NT's Holy Trinity. The apparent conclusion is that no clearly expressed antecedent to the Holy Spirit appears in the OT.

This conclusion runs counter to several apparent references in the NT to the Holy Spirit's involvement in the authorship of the OT. In *Hebrews* 3:7, the (unknown) author starts with the phrase "as the Holy Spirit says" (*kathōs legei to pneuma to hagion*) and proceeds to quote selectively from *Psalms* 95:7-11. Why the author attributes this passage to the Holy Spirit, however, is left unexplained. This accords with his apparent low opinion of his audience's mental capacities, as expressed at 5:11: "you have become dull of hearing" (*nōthroi gegonate tais akoais*). The explanation may be that the author thinks all the Psalms are the work of the NT's Holy Spirit. At *Hebrews* 10:15, similarly, the author writes: "the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us" (*Marturei de hēmin kai to pneuma to hagion*), and proceeds to repeat a version of *Jeremiah* 31:33-34. Indeed, it may be that the author considers the entire OT to be the work of the Holy Spirit. However this may be, speculation by an unknown author about the inspiration behind of the Psalms does not nullify our finding that the Holy Spirit is not mentioned in the OT proper.

A seemingly less speculative reason for maintaining that the Holy Spirit nonetheless is involved in the OT can be found at *Mark* 12:36. While teaching in the temple, Jesus mounted an argument against the scribes' claim that the Christ is the son of David. Jesus' argument turns on something said by "David himself, in the Holy Spirit" (*autos David eipen en tō pneumati tō hagiō*). Quoting David, Jesus then recites *Psalms* 110:1 almost verbatim. What should be carefully noted about this grammatically complex passage, however, is that Jesus is not saying unambiguously that the Holy Spirit was

actively involved in producing the verse in question. He appears to be saying instead that David is author of the verse (which we know already from 110:1) and that in voicing it David was speaking in accord with the Holy Spirit. Once again, there is nothing in *Mark* 12:36 to counter our conclusion that the Holy Spirit plays no active role in the OT.

(2.1252) The Holy Spirit: its Role as Enabler

As mentioned previously, the expression *pneuma hagion* appears roughly 90 times in the NT. Use of the expression is concentrated in *Luke* and *Acts*, which together contain more than 50 occurrences. There are numerous passages also in which the single term *pneuma* appears to designate the Holy Spirit without the qualifier *hagion*. Obvious examples include *Matthew* 4:1 and *Mark* 1:12, which tell of Jesus being taken by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil, and *Mark* 1:10, which depicts the Spirit descending on Jesus from heaven like a dove.

The first appearance of *pneuma hagion* in the NT is at *Matthew* 1:18, which tells how Mary (still virgin) was found to be with child “from the Holy Spirit” (*ek pneumatos hagiou*). When Mary’s pregnancy was disclosed, her “[betrothed] husband Joseph” (*Ἰωσήφ de ho anēr autēs*, 1:19) resolved to divorce her, but was assured by an angel that the child conceived in her is “from the Holy Spirit” (*ek pneumatos estin hagiou*, 1:20)). In *Luke*’s more complete account of Mary’s pregnancy, the angel Gabriel informs her in advance that “The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you” (*Pneuma hagion epeleusetai epi se kai dunamis hupsistou episkiasei soi*, *Luke* 1:35).

No less engrossing than the story of the Annunciation is the account of Pentecost in the second chapter of *Acts*. Pentecost was a Hebrew festival held on the fiftieth day after Passover. On this particular occasion, the twelve apostles (including Matthias who had been elected to replace Judas Iscariot; *Acts* 1:25-26) were gathered together in a group. “Suddenly a sound came from heaven like a mighty rushing wind” (*egeneto aphnō ek tou ouranou ēchos hōsper pheromenēs pnoēs biaias*, 2:2) which filled the entire house where they were sitting. And “they saw tongues like fire distributed among them” (*ōphthēsan autois diamerizomenai glōssai hōsei puros*, 2:3), tongues resting on “each one of them” (*hena hekaston autōn*, 2:3). With this, “they all were filled with the Holy Spirit” (*eplēsthēsan pantes pneumatos hagiou*, 2:4) and “began to speak in other tongues” (*ērxanto lalein heterais glōssais*, 2:4). As visible manifestations of the Holy Spirit, the tongues of flame enabled them to speak in the tongues of foreign languages.

Hearing the din, a crowd of devout Jews “from every nation under heaven” (*apo pantos ethnous tōn hupo ton ouranon*, 2:5) gathered around the house, each hearing speech in his own native language. As might be expected, “all were amazed and perplexed (*existanto de pantes kai diēporoun*, 2:12), asking each other “What does it mean?” (*Ti thelei touto einai*; 2:12). Some even scoffed that the apostles were drunk with new wine. After responding matter-of-factly that it was too early in the day to be drunk, Peter launches into a discourse quoting passages from the OT (*Joel* 2: 28-29, *Psalms* 16:8-11, *Psalms* 110:1) by way of explaining to the crowd that what they are witnessing comes from the Father’s promise “of the Holy Spirit” (*tou pneumatos tou hagiou*, 2:33). If only they will “repent and be baptized ... in the name of Jesus Christ” (*Metanoēsate ... kai baptisthētō ... epi tō onomati 'Iēsou Christou*, 2:38), he tells his

audience, they too will receive “the gift of the Holy Spirit” (*tēn dōrean tou hagiou pneumatos*, 2:38). Persuaded by this uneducated (cf. *Acts* 4:13) fisherman’s eloquence and knowledge of scripture, “about three thousand souls” (*psuchai hōsei trischiliai*, 2:41) were added that day to the Christian fellowship in Jerusalem.

Other passages linking the Holy Spirit with the gift of tongues are *Acts* 10:45-46, *Acts* 19:6, and *I Corinthians* 12:9-10. As depicted in the NT, speaking in tongues is an ability not possessed by ordinary human beings. It is a supernatural ability deriving from the Holy Spirit.

Another extraordinary capacity enabled by the Holy Spirit is facility of speech in the presence of civil authorities. In *Matthew* 10:19-20, while preparing them for their mission, Jesus assures his disciples that, when they are brought before governors and kings for his sake, the Spirit of the Father will speak through them. This message is repeated at *Luke* 12:12, where Jesus tells the disciples that the “Holy Spirit will teach you what to say” (*hagion pneuma didaxei humas ... ha dei eipein*) when brought before “the authorities in the synagogues” (*epi tas sunagōgas ... tas exousias*, 12:11).

An illustration appears in *Acts* 4:5-13. Not long after Pentecost, Peter had cured a cripple who had been lame from birth. Fearful of the effects this would have on the crowds, the authorities arrested Peter and John and brought them before the assembled “rulers and elders and scribes” (*archontas kai ... presbuterous kai ... grammateis*, 4:5) of Jerusalem. Referring to the healing, the rulers asked: “By what power or in what name did you do this?” (*En poia dunamei ē en poiō onomati epoiēsate touto humeis*;, 4.7). Then Peter, “filled with the Holy Spirit: (*plēstheis pneumatos hagiou*, 4:8), told them that the healing had been done in the name of Jesus Christ whom they had crucified.

Disconcerted by the audacity of these “illiterate and common men” (*anthrōpoi agrammatōi ... kai idiōtai*, 4:13), the rulers realized no firm case could be made against them, and released them with warnings to stop invoking Jesus’ name. This is a prime example of the Holy Spirit in its role as helper (*paraklēton*, *John* 14:16).

Among extraordinary powers attributed to the Holy Spirit in the New Testament, in brief, we have noted (1) the power of impregnating Mary without affecting her virginity, (2) that of endowing the apostles with the capacity to speak in tongues, and (3) that of enabling untutored disciples like Peter to respond persuasively to voices of authority. We may think of such cases, and others like them, as instances of the Holy Spirit acting in its broad role of enabler.

(2.1253) The Holy Spirit: its Role as Sanctifier

Another mode of action attributed to the Holy Spirit in the NT is that of sanctification. We begin our survey of this activity by noting several passages in which sanctification by the Holy Spirit is mentioned explicitly. In *Romans* 15:16, Paul tells his audience that the offering of the Gentiles is acceptable insofar as it is “sanctified by the Holy Spirit” (*hēgiasmenē en pneumati hagiō*). In *2 Thessalonians* 2:13, Paul tells the Thessalonians that they are saved “though sanctification by the Spirit” (*en hagiasmō pneumatōs*). And in *1 Peter* 1:2, written to Christians exiled in far-flung places including Pontus, Galatia, and Cappadocia, the author addresses them as set apart “by the sanctification of the Holy Spirit” (*en hagiasmō pneumatōs*).

The term used for sanctification in these passages comes from the verb *hagizō*, which also yields the adjective *hagios* in *pneuma hagon*. Like the other two Persons of

the Trinity, presumably, the Third Person is holy just in itself, meaning that holiness is one of its characteristics. But beyond that, it has a distinctive capacity to make other things holy as well. In so doing, the Holy Spirit operates in its sanctifying mode.

There is a tendency among some groups of Christians to associate sanctification by the Holy Spirit with the ritual of baptism. This association is supported by *Matthew* 28:19, where the resurrected Jesus tells his disciples “to instruct all nations” (*mathēteusate panta ta ethnē*), “baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (*baptizontes autous eis to onoma tou patros kai tou huiou kai tou hagiou pneumatos*).

The association also appears to be supported by references to the Holy Spirit in chapter 1 and 2 of *Acts*. Before the disciples departed on the mission of *Matthew* 28:19, by way of reminder, Jesus told them that they would soon “be baptized with the Holy Spirit” (*en pneumati baptisthēsethe hagiō*, *Acts* 1:5) themselves. As the text makes clear, reference here is to the aforementioned occasion on Pentecost when the Holy Spirit descended on the assembled disciples like a rushing wind from heaven. In this sequence of happenings, the baptism with the Holy Spirit that Jesus foretells in *Acts* 1:5 clearly is associated with “being filled with the Holy Spirit” (*eplēsthēsan ... pneumatos hagiou*) as described in *Acts* 2:4. But whether descent of the Holy Spirit in 2:4 is tantamount to baptism with the Holy Spirit as foretold in 1:5 is less certain, and depends upon how we understand baptism in this context.

The first mention of baptism in the NT is at *Matthew* 3:6. John the Baptist was preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and people were coming from all around to be baptized (*ebaptizonto*) by him in the Jordan River. Among them were numerous

Pharisees and Sadducees. Labeling these a “brood of vipers” (*[g]ennēmata echidnōn*, 3:7), John cautioned them that whereas he baptizes “with water for repentance” (*en hudati eis metanoian*, 3:11), someone will come who “will baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire” (*baptisei en pneumati hagiō kai puri*, 3:11).

John’s practice of baptizing in the river was a continuation of the Jewish tradition of ritual cleansing in “living water” (*hudatos zōēs* at *Jeremiah* 2:13; see also *John* 7:38); that is to say, in a river, a spring, or a connecting pool. As practiced by John, baptism required complete immersion (“deep immersion,” in keeping with the etymologically related term *bathos* meaning deep). Although baptizing in the manner of John was a carryover from the earlier Jewish practice of ritual cleansing (e.g., *Leviticus* 11:32, *Joshua* 3:15), however, there is no mention of complete human immersion in the Septuagint. John’s reference to one who will baptize with water and fire, accordingly, is innovative in two respects. It employs a term (*baptizein*) with a meaning unprecedented in the Bible. And it trades on a metaphorical extension of the term to cover a novel manner of “immersion” (by the Holy Spirit and fire) in which no liquid is involved.

John’s anticipation of someone who will baptize with the Holy Spirit figures in the other three gospels as well. The gospel *Mark* has John saying that he has baptized with water, but that this person to come “will baptize you with the Holy Spirit” (*baptisei humas en pneumati hagiō*, 1:8). Fire is not mentioned in the account of *Mark*. Fire comes back into the picture at *Luke* 3:16, where John says that whereas he baptizes with water the one to come “will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire” (*humas baptisei en pneumati hagiō kai puri*). Again without mentioning fire, the version in *John* has John the Baptist revealing who the expected person is. This time John says: “He on whom you see

the Spirit descend and remain, this is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit” (*Eph’ hon an idēs to pneuma katabainon kai menon ep’ auton, houtos estin ho baptizōn en pneumati hagiō, John 1:33*).

This brings us back to the account in *Matthew*. Jesus had come to the Jordan to be baptized by John. Immediately after he stepped out of the river, the heavens opened and Jesus saw “the Spirit of God” (*[to] pneuma [tou] theou, Matthew 3:16*) descending on him like a dove and settling (*erchomenon*) on him. And then he heard a voice from heaven saying “This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased” (*Houtos estin ho huios mou ho agapētos, en hō eudokēsa, 3:17*). Essentially the same account, dove included, is found at *Mark 1:10-11*, *Luke 3:22*, and *John 1:30-34*. Each Person of the Trinity is present in this transaction. God the Father, being well pleased, sends the Holy Spirit to rest upon the Son.

The gospels agree in depicting John the Baptist as baptizing with water, and as foretelling one to come who would baptize with the Holy Spirit. They also portray the Holy Spirit as descending on Jesus in palpable form (the dove) and as coming to rest on him. In the narrative sequence of the gospels, these events invite one to expect that the time will soon come when Jesus begins baptizing in the manner John predicted. Pursuing this line of expectation, however, leads to the surprising conclusion that Jesus is never depicted in the NT as baptizing with the Holy Spirit. In point of fact, Jesus is never depicted as baptizing in any manner whatever. These blanket statements require commentary.

Consider first the matter of baptizing with the Holy Spirit. The main textual evidence linking the Holy Spirit to baptism is the sequence in *Acts 1 and 2* that we have

been considering. In *Acts* 1:5 the risen Jesus tells the apostles that in days soon to come they will be baptized with the Holy Spirit. The text makes clear that Jesus is referring here to the events of Pentecost described in 2:1-4. The Holy Spirit rushed down on the apostles in a mighty wind, touched them individually with tongues of fire, and bestowed on them the ability to speak in many languages. Reference to fire in this narrative recalls John's prediction that Jesus would baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire.

But what kind of baptism do we find in the Pentacost narrative? We normally think of ritual baptism as an act someone performs, that is as something done by a qualified agent. Baptizing with water was something that John the Baptist did. And baptizing with the Holy Spirit and fire was something John predicted that Jesus would do in turn. The descent of the Holy Spirit depicted in *Acts* 2:2-4, however, was not an action performed by an agent. In the sequence of 2:2-4, there is nothing corresponding to John's baptizing his disciples with water. There is no baptizer (corresponding to John) distinct from the means (in John's case, water) with which he baptizes. If descent of the Spirit on the apostles was tantamount to their being baptized, this baptism was not an action undertaken with them as object but rather an occurrence to which they happened to be subjected. In particular, it was not an instance of Jesus baptizing with the Holy Spirit and fire as John foretold. The happenings of 2:2-4 do not constitute an act of baptism that Jesus or anyone else might have performed.

Initially more dubious, perhaps, is the second claim that the NT never depicts Jesus as performing baptisms of any sort whatever. This claim initially seems to be countered by *John* 3:22, which reads "Jesus went with his disciples into the Judean countryside" (*ēlthen ho 'Iēsous kai hoi mathētai autou eis tēn 'Ioudaian gēn*), where he

“spent time with them” (*diatriben met’ autōn*) and ‘baptized’ (*ebaptizen*). The sense of this remark seems to be that Jesus’ time with the disciples was spent baptizing with them, suggesting that *met’ autōn* should be added to *ebaptizen* for grammatical completeness. Only a dozen or so verses later (*John* 4:2), however, there is an explicit statement (with parentheses in text) saying “(Jesus himself did not baptize, but only his disciples)” (- *’Iēsous autos ouk ebaptizen all’ hoi mathētai autou* -). According to *John* 3:22, it seems, Jesus engaged in baptism, whereas according to *John* 4:2 he did not. This apparent anomaly calls for explanation.

As a beginning, we may note that the several passages between 3:22 and 4:2 are concerned mainly with John the Baptist’s reaction when he heard that Jesus and his group were baptizing in Judea. John and his disciples were baptizing some distance away (in Aenon near Salim) because “water was plentiful there” (*hudata polla ēn ekei*, 3:23). This makes it clear that the baptism here in question is the standard kind involving water. As it turned out, the story continues, some of John’s disciples got into a discussion with a devout Jew “concerning purification” (*peri katharismou*, 3:25), as a result of which John became aware that Jesus’ group was baptizing greater numbers of people than John’s group was. John responded to this information by saying that his joy is now complete, and that Jesus must increase while he must decrease (*ekeinon dei auxanein, eme de elattousthai*, 3:30). As far as Jesus was concerned, on the other hand, when he learned that the Jews had heard that his group was baptizing more people than John’s, he left Judea and returned to Galilee (4:3). The parenthetical remark that his disciples were doing the actual baptizing, rather than Jesus himself, is a commentary on the circumstances in which he decided to leave Judea.

This background provides insight into the apparent conflict between 3:22 and 4:2. The appearance of conflict hangs upon the odd grammar of *John* 3:22 mentioned above. All verbs in the sentence (*ēlthen*, went; *dietriben*, remained; *ebaptizen*, baptized) are third person singular. This suggests superficially that Jesus is the singular subject of the sentence. Yet both Jesus and his disciples went to Judea, and both remained there for a while. As far as the first two verbs are concerned, in effect, Jesus and disciples are treated as a single entity. The group (singular) consisting of Jesus and his disciples went (*ēlthen*) to Judea and stayed (*dietriben*) there for a while. So too with the verb *ebaptizen*, which again takes Jesus and his disciples as its single subject. Of this group consisting of Jesus and his disciples, 4:2 then tells us, only the disciples were engaged in actual baptism. This resolves the apparent conflict between 3:22 and 4:2. The upshot is that *John* 3:22 does not provide an instance of Jesus engaging in baptism, either with water or by any other means.

For present purposes, the main point here is that the Pentacost sequence of *Acts* 1 and 2 does not provide an instance of Jesus baptizing with the Holy Spirit and fire as John predicted. And since the NT contains no record of Jesus baptizing in any manner whatever, there are no other passages that illustrate what John had in mind. As far as textual evidence is concerned, John's prediction that Jesus will baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire remains an unfulfilled prophecy.

The Pentacost sequence was also cited above as support for the thought of some Christians that sanctification by the Holy Spirit is accomplished through the ritual of baptism. This association between the Holy Spirit and baptism is not affected by the fact that Jesus himself is nowhere depicted as baptizing with the Holy Spirit. For there are

numerous passages describing baptisms performed by his disciples. And several of these passages refer to the descent of the Holy Spirit as well.

A survey of these passages, however, reveals no consistent picture of how the two are related. In particular, there is no consistent portrayal of their temporal order, which disqualifies the view that one comes about through the other. In some contexts ritual baptism precedes sanctification by the Spirit, while in others the order of precedence is reversed. And there are many contexts in which one figures prominently with no mention of the other. A few examples of each should help clarify their relation.

In the sequence of events depicted in *Acts* 19:1-6, baptism (by water) precedes the descent of the Holy Spirit. According to this sequence, Paul had arrived in Ephesus and found “a number of disciples” (*tinas mathētas*, 19:1) there. He asked them whether they had “received the Holy Spirit” (*pneuma hagion elabete*, 19:2) when they became believers. Upon learning that they had not even heard of the Holy Spirit, Paul asked them “Into what were you baptized?” (*Eis ti ouv ebaptisthēte*, 19:3). They replied “Into John’s baptism” (*Eis to ’Iōannou baptisma*, 19:3). Paul then told them that John taught belief in Jesus, and proceeded to baptize them “in the name of the Lord Jesus” (*eis to onoma tou kuriou ’Iēsou*, 19:5). While this was happening, “the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began to speak in tongues and to prophesy” (*ēlthe to pneuma to hagion ep’ autous, elaloun te glōssais kai eprophēteuon*, 19:6). As with the events surrounding Pentecost, *Acts* 19:1-6 makes it appear that baptism was a prelude to the coming of the Holy Spirit.

To be sure, there is even a passage suggesting that baptism not only precedes receipt of the Holy Spirit but is sufficient to bring it about as well. In his sermon to the multinational assembly on the occasion of Pentecost, Peter (the unschooled fisherman)

quotes the prophet Joel (from *Joel* 2:28-32) and the patriarch David (from *Psalms* 16:8-11) at length, and calls upon “the entire house of Israel” (*pas oikos 'Israēl, Acts* 2:36) to realize that God has made the one they crucified “both Lord and Christ” (*kai kurion auton kai Christon, 2:36*). The Jews were “cut to the heart” (*katenugēsan tēn kardian, 2:37*) and asked Peter and the apostles what they should do. Peter replied: “Repent and be baptized ... in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (*Metanoēsate ... kai baptisthētō ... epi tō onomati 'Iēsou Christou eis aphesin tōn hamartiōn humōn kai lēmpsesthe tēn dōrean tou hagiou pneumatos, 2:38*). Peter at least appears to be saying that baptism is enough to cause the Holy Spirit to descend on the repentant Jews.

On the other hand we find contexts in which the Holy Spirit descends before baptism takes place. One such is chapter 10 of *Acts* in which the absolution provided by Christ’s death is extended to the Gentiles. Guided by a vision from heaven, Peter has journeyed to Caesarea at the behest of Cornelius the Roman centurion. Cornelius urges Peter to tell him about Jesus. Affirming that “God shows no favoritism” (*ouk estin prosōpolēptēs ho theos, 10:34*), Peter avowed that everyone who believes in Jesus Christ “receives forgiveness of sins through his name” (*aphesin hamartiōn labein dia tou onomatos autou, 10:43*). While Peter was saying these things, “the Holy Spirit descended on all who heard the message” (*epepesen to pneuma to hagion epi pantas tous akouontas ton logon, 10:44*). The circumcised Jews who came with Peter were amazed because “the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles” (*kai epi ta ethnē hē dōrea tou hagiou pneumatos ekkechutai, 10:45*), for these others were “speaking in tongues” (*lalountōn glōssais, 10:46*) and extolling God. Then Peter asked rhetorically “Can anyone

withhold water for baptizing these people, who have received the Holy Spirit as we have?” (*Mēti to hudōr dunatai kōlusai tis tou mē baptisthēnai toutous, hoitines to pneuma to hagion elabon hōs kai hēmeis;*, 10:47), and gave instructions that they too should be “baptized in the name of Jesus Christ” (*en tō onomati 'Iēsou Christou baptisthēnai*, 10:48). Baptism in this case came after reception of the Holy Spirit.

Another dramatic sequence in which baptism follows reception of the Holy Spirit centers on Saul’s interaction with Ananias in Damascus. As Saul approached the city, the narrative goes, “a light from heaven suddenly flashed around him” (*exaiphnēs te auton periēstrapsen phōs ek tou ouranou, Acts 9:3*). As he fell to the ground, he heard a voice saying “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?” (*Saoul Saoul, ti me diōkeis;*, 9:4). Asked who was speaking, the voice replied “I am Jesus whom you are persecuting” (*Egō eimi 'Iēsous hon su diōkeis*, 9:5). The voice then told Saul to proceed into the city and to wait instructions about what to do next. Inasmuch as Saul had been blinded by the flash, he relied on his companions for help in proceeding.

Once in Damascus, Saul was led to the house of Judas on a specific street, where he met Ananias who had been sent there in a vision to attend him. Laying his hands on Saul, Ananias said “the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road ... has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit” (*ho kurios apestalken me, 'Iēsous ho ophtheis soi en tē hodō ... hopōs anablepsēs kai plēsthēs pneumatos hagiou*. 9:17). Immediately “something like scales fell from his eyes” (*apepesan autou apo tōn ophthalmōn hōs lepides*, 9:18) and he regained his sight. Then he “rose and was baptized” (*kai anastas ebaptisthē*, 9:18). Saul’s regaining his sight presumably coincided

with his being filled with the Holy Spirit. If so, he was filled with the Holy Spirit before he was baptized.

Apart from the issue of which comes first, there are many passages in which baptism figures without mention of the Holy Spirit, and vice versa. Included among the former are *Acts* 8:35-38 (Philip's baptism of the eunuch), *Acts* 16:15 (the baptism of Lydia and her household), and *Acts* 16:33 (the baptism of the converted jailor and his family). Cases illustrating descent of the Holy Spirit without involvement of baptism, in turn, will be discussed below in connection with the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

All in all, it appears, the picture of baptism afforded by the New Testament is amorphous and uncertain. There are even passages where the term *baptisma* is used in a metaphorical sense, having little to do with a ritual procedure. One is *Mark* 10:38, where Jesus questions James and John whether they are able to drink the cup that he drinks, or to "be baptized by the baptism with which I am baptized" (*to baptisma ho egō baptizomai baptisthēnai*). Another is *Luke* 12:50, where Jesus says in exasperation: "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and great is my distress until it is accomplished" (*baptisma de echō baptisthēnai, kai pōs sunechomai heōs hotou telesthē*). The "baptism" to which Jesus refers in both cases, of course, is the ordeal of death on the cross.

By way of conclusion, it is clear that the sanctification of the Holy Spirit and ritual baptism are separate themes in the NT. In cases where the procedure of baptism clearly leads to the advent of the Holy Spirit, nonetheless, that procedure serves as an avenue enabling the Holy Spirit to function in its sanctifying mode. We turn now to other avenues by which the Holy Spirit might come to dwell within an individual person.

(2.1254) The Holy Spirit: its Indwelling Role

We have examined the Holy Spirit's roles of enabler (e.g., empowering the speaking in tongues) and of sanctifier (e.g., making acceptable the offerings of the Gentiles). Another role of the Holy Spirit is indicated in *Romans* 5:5, where Paul says "God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given us" (*hē agape tou theou ekkechutai en tais kardiais hēmōn dia pneumatōs hagiou tou dothentos hēmin*). The Holy Spirit has been given to dwell within us, Paul says in effect, where it acts as a channel of God's affection. Let us refer to this as the indwelling role of the Holy Spirit.

As depicted in the NT, there are various ways in which the Holy Spirit is brought to dwell within individual people. One is by so-called "laying on of hands." In *Acts* 8:17, the Samaritans "received the Holy Spirit" (*elambanon pneuma hagion*) when Peter and John "laid their hands on them" (*epithesan tas cheiras ep' autous*). *Acts* 19:6 tells us that when "Paul laid his hands" (*epithentos autois tou Paulou [tas] cheiras*) on the group at Ephesus, "the Holy Spirit came on them" (*ēlthe to pneuma to hagion ep' autous*) and they began speaking in tongues. And in *Acts* 9:17, after "laying his hands on" (*epitheis ep' auton tas cheiras*) Saul, Ananias bids him "be filled with the Holy Spirit" (*plēsthēs pneumatōs hagiou*). In these cases, the laying on of hands is an act deliberately undertaken by Peter, John, Paul and Ananias, respectively.

There is another case in which Peter brings about the coming of the Holy Spirit inadvertently. As previously discussed, the case features Peter's address to Cornelius and fellow Gentiles on the topic of God's forgiveness being available to people of all nations. In the midst of Peter's address, we hear at *Acts* 10:44, "the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the message" (*epepesen to pneuma to hagion epi pantas tous akouontas ton logon*).

Although Peter's role here is inadvertent, this event joins those above as cases in which descent of the Holy Spirit upon an individual person involves the active participation of other people.

In what surely are the most dramatic instances of the Holy Spirit coming to dwell in individual people, however, no other human individuals are involved. Three such cases are recorded in the early pages of *Luke*. First mentioned is the case of John the Baptist. Zechariah, John's father, had been advised in advance by an angel that his wife Elizabeth would bear him a son, despite her being past child-bearing years. Many will rejoice at his birth, the angel said, and "he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb" (*pneumatōs hagiou plēsthesetai eti ek koilias mētros autou, Luke 1:15*). Second is the case of Elizabeth herself. In the sixth month of pregnancy, Elizabeth received a visitor in the person of her cousin Mary, to whom Gabriel had already announced that she would bear a son by the Holy Spirit. When Elizabeth heard Mary's voice, the unborn John "leaped in her womb" (*eskirtēsen ... en tē koilia autēs, 1:41*), and she "was filled with the Holy Spirit" (*eplēsthē pneumatōs hagiou, 1:41*). Whereupon Elizabeth exclaimed in a loud voice: "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb" (*Eulogēmenē su en gunaixin kai eulogēmenos ho karpos tēs koilias sou, 1:42*).

Third is the case of John's father, Zechariah. When John was born, those concerned thought he would be named after his father, but Elizabeth insisted on the name John instead. This was the name specified by the angel who told Zechariah of Elizabeth's forthcoming pregnancy. On this previous occasion, Zechariah had been struck speechless for doubting what the angel told him. But when those concerned asked him what his son should be named, Zechariah wrote "His name is John" (*Iōannēs estin onoma autou,*

1:63) on a tablet, and immediately his speech was restored. Following this, “Jechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit” (*Zacharias ... autou eplēsthē pneumatos hagiou*, 1:67), and burst into prophetic speech extolling the role prepared for his son, who “will go before the Lord to prepare his ways” (*proporeusē ... enōpion kuriou hetoimasai hodous autou*, 1:76).

A seemingly less momentous case of the indwelling Holy Spirit, also recorded in *Luke*, is that of Simeon who encountered the child Jesus in the temple. With the “Holy Spirit upon him” (*pneuma ... hagion ep’ auton*, 2:25), it had been revealed to Simeon “by the Holy Spirit” (*hupo tou pneumatos tou hagiou*, 2:26) that he would not die “before he had seen the Christ of the Lord” (*prin [ē] an idē ton Christon kuriou*, 2:26). When his parents brought the child Jesus into the temple, Simeon “took him into his arms” (*edexato auto eis tas ankalas*, 2:28), intoning the supplication beginning “Lord, according to your word, now let your servant depart in peace” (*Nun apolueis ton doulon sou, despota, kata to hrēma sou en eirēnē*, 2:29).

In every case considered thus far, descent of the Holy Spirit upon a given person occurs without the initiative of the person receiving it. Ananias brought the Holy Spirit upon Saul by the laying on of hands, but the initiative was that of Ananias and not of Saul himself. Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit when John leapt in her womb, and John received the Holy Spirit upon birth. When the Holy Spirit descended on Zechariah or on Simeon, in turn, no human initiative contributed to the happening. In such cases, descent of the Holy Spirit occurred without deliberate action on the part of the recipient.

There are other passages in the NT, however, that portray descent of the Holy Spirit as an occurrence brought about by something the recipient does deliberately. One

such comes at the end of the sequence where Peter and John reported to their fellow believers the favorable outcome of their grilling by the Jewish officials (described in *Acts* 4:1-22). As might be recalled, Peter and John had cured a man lame from birth in the name of Jesus, thus provoking the ire of the Jewish authorities. The two had spoken so effectively in their defense that the authorities released them with mere warnings to cease and desist. Their fellow believers were so pleased with this result that they “lifted their voices to God in one accord” (*homothumadon ēran phōnēn pros ton theon, Acts* 4:24), quoted some scripture, and began praying. And after they had prayed, “their [gathering] place shook” (*esaleuthē ho topos, 4:31*), and “all were filled with the Holy Spirit” (*eplēsthēsan hapantes tou hagiou pneumatos, 4:31*). As the text reads, both the shaking and the descent of the Holy Spirit resulted from their deliberate action of praying.

The avenue of prayer is opened to a much larger class of people at the end of the section in *Luke* that contains the truncated version of the Lord’s Prayer (shorter than at *Matthew* 6:9-13). After communicating the prayer to his disciples at 11:2-4, Jesus ventures a somewhat arcane parable on the theme of giving bread and conveys a perennially comforting assurance regarding the efficacy of prayer generally. In Jesus’ words at 11:9, “ask, and it will be given you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it will be opened to you” (*aiteite kai dothēsetai humin, zēteite kai heurēsete, krouete kai anoigēsetai humin*). Then, comparing “faulty” (*ponēroi, 11:13*) fathers with the Heavenly Father, and observing that even the former will provide for the needs of heir sons, Jesus concludes: “how much more will the Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!” (*posō mallon ho patēr [ho] ex ouranou dōsei pneuma hagion tois aitousin auton, 11:13*).

Again all three Persons of the Trinity are involved. In the immediate sequel to the Lord's Prayer, the Son assures his disciples that the Father will give the Holy Spirit to those who ask. To ask God for the Holy Spirit is to pray for that gift. For those who do not know "how to pray as they ought" (*proseuxōmetha katho dei ouk, Romans 8:26*), the Holy Spirit itself will come to their aid. So at least says Paul in his message to the Romans. In such cases, "the Spirit itself intercedes with sighs beyond uttering" (*auto to pneuma huperentunchanei stenagmois alalētois, Romans 8:26*). A soft sigh of intercession is a far cry from the great rushing wind with which the Spirit descended on the apostles on the day of Pentacost.

(2.2) Belief(d): Its Place in Religious Belief

Religious belief is a variety of symphoric belief, in that it amounts to an acceptance of a comprehensive worldview. Symphoric belief (belief(s)) is one of four genres of belief distinguished at the beginning of this essay, the other three being apodexic belief (belief(a)), doxastic belief (belief(d)), and believing in (belief(n)). In a comprehensive worldview, a generalized form of belief(a) functions as what has been termed a "horizon of expectation," meaning a background of entities and influences one is prepared to deal with as a matter of course when participating in that worldview. We have examined horizons of expectation typical of religious belief in some detail, taking the worldviews of the OT and the NT as primary examples. We turn now to the part played by belief(d) in religious belief.

A review of the main factors comprising belief(d) is in order, preceded by some reminders regarding belief(d) itself. Doxastic belief is the acceptance of a specific

proposition as being true. The proposition is the object of the belief(d) in question. A proposition is (1) a representation of a SOA (state of affairs) combined with (2) an indication of that SOA's status, that either of being the case or of not being the case. A proposition is true if and only if the SOA it represents in fact has the status indicated in the proposition; otherwise it is false. A belief(d) shares the truth-value of its propositional object. Propositions are either true or false; so too the beliefs(d) that take them as objects.

A SOA is an aspect of the world, either as it is or as it might be. An actual SOA is an aspect of the world as it is, a possible SOA an aspect of the world as it might be. SOAs are keyed to expressions in the natural languages used to represent them. A natural language is a symbol system by which members of linguistic groups communicate with each other. To communicate successfully about particular SOAs, members of a given linguistic group must have a shared understanding of circumstances that constitute the actual presence of those SOAs if and when they occur in the world as it is. For any given SOA, the group's understanding of what constitutes its actual presence provides the criterion determining whether or not that SOA is the case. In the linguistic dealings of a given group, a SOA is the case if the circumstances understood by the group as constituting its actual presence in fact occur. If those circumstances do not occur, the SOA in question is not the case.

Among linguistic expressions purporting to represent SOAs, criteria based on shared understanding of this sort also distinguish between expressions that correspond to genuine SOAs and those that do not. A previously discussed example of the latter is Lewis Carroll's "Mome raths outgrabe." Since no relevant language group possesses a shared understanding of circumstances that would constitute the presence of its supposed

referent, that expression does not correspond to a genuine SOA. Accordingly, there is no genuine proposition either affirming or denying that the supposed referent of that nonsensical expression is or is not the case.

As far as belief(d) is concerned, all genuine beliefs(d) have genuine propositions as objects. And since all but only genuine propositions are either true or false, all but only genuine beliefs(d) are true or false as well. A putative belief(d) to the effect that “Mome raths outgrabe” has no truth-value. It is as nonsensical as Lewis Carroll’s original expression itself.

(2.21) The Accommodation of Belief(d) in Various Forms of Discourse

There are many forms of discourse, and many ways of categorizing them. The categorization that follows is set up to emphasize the uniqueness of religious discourse and to provide a tolerably clear sense of the extent to which religious discourse accommodates doxastic belief.

Human discourse can be divided into (1) isolated reports and (2) communication about events represented as interconnected. Isolated reports treat specific events in a manner that minimizes their relations to other events. Examples are “There is a herd of bison to the east” (in the context of a tribal hunt) and “John had eggs for breakfast this morning” (in the context of a review of John’s day). Discourse of type (1) can include lists of individual items (as in an inventory), as long as those items are treated in isolation. Discourse of type (2), on the other hand, deals with events in a manner that emphasizes connections they may have with one another. An example is an account of significant events in John’s day that treats them in order of temporal sequence.

Discourse of the latter sort can be further divided by type of connection involved. Among types of connection are (a) sequence of natural occurrences, (b) logical sequence, and (c) narrative sequence. Examples of (a) include an itemization of events in John's day in temporal order as above, and an account in terms of perceived causal sequence of events leading to John's success in finding a job. Examples of (b) can be drawn from almost any endeavor relying on logical reasoning, such as the derivation of empirical consequences from scientific principles and argumentation aimed at trapping a verbal opponent in contradiction. Of special interest for present purposes is (c) discourse arranged in narrative order. This comprises forms of discourse with a storyline, consisting generally of (i) a starting point connected with (ii) a projected end by (iii) a series of end-directed events in the middle. Most well written novels would serve as examples. Other examples include religious narratives like those supported by the OT and the NT.

Discourse arranged in narrative order can be further divided according to sources. On one hand is discourse initiated by individual authors, on the other discourse generated by cultural processes. The former includes fictional works generally, along with non-fictional work by disciplined historians. The latter includes discourse such as oral traditions, creation myths, and fables. Our primary concern in this study leads in the direction of culturally generated narratives. With regard to matters of belief(d), however, there are useful parallels to be found among both fictional and non-fictional works by individual authors. With this in mind, let us look at further distinctions within the category of the fictional narrative.

(2.211) Fictional Narrative

Works of fiction generally reflect the influence of characteristic constraints that authors tend to observe in the process of composition. Authors of historical novels, for example, must abide by constraints of historical plausibility. Plots and personae in this genre are left to the author, but events in the storyline overall must fit within a recognizable historical niche. Leo Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* is a historical novel written against the background of late 19th century feudal Russian society. This background is what makes it a historical novel, as distinct from a work of generic (undifferentiated) fiction. In setting out to write a novel of this specific sort, Tolstoy presumably adopted the constraints by which that genre is identified.

Generic fiction is governed by its own constraints, albeit constraints of a more general character. In addition to a developing storyline, a work of generic fiction must bring to bear a coherent conception of the world in which events of the narrative take place. At very least, this world must be sufficiently well ordered to support characters with persisting identities who are capable of actions with predictable effects. Without basic coherence of this sort, it would be impossible for an identifiable storyline to take shape. Constraints of this general sort must be observed for the author's product to count as a work of fiction in the first place.

Generic fiction gives way to historical fiction when constraints of historical plausibility are added to those of basic coherence. Another departure from generic fiction is the genre of science fiction. Whereas the constraints of historical fiction pertain to the past, those of science fiction tend to be future-oriented. A work of science fiction is a story about what might happen of human interest if science continues to develop along its

current path. Plot and personae, once again, are left to the author's invention. But to count as science fiction specifically, the narrative has to develop in a manner consistent with constraints of scientific plausibility. As such, a work of science fiction should not be read as a prediction of what the future will be like. It is rather a depiction of what the future might be like if science continues to develop as it has in the past.

Of particular interest for present purposes is the genre of fantasy literature. There are various well-known works, to be sure, that combine fantasy with science fiction. Notable examples are the so-called "space trilogy" of C. S. Lewis and the *Dune* series by Frank Herbert. As far as "pure" fantasy is concerned, however, J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* is a universally recognized pace setter. More recent contributions of note to this category include *A Wizard of Earthsea* by Ursula K. Le Quin, *A Game of Thrones* by George R. R. Martin, and the Harry Potter series by J. K. Rowling. For present purposes, Tolkien's work stands out as particularly instructive.

It might appear at first that fantasy literature abides by no constraints whatever. The genre shows little concern for either historical or scientific plausibility. There are of course the basic constraints of sheer narrative coherence. If such constraints were not in place, a typical fantasy work would lack the character development and sense of quest that make it interesting to read. Beyond sheer coherence, however, there are other characteristics of fantasy literature that make it a genre unto itself. A primary constraint rules out portrayal of a world that is value neutral. Value neutrality is not uncommon in science fiction, and is more or less standard in historical novels. Fantasy literature, on the other hand, typically is written against the background of a world in which distinctions of value are inherent. A standard theme of fantasy literature is that of an ongoing battle

between good and evil in which more is at stake than the interests of the human (or human-like) characters who happen to be involved. The thematic battle of *The Lord of the Rings*, by way of illustration, pits the inherently evil forces of Mordor against the creatures loyal to Iluvatar the Creator.

Another basic constraint of fantasy literature precludes anthropocentrism. In one respect, this rules out any storyline in which the good of individuals outweighs the common good. To prevail in the battle between good and evil, the forces of good must present a unified front. The forces of good typically will include creatures of various species, animal and vegetable (both broadly conceived) as well as human. If the forces of good are to succeed, the welfare of the group must take precedence over the welfare of individual participants. In the overall scheme of things, the ultimate fulfillment of an individual life may even boil down to the sacrifice of self for the good of others. In Tolkein's narrative, sacrifice of Gandalf the Grey turned out to be essential for the eventual defeat of the evil lord Sauron.

Avoidance of anthropocentrism also rules out a storyline in which human-like creatures are in charge of nature. Rather than having dominion over nature, humankind itself is only part of the natural order. In a typical fantasy world, the distinction between good and evil goes hand in hand with the distinction between natural and unnatural. If an attempt were made by created beings to take control over nature (inspired perhaps by *Genesis* 1:26), unnatural results would be sure to follow. Something like this happens in Tolkein's story when previously natural breeds of elves were viciously transmogrified into unnatural orcs. A fantasy author would follow the spirit of *Genesis* 2:15, which depicts the Lord God as instructing Adam to "dress and keep" (*ergazesthai auton kai*

phulassein) the Garden of Eden, in contrast with *Genesis* 1:28 where he is told to “fill the earth and gain dominion over it” (*plērōsate tēn gēn kai katakurieusate autēs*). The latter passage characterizes the goal of Tolkien’s Dark Lord, which is thwarted by the forces of Good by the end of the story.

Closely aligned with the avoidance of anthropocentrism in fantasy literature is its negative view of human technology. Technology is the darling of science fiction, providing the primary means in that genre for bringing about the world of the future. But since the desire to control nature is evil in fantasy literature, so too is the chief means by which control over nature is achieved. The key symbols of technological contrivance in Tolkien’s story are the rings designated in the title. Eighteen rings had been crafted under Sauron’s tutelage, and distributed among elves (3) dwarves (6), and men (9). Sauron himself had then forged the One Ring to exercise power over the others. This underlies Sauron’s desire to regain control of this One Ring of Power, which would have enabled him to establish complete dominance over Middle Earth.

As historical fiction and science fiction are governed by constraints of historical and scientific plausibility, respectively, so fantasy literature is governed by constraints ruling out value neutrality and anthropocentrism. These constraints on storylines composed in these various fictional genres match the horizons of expectation brought to bear by their respective readers. Introduced previously, a genre’s horizon of expectation limits (the horizon part) the types of processes and events a reader is prepared to encounter (the expectation part) in a literary work. The constraints in question serve as guidelines for the author, the horizons of expectation as preparation for the reader.

In accord with the genre's horizon of expectation, readers of fantasy literature learn to anticipate plots that feature inherent good in conflict with inherent evil. This corresponds to the authorial constraint ruling out a fictional world that is value neutral. Seasoned fantasy readers are also prepared for storylines in which the conflict between good and evil requires individual sacrifice. This corresponds to the constraint subordinating the good of individual characters to the common good of the group. Fantasy readers furthermore are ready to move with scenarios that deny humans a dominant role in determining their own destinies. This corresponds to the constraint limiting humanity to subservient status in the general order of things.

Experienced readers of Tolkien's fantasy become attuned to his treatment of technology as a hallmark of evil. Not only are the rings technological means that the forces of evil hope to mobilize in defeating the forces of good, as already mentioned, but moreover all but the simplest mechanical contrivances in the story are employed by powers aligned with the Dark Lord. Prominent examples are the industrial wasteland of Saruman's fortress Orthanc, and Grond the massive battering ram that destroyed the gate of Minas Tirith. This aspect of the reader's horizon of expectation corresponds to the authorial constraint confining use of advanced technology to forces of evil.

As far as fictional narrative generally is concerned, reader's expectations and author's constraints are geared to each other. Their relation is such that nothing permitted by authorial constraint falls outside the typical reader's horizon of expectation. Authors and readers of a given genre, that is to say, generally agree on what happenings are excluded from the storylines they share. Without agreement of this general sort, would-be

authors in the genre would lack a sympathetic readership and expectant readers in the genre would lack authors qualified to serve their literary interests.

It should be immediately obvious that fictional discourse does not support doxastic belief. But it is useful to recall why exactly this is the case. Belief(d) is acceptance of propositions as having particular truth-values (true or false), and the sentences of fictional discourse do not constitute propositions. A proposition is a representation of a SOA accompanied by an ascription of status (being the case or not being the case). And whereas a sentence of fictional discourse might represent a SOA (an aspect of the world as it is or might be), such a representation is not accompanied by a status-ascription. If it were, the sentence would be either true or false, and hence not a piece of fictional discourse.

Such a sentence, of course, could be abstracted from its fictional context and treated separately as a representation of a SOA. By bringing a status-ascription of some available sort to bear, the sentence then could be converted into a proposition. This would make it subject to belief(d). Given its fictional origin, to be sure, the resulting proposition most likely would represent a nonexistent SOA as being the case. An (affirmative) belief(d) directed toward the proposition, accordingly, most likely would be false. At any rate, the price of making the sentence subject to belief(d) is to remove it from its fictional context. In its original context the sentence is neither true nor false and hence not subject to belief(d).

(2.212) Nonfictional Historical Narrative

Cicero, in his *De Legibus*, describes Herodotus as the “father of history” (*pater historiae*, 1.5). The work by which Herodotus fathered history is a set of inquiries each labeled “history” (*historia*), which together have come to be known as *The Histories*. In the opening paragraph of this work, Herodotus identifies himself as author and describes his intent. His intent was to “display his inquiries” (*historiēs apodexis*) so that human achievement may be spared “the fading of time” (*tō chronō exitēla*) and so that great works of Greeks and barbarians alike should be kept alive. In particular, he wanted to give the reason (*hēn aitiēn*) why the Greeks and the barbarians (the Persians) went to war.

In this rendition of Herodotus’ opening statement, the term *historiēs* is translated “inquiries.” This is the standard meaning of the term in classical Greek. Thus Aristotle’s *History of Animals* (*Tōn Peri ta Zōia Historiōn*) is an inquiry into the distinguishing features of groups of animals, in effect a work of zoology. It was because of Herodotus’ pioneering work that the term ‘history’ came to carry the meaning associated with it by the time of Cicero (the first century BC).

The genre of narrative history initiated by Herodotus shares two important features with its fictional counterpart (i.e., historical fiction). One, needless to say, is being subject to the constraint of historical plausibility. More will be said of what this constraint amounts to presently. The other is individual authorship, in contrast with being generated by cultural processes (as are creation myths and traditions). Herodotus’ *The Histories* was written by that author specifically. And as we have seen, he wrote it with specific goals in mind. Moreover, the author approached these goals under the guidance

of a specific set of methodological principles. Let us examine some of the more salient of these methodological guidelines.

One basic principle followed by Herodotus is that of restricting his account to material provided by his sources. In his own words, Herodotus considered it his responsibility throughout his writing “to record just what his sources have told him” (*ta legomena hup’ ekastōn akoē graphō*, book II, section 123). In order of general reliability, Herodotus’ sources included (1) eyewitness testimony (*opsis*, II, 29), (2) hearsay reports (*akoē*, II, 29), and (3) traditional stories (*legomena*, VI, 53). Hearsay reports are less reliable than eyewitness testimony in being further removed from the events in question, and tradition is less reliable than hearsay reports in being shaped by the incidental input of indefinitely many people.

Reliable or not, all information deriving from these sources originates in the experience of people other than the author himself. This imparts a sort of objectivity to the inquiry served by these sources. The other people involved typically will view their experiences from a variety of perspectives, often quite different from the perspective of the author himself. By restricting his account to information provided by his sources, Herodotus avoided the bias that might stem from his own preconceived notions of the Persian War. The objectivity thus achieved tends to counteract the subjectivity of his personal perspective. Although the historian’s sources are likely to be biased as well, with a sufficiently large input these biases should tend to cancel out.

A companion principle initiated by Herodotus is that of identifying one’s sources. Since the Persian War (499 – 449 BC) had finished about a decade before *The Histories* was “published” (440 BC), Herodotus had relatively few firsthand sources to identify.

But identifications of secondhand (hearsay) sources are plenteous. As part of his account of the prelude to the battle of Plataea (IX, 16), for instance, Herodotus describes a gripping story he had been told by one Thersander of Orchomenus (an ancient site in central Greece). Thersander had been told the story in turn by a fellow-guest at a banquet who was Persian. The gist of the story is that Thersander's informant, along with other Persian warriors, somehow knew of "the god's decree" (*ho ti dei ... ek tou theou*, IX,16) that they would be defeated at Plataea.

Comparably abundant are legendary sources that Herodotus draws upon without vouching for their veracity. Early in the first book, for example, he recounts alternative stories about how the Persian war began. The Persians and the Greeks, he says, tell competing versions, featuring different interpretations of the events supposedly leading to the sack of Troy. Based on ancient legend as they were, Herodotus' report of these stories is accompanied by the guarded remark: "far be it from me to ask whether they are accurate or not" (*egō de peri men toutōn ouk erchomai ereōn hōs houtōs ē allōs*, I,5).

Herodotus' scepticism is more pronounced in book VII in addressing the question whether the Argives sided with the Persians in the battle of Thermopylae. There he writes: "I am obliged to state things I am told, but I am not obliged to be wholly persuaded by them" (*Ego de opheilō legein ta legomena, peithesthai ge men ou pantapasin opheilō*, VII,152).

Herodotus' purpose in writing *The Histories*, as noted previously, was to give the reason (*hēn aitiēn*) the Greeks and the Persians went to war. His method was to report what his sources had to say on the matter; and some sources were less reliable than others. Least reliable in his opinion were stories like the *Iliad*, which invokes emotions of the gods (the fury of Apollo, the jealousy of Hera) in explaining the actions of mortal

men. Herodotus feels obligated to record such stories among his sources, but he is not prepared to believe them. He does not believe them because their contents misrepresent the real reasons the Greeks went to war with the Persians.

The concept of there being real reasons here was relatively novel. Within roughly one and one-half centuries before *The Histories* was written, an enlightenment of sorts had taken place in the same general area of the southeast Aegean Sea where Herodotus himself was born. Spearheaded first by the natural philosopher Thales of Miletus, and later by the medical theorist Hippocrates of Kos, this movement rejected the notion of divine participation in worldly events and pursued rational inquiry into the natural causes of things. Herodotus did for history what Thales did for natural philosophy and Hippocrates did for medicine. The reasons for the Persian War, mentioned in the prologue as goal of his study, are its natural causes stripped of any mythological embellishment.

The third methodological principle initiated by Herodotus, in effect, is that history should pursue natural causes for natural events. It would be inaccurate to say that Herodotus renounces supernatural factors entirely. When such factors are invoked by his sources, he does not hesitate to mention them indirectly (in quotes, as it were; e.g., IX,16 above). Moreover, the notions of *moira* (fate, doom), *tuchē* (good fortune, destiny), and *anankē* (necessity), sometimes figure directly in Herodotus' own account. In book III, for instance, he explains how Syloson (brother of Polycrates) was the “beneficiary of divinely given good fortune” (*theiē tuchē chreōmenos legei*, III,139) in giving Darius a much-desired cloak free of charge. And in book IV, he explains how Arcesilaus (ruler of

a colony in Libya) “fulfilled his destiny” (*exēplēse moiran tēn heōtoutou*, IV,164) by venturing into circumstances the oracle at Delphi had advised him to avoid.

In these particular examples, however, the locutions containing reference to fortune (*tuchē*) and destiny (*moira*) read more like figures of speech than like descriptions of actual causes. One would be hard put to find more than a few scattered passages in which reference to supernatural causes seems essential to Herodotus’ account, if indeed any are to be found at all. It also should be borne in mind that what counts as supernatural varies with time and with cultural circumstances. As far as Herodotus is concerned, later conceptions of the supernatural (such as those current today) would not necessarily be disqualified by the principle in question. This third principle, again, is that historical inquiry, like inquiry in natural philosophy (Thales) and medicine (Hippocrates), seeks natural causes for natural events.

For historians following Herodotus, by way of summary, genuine history (1) confines itself to sources, (2) identifies its sources in ways that can be checked by subsequent investigators, and (3) employs these sources in seeking natural explanations for past events. Other defining characteristics became apparent later on as history developed into a distinct academic discipline. But these three are enough to provide a working definition of historical plausibility. The concept of historical plausibility first emerged in our discussion of historical fiction. As already noted, however, the concept applies to non-fictional works of history as well. What, for our purposes, is required for a non-fictional inquiry into the past to be plausible as a work of history?

One requirement for historical plausibility, obviously enough, is that the inquiry in question be directed toward finding out the causes of things that happened in the past.

This is illustrated by Herodotus' purpose of showing the reason the Greeks and the Persians went to war decades earlier. Another requirement is that the results of the inquiry be presented in narrative form. A work of history is more than a list of past events in order of occurrence. History connects past events together in a way that reveals their interactions with one another, which in turn adds up to a form of narration. A third requirement is that the resulting narrative be objective, in the sense of being written from a perspective not limited to the viewpoint of the author. Objectivity is achieved by means of the requirements (a) that the inquiry should be based primarily on information derived from identifiable sources and (b) that material derived from these sources should in principle be open to verification. An additional requirement of historical plausibility is that the causes at which the inquiry aims are natural occurrences in the natural world. This amounts to a repetition of principle (3) above. Although what counts as natural (vs. supernatural) varies with time and culture, an account is historically plausible only insofar as it accords with prevailing conceptions of the natural world.

Being historically plausible in this manner brings non-fictional historical narrative within the range of belief(d). Herodotus warns his readers, to be sure, that he himself is not prepared to believe all the tales his narrative encompasses. But his purpose of explaining why the Greeks and Persians went to war would not have been achieved unless most of his account were factually believable. Most of his account, that is to say, is presented to the reader as worthy of belief(d).

Herodotus' account itself begins with some facts about Croesus, the first of the Persians "to work harm on the Greeks" (*adikōn ergōn es tous Hēllēnas*; I,5). As mentioned in I,6, Croesus was Lydian by birth, son of Alyattes, and ruler of various

people who lived west of the river Halys. In his initial interaction with the Greeks, Croesus forced some (the Ionians, the Aeolians, and the Dorians) to pay him tribute and offered the hand of friendship to others (the Lacedaemonians). This reads like accurate information, and we have no better information at hand to gainsay it. Readers with an interest in such matters may believe(d) as a matter of course that Croesus was Lydian by birth, that he got along well with the Spartans (the Lacedaemonians), and so forth.

To believe(d) that Croesus was a friend of the Spartans is to accept as true a proposition to that effect. A proposition to that effect is a representation of the SOA of Croesus being friends with the Spartans as being the case. This is a genuine SOA (not the stuff of myth and legend) because people of the time had a shared understanding of what friendship among political groups amounts to. There were publicly applicable criteria for determining when a state of friendship between Croesus and Sparta prevails (is the case), and Herodotus was convinced that those criteria were met. Thus Herodotus himself believed(d) that Croesus was a friend of the Spartans. And on the basis of Herodotus' historically plausible account, subsequent readers are authorized to maintain the same belief(d).

(2.2121) The Historian's Contribution to Historical SOAs

A SOA is an aspect of the world as it is or might be. In the domain of historical SOAs, the activity of the historian makes an interesting contribution to how the world is. Like SOAs generally, historical SOAs come in different levels of detail. Quite apart from the general friendship between Croesus and the Spartans, there were more specific SOAs having to do with envoys passing between Lydia and Sparta, with commercial ventures

shared in common, with gifts being exchanged among their leaders, and so on. Each of these specific SOAs could be treated separately. And lists of them could be composed with no indication of how they were interconnected. Any number of such details relevant to the period Croesus was in power (560-546 BC) were there to be recorded by Herodotus and other interested parties. Instead of spelling out details, however, Herodotus spoke generally of a state of friendship between Croesus and the Spartans. The SOA of Lydia and Sparta being on friendly terms during the mid-6th century BC became part of Greek history because of the way Herodotus dealt with it in his account.

Because of his account, moreover, that SOA became an aspect of the world as it is. Herodotus' account made it the case that Sparta's friendship during the mid-6th century is an aspect of the world as it is. There was a period in the distant past when human beings began to group together in coherent societies, and a period when these societies began to interact with each other. Since then, presumably, there have been literally countless cases of societies' coexisting on friendly terms, and countless others of their engaging in hostilities with each other. Let us postulate that unknown society X was on friendly terms with unknown society Y in the mid-8th century BC. Along with that postulation goes an unverifiable assumption of a SOA consisting of the mutual friendship between X and Y being the case at that time. But the fact that this presumed SOA is unverifiable means that their mutual friendship during the mid-8th century is not an aspect of the world as it is. The putative SOA in question is not a genuine SOA. The mid-6th century friendship between Lyudai and Sparta, on the other hand, is a genuine SOA because of Herodotus' having recorded it. Because of Herodotus' account, this latter friendship having been the case is an aspect of the world as it stands currently.

One might object that the mid-6th century friendship between Lydia and Sparta would have been part of Greek history even if no historian had ever recorded it. Put otherwise, the objection is that there is a SOA of Lydia and Sparta being friends during the mid-5th century and that this SOA was the case regardless of its ever being recorded. The world is as it is, one might insist, independently of what anyone puts in writing.

To prepare a response to this objection, recall from above that a SOA is genuine only if people in relevant circumstances have a common understanding of the conditions under which it would be the case. Greeks of the mid-6th century presumably had a common understanding of what friendship between Lydia and Sparta amounted to, and presumably also realized that the conditions under which that SOA is the case were currently met. In the context of mid-6th century Greece, accordingly, the SOA in question was the case. A century later, however, there no longer was a shared realization of the conditions being met under which that SOA is the case. This is because those conditions in fact were no longer met. At best, there were memories of those conditions having been met in the increasingly distant past.

When Herodotus marshalled those memories and converted them into a plausible historical account of the relations between Lydia and Sparta at mid-6th century, he altered the SOA in question. He altered it in the sense of changing the conditions under which the friendship between Lydia and Sparta counts as being the case. During the mid-6th century, the relevant conditions were such that people of the time were able to determine when in fact they were met. They were able to apply the criteria marking the actual occurrence of the associated SOA. The relevant SOA at that point was expressed in the present tense, namely as the SOA of its being the case that Lydia and Sparta are united in

friendship. Decades later, those previous criteria were no longer applicable, and the previous SOA no longer was the case. The SOA that replaced it is that of its having been the case that Lydia and Sparta were friendly during the mid-6th century. And the criteria marking the occurrence of that SOA is Herodotus' having recorded it as such. Because of this record, the world now is such that Lydias and Sparta were on friendly terms during the mid-6th century.

Herodotus' record changed the relevant SOA from something present to something past. During the mid-6th century the SOA in question had been the present friendship between the Lydians and the Spartans. Since Herodotus, the relevant SOA has been the past friendship of the Lydians and the Spartans during the mid-6th century. Among aspects of the world as it was in mid-6th century was its being the case that the Lydians and the Spartans currently enjoy (present tense) a mutual friendship. Among aspects of the world after Herodotus is its being the case that those two parties enjoyed (past tense) a mutual friendship in the mid-6th century BC.

We now return to the topic of doxastic belief. Herodotus himself believed(d) that Lydia and Sparta were friendly with each other in the mid-6th century. This belief amounted to his accepting as true the proposition that it is the case that Lydia and Sparta were on friendly terms during that period. On the basis of Herodotus' authority, readers of his *The Histories* are authorized to accept the same proposition as being true. That is, they are authorized to believe(d) the same proposition. When well executed, the historian's report serves as a window on the past. A mark of a historical report being well executed is its acceptance by other historians as containing information on which further historical inquiry can be based.

When a historical report is properly executed, furthermore, it provides a basis on which non-historians can form beliefs(d) about the past as well. Herodotus believed(d) that Lydia and Sparta were on friendly terms in the mid-6th century BC. A consequence of his having put this belief in writing is that his lay readers are authorized to adopt the same belief. The craft of the historian provides a bridge over which authentic beliefs(d) can pass from person to person over time. A matter of added interest is that this bridge is one way only. The bridge provided by history enables passage of beliefs(d) from people in the past to people in the present. Obviously enough, there is no human craft that enables passage of beliefs(d) in the opposite direction.

Herodotus was the person who added the SOA of Lydia and Sparta having been friendly during the 6th century BC to the many things that are the case in the world as it is today. Other historians have added other SOAs involving past happenings to the class of things that are the case in the world as it is. This is what historians do. As the historical past grows in extent, more and more of what is presently the case consists of SOAs expressed in the past tense. For those of us who keep track of the past, more and more of our beliefs(d) are directed toward propositions with past dating.

Without history, we in the present would lack a shared set of beliefs(d) about what happened in the past. Without a shared set of such beliefs(d), we would lack a coherent group-memory. And without a coherent group-memory, we in the present would lack a coherent anticipation of the future. In their work of keeping the past intelligible, historians help make the future intelligible as well.

(2.213) Oral Traditions

All cultures have traditions. Traditions are integral to cultural identity. Understood generally, traditions include customs (e.g., use of certain utensils for eating), mores (e.g., restrooms segregated by gender), rules of courtesy (e.g., saying “please” and “thank you”), and ceremonial behavior (e.g., procedures of marriage and burial). In a class by themselves are oral traditions, which comprise stories conveyed orally through successive generations. Our concern in this section is with oral traditions, and with the extent to which they support belief(d).

One common feature of oral traditions is that they are conveyed in narrative form. Another is that the stories they tell are focused on the past. These are features they share with the non-fictional narratives of written history as well. Among key differences from historical narratives are that oral traditions are not passed on in written form and that they do not originate as products of individual authors. Even if eventually written down (as the story of the Trojan War was eventually recorded in the *Iliad*), oral traditions originate with cultural forces that owe relatively little to individual contributors.

Oral traditions generally are prehistorical, in that no historical records exist that might throw light on their origins. Being beyond present day experience, moreover, there are no empirical disciplines (like anthropology, sociology, or psychology) that can study the processes by which they begin. Nonetheless, we possess what might be called a “folk knowledge” of human nature that enables reasonable conjecture about how oral traditions are transmitted once they get underway.

Oral traditions are stories transmitted by word of mouth. Because people tend to remember things that interest them and to forget things that do not, and because different

people are interested in different things, these stories change as they pass from person to person. There are tendencies as well to exaggerate what one finds important and to embellish what one finds edifying, along with counter tendencies to downplay what one sees as extraneous and to disparage what one considers degrading. After several generations of retelling, accordingly, the contents of an orally transmitted story can change substantially.

After several centuries of retelling, moreover, the contents of an oral tradition can change in ways with no precedent in earlier versions. This has significant ramifications for our understanding of oral traditions like that of the Trojan War. According to Herodotus (II,53), Homer was active around mid-8th century BC. Dates assigned the Trojan War by interested parties vary from mid-12th century to early-11th century BC. The upshot is that the story of the Trojan War altered in content for some 400 years before arriving at the written form we have today. As far as preceding oral forms are concerned, we can only say that their contents are indeterminate from our present perspective.

Thus it is with oral traditions generally. Due to the very nature of oral transmission, such traditions lack fixed content. Although names, places and circumstances may hold steady enough to preserve thematic identity (the sack of Troy, the return of Odysseus, the heroic deeds of Gilgamesh, the lost kingdom of Atlantis), the specific contents of these narratives are constantly changing. Episodes featured at one stage will be missing at another, and new episodes will be added to keep the plot moving. Change in narrative content here means change in the episodic sequences of which the story is composed.

Enough has been said about propositions previously for us to realize that the narrative content of oral traditions usually is not propositional in form. This is in contrast with the narrative accounts of history, which are typically propositional, and in accord with those of fiction which also are not. Regardless of context, by way of reminder, a proposition is a representation of a SOA accompanied by a status-ascription. A proposition is true if and only if the SOA it represents actually has the status (being the case or not being the case) specified in its status-ascription. These reminders connect with our present concern in that belief(d) by definition is directed toward propositions. For an oral tradition to admit belief(d) would require that propositions figure within its narrative content. Its narrative content would have to be such that it has propositional content as well.

The fact that the narrative content of an oral tradition is constantly changing does not by itself prevent it from having propositional content. Its narrative sequence conceivably might be such that an oral tradition contained genuine propositions at an early stage in its development. For instance, there just might have been a time in 12th century BC when observers near the harbor of Aulis were aware of a mighty fleet under the command of Agamemnon finally sailing westward to wreak vengeance against a prince of Troy. These eyewitnesses may have discussed the departure of the fleet among themselves, remarking on the impatience of the warriors, the circumstances of their being delayed, and so forth. The events thus discussed, we may imagine, had all the features of genuine SOAs, so that what the eyewitnesses had to say about these SOAs was actually the case. Under these circumstances, accordingly, the eyewitnesses were engaged in

propositional discourse. And the propositions involved in their discourse were presumably true.

Now let us imagine that the account shared by these eyewitnesses somehow found its way into the burgeoning oral tradition of the sack of Troy. We can then surmise that there once was a time at which the tradition shared some of the same propositional content as the eyewitness reports. This would be a time close enough to the occurrence of the SOAs in question that auditors of the burgeoning tradition shared the same conception of those SOA as did the original eyewitnesses. Among these SOAs was that of the fleet leaving Aulis, which was the case at a certain date close to the end of the 12th century. At that date, eyewitnesses and auditors agree that the voyage to Troy is finally underway. Their agreement shares the same propositional content and the same estimation of its factual truth. Indeed, it may be said that they all believed(d) that the SOAs in question were the case.

As the oral tradition moves further away from its origins, however, the propositional objects of those initially shared beliefs(d) fade into oblivion. This is so for at least two reasons. One is that relevant details of the SOAs in question change with frequent retellings of the story. Details concerning the annoyance of a particular contingent of warriors that struck the original eyewitnesses as important, for instance, have dropped from the narrative, and other initially irrelevant details have taken their place. Although narrative content and propositional content are not the same, changes in the former will undercut the integrity of the latter. By the end of the 11th century, no participants (speakers or listeners) in the constantly changing story will entertain the same beliefs(d) in that regard as the original eyewitnesses.

The other reason for the short-lived propositional content of developing oral traditions has to do with matters previously discussed in connection with historical discourse. History and tradition are both forms of discourse having to do with the past. To be sure, both are forms of discourse that address the past from the viewpoint of the present. Both engage the awareness that what is past was once present, and that what is present will soon be past. And from a broader perspective, both history and tradition are bound up with a potentially endless expansion of circumstances encompassed by the world as it is. What is the case today (the present) at least in part reflects what once was the case (the past). And under certain circumstances, at least, what was the case previously remains part of the world as it is. Those circumstances include a matter of tensing. To cite a previous example, the world now is (present tense) such that it is the case that Lydia and Sparta were friendly (past tense) at mid-6th century BC.

This is the point at which oral tradition and historical discourse go separate ways. There is more to what it takes for the world of the past to remain part of the world of the present than just a matter of tensing. Additional requirements have to be met to assure that SOAs in past tense retain their identity. Meeting these requirements is the work of the historian. For a SOA to have distinct identity, there must be a common understanding among people concerned with that SOA regarding circumstances under which it counts as being the case. We have referred to these circumstances as the criterion that determines whether or not the relevant SOA is the case. For SOAs occurring in the past (thus designated in the past tense), criteria for their being the case presently boil down to their being recorded in an appropriately executed historical account. Thus the SOA of Lydia

and Sparta having been friendly at mid-6th century BC is presently the case because Herodotus recorded it as such in his written work *The Histories*.

The important difference between history and oral tradition in this regard is that most events figuring in the latter lack criteria for being the case. If these events had fixed historical identity, they no longer would be oral and they no longer would be subject to change through successive stages of transmission.

The second reason why any propositional content of oral traditions tends to be short-lived, in short, is that most events entering into that mode of discourse lack distinct identity. There is no SOA of a Greek fleet reaching the shores of Troy on a specific day of a specific month of a specific year around 1200 BC. Likewise, there is no SOA of a particular English king (named “Arthur”) extracting a sword from a stone, or of a certain Danish prince (named “Hamlet”) having blue eyes.

In conclusion, whatever purported set of events one selects from an oral tradition at any given time, there is a high likelihood that these events do not correspond to a genuine SOA. And if no genuine SOA is at hand, there is no proposition to serve as an object of belief(d). This holds for sagas, epic poems, folk tales, and creation myths, along with other forms of discourse that rely on oral transmission. Such discourse might be subject to belief of other sorts, but it is beyond the reach of doxastic belief.

We now turn to the main topic of this section, which is belief(d) as a component of religious belief.

(2.22) Religious Discourse and Belief(d).

All of the world's major religions have texts they consider sacred. As far as I can tell, no historically authoritative account has been written about the origin of these texts, either individually or collectively. There seems to be general agreement among scholars of religion, however, that sacred texts began as written versions of religious teachings that previously had been transmitted orally. This includes the primary texts of Buddhism, Hinduism, and Zoroastrianism, and in particular the Quran of Islam, the Old Testament of Judaism, and the New Testament of Christianity. These particular texts, that is to say, most probably originated as transcriptions of oral traditions.

As we have seen, oral traditions by and large lack propositional content. They accordingly are not subject to doxastic belief. Our present concern is whether they become accessible to belief(d) when transcribed into written form. Setting aside the NT for the moment, let us consider this question with the OT primarily in mind.

(2.221) Belief(d) and the OT

As noted previously, oral traditions can sometimes be transformed into documents with propositional content by the research and selective judgment of competent historians. Such was the origin of Herodotus' written work *The Histories*. The process of transforming an oral tradition into a document with propositional content follows a number of principles that Herodotus himself appears to have initiated. One is that the author's account should be restricted to material provided by its sources. Another is that the sources should be identified. In the manner previously indicated, these two principles

promote an objectivity that frees the account from the limitations of the author's own subjective viewpoint.

A third principle is that the account should aim to explain the events it treats in terms of their actual causes. In the case of Herodotus and the Persian Wars, these causes had to do with interactions among the individuals, armies, and cultures involved. An essential part of the transition from legend to history in Herodotus' case was the restriction of the account to natural causes excluding capricious interventions of supernatural gods. When we turn to religious documents such as the Old and New Testaments, however, ruling out supernatural causes of natural events would beg the question. For present purposes, at least, we may modify the third principle to require only that events be attributed to causes by which they actually were brought about. The intent of the modified principle remains that of excluding purported causes, supernatural or otherwise, that may have played a part in legend but not in fact. For present purposes, supernatural causes are not automatically to be excluded. If the massive flood of *Genesis* (chapters 6 through 9) was actually brought about by the Lord God's wrath at human wickedness, this third principle does not preclude recording it as such.

By hewing to his principles, Herodotus converted the oral tradition that provided his sources into a written history with genuine propositional content. General readers thereby were enabled to believe(d) substantial parts of *The Histories* as accounts of what actually took place between the Greeks and the Persians during the mid-6th century BC. And subsequent historians were enabled to treat these accounts as a legitimate source of believable information for their own professional purposes. Thanks to Herodotus, the

world today is such that in fact it is the case that events recorded in *The Histories* actually took place some two and one-half millennia ago.

We turn now to the question of whether something like this happened when the events of the OT were recorded in writing. One immediate problem is that we know practically nothing about the oral traditions from which the various stories of the OT were derived. The time of their origin is literally prehistorical. Since the sources of these stories cannot be identified, we have no firm information about the processes through which they took on written form.

Another problem is one of authorship. It seems safe to say in general that there are no certifiable works of history that were not written by known historians. Accordingly, if one is to accept the OT as a work of history, one should be prepared to identify its author or authors. There are major segments of the OT, however, the authorship of which remains unknown. Jewish and Christian orthodoxy both hold that in some sense the writings in question were inspired by God. The question at hand, however, is not how they were inspired but rather who actually put them in writing.

In point of fact, interested parties (biblical scholars, proselytizers, zealous believers) have argued issues of OT authorship at length, with little ensuing consensus. One point of apparent agreement, nonetheless, is that a large number of authors were involved. Another is that there are several books, including those ranging (in standard order) from *Joshua* through *1* and *2 Kings*, the authors of which will never be identified. As far as biblical scholars are concerned, there is agreement also that the *Pentateuch* (*Genesis* through *Deuteronomy*) was composed over a period of centuries, rather than being written by Moses as held by Jewish tradition. On the other hand, it should be noted

that there are several books of the OT whose authorship is considered by scholars to be relatively certain. Ezra probably was the author (at least in part) of *Ezra*, Hosea of *Hosea*, and Obadiah of *Obadiah*.

Even in cases where authorship is known, however, questions remain about the author's status as a competent historian. Did his material come from identifiable sources? Did he restrict his account to material gathered from these sources? And of particular importance for our purposes, did his account result from a genuine effort to explain events in terms of their actual causes? Unless an author meets these requirements, what he writes cannot qualify as a work of history. Since we have no reason to think that OT authors in fact met these requirements, we also have no reason to accept what they wrote as historical documents.

The upshot of these reflections is that we cannot plausibly read the OT overall as a historical document. This is not to suggest that it has no historical content whatsoever. It may have been the case that the First Temple was actually destroyed early in the 6th century BC by Nebuzaradan, captain of King Nebuchadnezzar's bodyguard (*2 Kings* 25:9, *Jeremiah* 52:13). And it may have been that the temple was actually rebuilt later in that century by Cyrus King of Persia (*2 Chronicles* 36:23, *Ezra* 1:1-3). Similar instances of ostensibly historical relevance can be found elsewhere in the OT. If authenticated by responsible historical research, such facts (in the past tense) would take their place among things on record as being the case in the world as it is (present tense). Being mentioned in the OT, however, does not by itself establish them as part of the historical record. For the OT did not result from historical research. It instead is a written version of oral traditions that were inscribed by authors unfamiliar with the discipline of

history. An oral tradition does not become a work of history merely by being written down.

With occasional exceptions, the events recorded in the OT do not correspond to genuine SOAs. This is not to say that Abraham, Moses, and other prominent characters of the OT never existed, or that monumental circumstances such as the exodus from Egypt and the Babylonian captivity never occurred. The OT's witness of such persons and circumstances is too emphatic to be mere fabrication. It is to say rather that there are no presently applicable criteria for determining whether the events in question constitute SOAs that actually took place in the past. Criteria for the previous actuality of past events hang upon the availability of properly executed historical accounts. And since the OT is neither a historical account in its own right, nor regularly backed up by independent historical records, the events it describes for the most part are not genuine SOAs.

Moreover, since the events described in the OT for the most part are not genuine SOAs, the document itself generally lacks propositional content. As noted repeatedly above, a proposition is a representation of a genuine SOA accompanied by an ascription of status. And insofar as the events of the OT are not genuine SOAs, their manner of representation in that document is not propositional.

Finally, since doxastic belief is directed toward propositions, the narrational content of OT is not a suitable object of belief(d). There is nothing in these considerations, however, to prevent parts of its narrational content from figuring substantially in someone's belief(s). We turn in due course to the role of the OT in the symphonic belief typical of faithful Christians.

(2.222) Belief(d) and the NT

There are two events recorded in the NT that clearly qualify as objects of belief(d). One is the birth of Jesus Christ. The other is his death by crucifixion. The first is well attested by having long served as a pivotal point in the world's most widely used calendars.

Despite the fact that 'before Christ' (BC) and '*ano domini*' (AD) have begun to give way to 'before common era' (BCE) and 'common era' (CE), respectively, the transition point between BCE and CE is still Christ's birth. The second often is cited in the writings of secular historians (beginning with Gaius Cornelius Tacitus in the 1st century AD), which lend it historical authenticity. A given person might believe(d) that these events occurred, or believe(d) that they did not occur. In either case, however, the events in question are genuine SOAs, and are represented by genuine propositions. This makes them suitable objects of doxastic belief.

In contrast with the nativity and the crucifixion, not many other events mentioned in the NT have found their way into secular history. This is worth noting because it throws their historical status into doubt. One reason these events have not found their way into secular history is that the NT itself quite clearly is not a historical document. To say that the NT is not a historical document is not to say that the events recorded in it are not historical, in the sense of 'historical' signifying that they actually occurred. Many events in the NT probably are historical in this sense. It is instead to say that the books of the NT were not written to serve as historical records. They were written for various other purposes, such as to attract their readers to a life in Christ and to urge them to accept the rigors such a life involves. We begin our consideration of belief(d) and the NT by noting respects in which the NT differs from a standard historical account.

(2.2221) Why the NT is not a Historical Document

As with the OT examined above, the NT differs substantially from a standard historical account. One difference has to do with authorship. In the case of the OT, we recall, very little is known about the circumstances in which the oral traditions leading up to its many books were committed to writing. Not only are the authors of these OT documents often unknown, but even when the author of a given document is known, his relation to the oral tradition behind the document is likely to be unrecoverable. With the NT, on the other hand, biblical scholars today have a general idea of how the oral traditions behind several of its books found their way into writing.

The first written books of the NT, as we currently know it, are the letters of the Apostle Paul, probably written around 50-60 AD. Most scholars accept seven (*Romans*, *1 and 2 Corinthians*, *Galatians*, *Philippians*, *1 Thessalonians*, and *Philemon*) as actually written by Paul, and most believe that at least four (*Ephesians*, *1 and 2 Timothy*, and *Titus*) were composed after Paul's death. Scholars generally agree also that Paul was not the author of *2 Thessalonians*, *Colossians*, or *Hebrews*. Authorship of the remaining letters of the NT is still open to debate. Of the seven genuine letters of Paul, it is commonly acknowledged that *1 Thessalonians* was written first (around 50 AD), which makes it the oldest explicitly Christian writing still in existence.

None of these letters amounts simply to a written version of an antecedent oral tradition. Oral traditions are impersonal, and not directed toward a specific audience. Most of Paul's letters, on the other hand, were written to people who had already been introduced to Christianity in conversation with other people. Most of them, that is to say,

were addressed to people who themselves were actively participating in the development of a newly initiated religious movement. Moreover, none of the letters in question purports simply to convey the teachings of that movement in written form. Each in its own way, the letters are exhortations intended to encourage their recipients to persevere in the way of life they had inherited from the original disciples.

In contrast with Paul's letters, the synoptic Gospels present relevant details of the circumstances in which the Christian way of life had been initiated. These Gospels are given more to exposition than to exhortation. The term 'synoptic' comes from the Greek *sunoptikos*, which means "seeing the whole together." Taken together, the Gospels *Matthew*, *Mark*, and *Luke* reinforce each other in describing the life and purported mission of Jesus Christ, begotten by God to bring salvation to the human race. The common view among biblical scholars is that *Mark* was written first, with *Matthew* and *Luke* following in that order. Estimated dates of authorship have all three appearing between 66 and 90 AD.

The fourth book of the NT is the Gospel attributed to John. Unlike the three synoptic Gospels, *John* situates the life of Jesus in a comprehensive theological setting. Its first chapter begins at the beginning, with the words: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (*En archē ēn ho logos, kai ho logos ēn pros ton theon, kai theos ēn ho logos*, 1:1). The Word subsequently is identified as the only Son of the Father in 1:14, and named Jesus Christ in 1:17. With regard to theological content, the gospel ends with Jesus' post-resurrection appearance to the disciples by the sea of Tiberias. Jesus' final words on this occasion were addressed to Peter, advising him to stop fretting about "the disciple Jesus loved" (*ton mathētēn hon ēgapa ho 'Iēsous*,

21:20) and instructing him impatiently “You follow me!” (*su moi akolouthei*, 21:22).

Peter was the “rock” (*petra*, *Matthew* 16:18) on which Jesus was to found his church, and it was time to get that business underway.

Theological content aside, the final remarks of the document itself are self-referential and enigmatic. Penultimate verse 21:24 identifies the author as the disciple Jesus loved (referring back to 21:20), and assures the reader that his testimony is true. With the author seemingly identified, the final verse 21:25 then slips into first person singular (*oimai*) to say that if everything Jesus did were written down, “I suppose the world itself could not contain all the books that would be written” (*oud’ auton oimai ton kosmon chōrēsai ta graphomena biblia*). Verse 21:24 is self-referential in describing itself as authored by the disciple Jesus loved. Who that person was, however, remains an enigma.

When the Gospel *John* first gained notice by church writers toward the end of the 2nd century, it was generally assumed that the author was the apostle John, son of Zebedee. In addition to three mentions of the disciple Jesus loved in chapter 21 (verses 7 and 20 explicitly, and 24 indirectly), there are three other passages referring to a person by this description earlier in the Gospel. One is 13:23, in the context of the scene where Jesus recognizes Judas as the one who would betray him. In that scene (recalled at 21:20), the disciple Jesus loved was reclining on a couch next to Jesus and leaned back against him to seek confidential information. Another is 19:26-27 where Jesus, speaking from the cross, tells his mother Mary to look upon the disciple he loved as her son and tells the disciple to look upon Mary as his mother. And then when Mary Magdalene first discovered the empty tomb, as recorded in 20:1-2, she ran to tell Peter and the disciple

Jesus loved. In all these contexts it seems plausible to think of the disciple in question as John the apostle. Given 21:24, that would make the apostle John the author of this Gospel.

In none of these contexts, however, is the disciple Jesus loved identified explicitly by name. And the dominant opinion among recent NT scholars is that the apostle John is not the sole author of the Gospel that goes by his name today. One consideration leading to this opinion is that the Gospel as it stands shows signs of having been written by more than one person. Chapter 21, with its several referenes to the disciple Jesus loved, exhibits a Greek style different from that of the rest of the work. Another consideration is that the theological sophistication of the work overall seems beyond the reach of a man who spent most of his life catching fish. Yet another has to do with dating. Internal evidence suggests that Gospel was written quite late in the 1st century, when the apostle John would have been close to 100 years old. Although he may in fact have lived to a very old age, the literary polish of the book suggests a younger author.

Taken together, these considerations suggest the following picture of the origin of the Gospel *John*. The apostle John probably was the disciple Jesus loved (whatever that means). What was to become the book of *John* probably began as a narrative account of this apostle's experiences in the company of Jesus. As this narrative was spread by word of mouth, some things were probably added and other things dropped. At some point written versions began to circulate among interested parties, and further changes were made in content and style. In all likelihood, the apostle John had died long before the work had reached the form we know today. The upshot is that John son of Zebedee

probably was the original source, but that other people contributed substantially to the Gospel *John* we have today.

Recent scholarship has raised questions regarding the authorship of the synoptic Gospels as well. On the basis of traditions going back to the 2nd or 3rd centuries, *Matthew* has been attributed to the apostle Matthew (the one-time tax collector), *Mark* to Mark (also known as John, *Acts* 12:25) the cousin of Barnabas (*Colossians* 4:10), and *Luke* to Luke the physician who supposedly accompanied Paul on some of his journeys (*Colossians* 4:14). Although these attributions have not been positively discredited, scholars have argued that they are not as secure as once appeared. Let us consider first the Gospel of *Mark*, which many scholars believe to be the earliest of the three to be put into writing.

As reported by Eusebius in his *Church History* (early 4th century), Mark was not a personal follower of Jesus, but had written down what he heard from Peter while serving as the latter's interpreter. The choppy style of the work suggests input from other sources as well. Many NT scholars today think that *Mark* is based on oral testimony (including Peter's) current in the author's particular (perhaps Roman) Christian community. Indeed, many scholars think that Eusebius was overly confident in attributing the gospel to the "John/Mark" of *Acts* 12:25. The dominant scholarly view today is that the author is anonymous. Whatever his identity, recent scholarship nonetheless agrees with Eusebius that the author of *Mark* was not an eyewitness of the events he recounts but rather relied on secondhand testimony.

Matthew is an appropriate document to place at the beginning of the NT because of its close relationship with traditional Judaism, and the easy transition it thereby

provides from the affairs of the OT. The book itself begins with a genealogy linking Jesus to Abraham. It makes several connections between the life of Jesus and OT prophecies (e.g., “Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel,” *Isaiah* 7:14). And it is quite violent in attacking representatives of contemporary Judaism. At 23:13, for example, we hear Jesus saying: “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!” (*ouai ... humin, grammateis kai Pharisaioi hupokritai*; repeated verbatim at 23:23,25 27,29). This much is consistent with the traditional view, dating back to Eusebius (*Church History* 3:39:16), that the first Gospel was written by the apostle Matthew. The one-time tax collector presumably was conversant with the OT; and he certainly had reason to be unhappy with the official Judaism of his time. A majority of church historians today, however, find this attribution implausible. The main problem is that the account of *Matthew* relies heavily on that of *Mark*, and that an original disciple would not take so much material from a secondhand source. Other sources are evident as well, some of which probably derived from the original disciples. Uncertainty in this regard is sufficient to lead most NT scholars today to the conclusion that the author of *Matthew* is anonymous.

There are several distinctive features of the gospel *Luke* that bear on its disputed authorship. It is written in polished Greek, and employs the largest vocabulary of the four gospels. Its vocabulary includes a number of medical terms, suggesting a connection with “Luke the beloved physician” (*Loukas ho iatros ho agapētos*) mentioned by Paul in *Colossians* 4:14. And it purportedly was written for the edification of a certain Theophilus (not for a general audience) to whom it was specifically addressed. These features point to Paul’s Greek physician Luke as probable author of the gospel, which

accords with the traditional attribution dating back to the late-2nd century. This attribution has been questioned by recent critics, on the basis of the author's showing no awareness of Paul's letters. There is general agreement, however, that the author of *Luke* never encountered Jesus personally. As stated in its opening remarks (1:2-3), this gospel is an orderly rendition of material passed on by "those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word" (*hoi ap' archēs autoptai kai hupēretai ... tou logou*).

It is generally thought that the author of *Luke* wrote the book of *Acts* as well. Both books are addressed to Theophilus, the latter beginning with the observation that the former deals with what Jesus did up to the day of his ascension (which it does). The book of *Acts* then proceeds to recount the deeds of the Apostles engaged in founding the original church. Indeed, scholars typically think of the combination as two parts of the same work. Largely ignoring the other disciples, *Acts* focuses on the deeds of the preeminent apostles Peter and Paul. Given that Luke accompanied Paul on some of his journeys, it is reasonable to assume that parts of the book are based on firsthand experience. By and large, however, *Acts* constitutes a report of things Luke must have heard from other people. As far as authorship is concerned, the conclusions above regarding *Luke* apply equally to the book of *Acts*.

Regarding authorship, the following general picture emerges from the preceding considerations. In the decades immediately following Jesus' death, salient particulars of his life were transmitted by word of mouth. Various oral accounts of the emerging Christian message, reflecting various ethnic and political circumstances, gained prominence in various parts of the Mediterranean region. From time to time along the way, there were efforts to convert the contents of these oral accounts into written form.

There was also an active exchange of written letters geared to these accounts, of which those by Paul became dominant in the present NT canon. Chosen from many written documents available, the still-current canon became official by proclamation of Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria, in 367 AD. Apart from Paul's letters, which do not purport to be historical reports in the first place, no books in the canon have been attributed definitively to a single author.

This in itself indicates that the NT is not a compilation of historical documents. Authorship by specific writers is important for works of history because knowing the author or authors of a given work is essential for judging its objectivity. A historical work is objective only insofar as the author's sources are clearly identified and the author takes the perspectives of those sources into account in evaluating their significance. By taking these other perspectives into account, the author avoids the subjectivity of working within his or her own perspective exclusively. Inasmuch as the sources of many parts of the NT are not identified, the NT in general lacks the objectivity of genuine historical accounts.

Hand in hand with objectivity in this respect, a work of history aims at tracing out the actual causes of things in the past, as distinct from fitting past events into previously determined storylines. In the few cases where a NT author identifies his sources, the author shows no particular concern with finding actual causes of past events. In his Prologue to the book of *Revelation*, for instance, John of Patmos (probably not the author of the gospel *John*) identifies his source as an angel sent by God. John is quite forthright in stating that what the angel revealed to him were not causes of past events but rather "things that must soon take place" (*ha dei genesthai en tachei*, 1:1). As the narrative gets underway, it soon becomes evident that the things soon to take place fit into a previously

determined storyline. The book of *Revelation* is not concerned with temporal causes, but rather with the salvation to be realized in Jesus Christ.

Things that must soon take place, of course, are not subject to historical account. History is concerned with the explanation of past occurrences, not with the forecast of things yet to occur. This is another reason, itself sufficient, why *Revelation* is not a work of history. The last book of the NT looks ahead to the future, with scarcely a word about the past from which the future results.

(2.2222) The New Testament Generally is not Subject to Belief(d)

In and by themselves, events in the past do not constitute objective SOAs. Without a historical context, there are no criteria by which people who invoke past events can establish their previous occurrence. Events in the past come to participate in objective SOAs by being documented in responsible historical accounts. Being so documented serves as the criterion by which a specific event in the past can be established as actually having occurred. It was because of Herodotus' history that the previously actual SOA of Lydia and Sparta being on friendly terms at mid-6th century BC became the presently actual SOA of their having been friendly during that period. During that earlier period the SOA in question was expressed in the present tense. The equivalent SOA that is the case today is expressed in the past tense instead. It actually is the case today that Lydia and Sparta were on friendly terms during the mid-6th century BC.

A proposition, once again, consists of (1) a representation of a SOA accompanied by (2) a status-ascription. To this familiar definition, it should be added that the SOA in question should be objective and that the status ascribed to it should be either that of

being the case or that of not being the case. A SOA is objective only if there is a publically accessible criterion for determining its status. With regard to SOAs comprising past events in particular, their manner of representation is likely to be verbal (oral, written, printed, etc.). If represented verbally, their being past will be indicated by the grammar of their representations rather than by their status-ascriptions. Thus it is the case that Lydia and Sparta were friendly during the mid-6th century. A proposition to this effect consists of (1) a representation of their friendship during that now-past period accompanied by (2) an indication that this SOA is the case.

Doxastic belief is acceptance of a given proposition as being true. The proposition is true if and only if the SOA it represents actually has the status indicated in its status-ascription; otherwise it is false. Thus belief(d) that Lydia and Sparta were friendly during mid-6th century BC amounts to acceptance of a proposition to that effect as being true. The belief(d) itself is true if and only if it is directed toward a true proposition. Herodotus tells us that Lydia and Sparta indeed were friendly during that period. Herodotus' account of that SOA serves as a criterion of its actually being the case. The proposition affirming that friendship, accordingly, is a true proposition. And acceptance of that proposition as being true constitutes a true belief(d).

Without Herodotus' account, there would be no objective SOA of Lydia and Sparta being friendly during the mid-6th century. Accordingly, there would be no authentic proposition to that effect to be accepted as being true, and no authentic belief(d) that the friendship in question had once been current. Belief(d) concerning past events is historical in two distinct senses. In the first place, it is historical in being directed toward events that are no longer current. Beyond that, it is historical in depending for its

authenticity upon genuine historical accounts. Belief(d) that Lydia and Sparta enjoyed a period of mutual friendship was rendered historical in the first sense by the passage of time. The historical dependency of that belief in the second sense lies in its being authenticated by the account in Herodotus' *The Histories*.

Returning now to the NT, we recall that the narratives of the NT are not works of history. They are of course historical in the initial sense of dealing with events that occurred before the NT was written. But they neither are nor were intended to be objective historical accounts. The events they treat are not objective SOAs of the sort that figure in authentic propositions. For the most part, accordingly, the events recorded in the NT do not provide appropriate subject matter for beliefs directed toward propositional objects. While undoubtedly subject to belief of another sort (belief(s)), they are not subject to belief(d).

Events recorded in the NT are distinct from doctrines that come to be based on those events. We turn now to the question whether such doctrines themselves are potential subjects of doxastic belief.

(2.23) Belief(d) and Doctrines Based on NT Teachings

The terms most commonly used for doctrine in the NT are *didaskalia* and *didachē*. In *1 Timothy* 4:6, for example, Paul speaks favorably of Timothy as “being trained in the words of the faith and in the right doctrine” (*entrephomenos tois logois tēs pisteōs kai tēs kalēs didaskalias*). Either term could be translated “teaching” as well. On the night of his betrayal, for instance, the high priest questioned Jesus “about his disciples and about his teaching” (*peri tōn mathētōn autou kai peri tēs didachēs autou, John* 18:19).

As illustrated in these examples, most references in the NT to doctrines and teachings are generic. Timothy is commended for following right doctrine generally, and the high priest demanded that Jesus give a general account of his public teaching. The only reference to more or less specific teachings comes in the context of the Sermon on the Mount. Taking up three full chapters of *Matthew* (5-7), this sermon includes the Beatitudes, one version of the Lord's Prayer, and various parables and similies touching on topics of morality ranging from anger and anxiety to lust and divorce. After recounting the sermon, the author of the gospel remarks that "the crowds were astonished at his teaching" (*exēplēssonto hoi ochloi epi tē didachē autou*, 7:28). There are numerous other NT passages in which the verb *ekplēssein* is used to express amazement at Jesus' teaching, including 13:54, 19:25, and 22:33 in *Matthew* alone.

Specific teachings in this sermon include Jesus' counsel that his disciples should let their light shine before others (5:16), that they should seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness before attending to earthly needs (6:33), and that they should not give dogs what is holy or cast their pearls before swine (7:6). Teachings such as these obviously are not presented in propositional form. As elsewhere in the gospels, Jesus' teachings in the Sermon on the Mount consist largely of parables and aphorisms. His use of parables for moral instruction is expressly pointed out in *Mark* 4:2. Addressing a large crowd on shore from a boat, the narrator tells us, Jesus "was teaching them many things in parables" (*edidasken autous en parabolais polla*).

Like other figures of speech, parables and aphorisms cannot be cast in propositional form because they neither affirm nor deny the occurrence of genuine SOAs. And from the fact that parables and aphorisms cannot be cast in propositional form, it

follows that they are not suitable objects of belief(d). To find prima facie plausible cases of teachings and doctrines that have propositional content, we must look away from things Jesus said to things others have said about him.

(2.231) The NT basis for the Doctrine of the Resurrection

Among the most fundamental teachings of Christianity are the doctrines of Christ's virgin birth, of his death on the cross, and of his subsequent resurrection. Although the virgin part poses complications, the first two have already been recognized as suitable objects of belief(d). What can be said in this regard about Christ's rising from the grave? Once spelled out, the answer to this question can be extended to other prominent Christian doctrines.

Between his resurrection and his ascension, a period of forty days, Jesus appeared many times in human form to his committed followers. So at least we are told by the author of *Acts*, who wrote: "He [Jesus] presented himself to them [the disciples] after his suffering by many proofs (*hois kai parestēsen heauton zōnta meta to pathein auton en pollois tekmēriois*, 1:3), "appearing to them during forty days" (*di' ēmerōn tessarakonta optanomenos autois*, 1:3), and speaking about the kingdom of God. Accounts of these post-resurrection appearances are found in all four Gospels, as well as in *Acts* and in *I Corinthians*. Depending on method of tallying, eight or nine appearances are mentioned in all. First was to Mary Magdalene at the empty tomb (*Matthew* 28:1, *Mark* 16:1, *John* 20:1), and last to the disciples present at his ascension (*Mark* 16:19, *Luke* 24:51, *Acts* 1:9). Since Jesus' subsequent appearance to Saul (reported in *Acts* 9:3-6) seems not to have been in human form, it belongs in a class by itself.

These several references in the NT provide the only reasons we have for thinking that Jesus Christ arose from the dead. For one thing, these passages provide the only rationale we have for positing the astounding doctrine of Jesus' resurrection in the first place. Beyond that, these passages contain the only evidence we have that such an event actually took place. Our immediate purpose is to ascertain whether the doctrine of Jesus' resurrection is an appropriate object of belief(d). Other senses of belief will be left aside for the present. With this immediate purpose in mind, let us examine what the NT says about Jesus' appearances to his disciples after he arose from the dead.

(2.2311) Touching Jesus' Post-Resurrection Body

Jesus' first post-resurrection appearance to his disciples as a group is described in *Luke* 24:33-49 and *John* 20:19-24. On the evening of the day he arose from the dead, all the remaining disciples except Thomas were gathered in a locked room "for fear of the Jews" (*dia ton phobon tōn 'Ioudaiōn*, *John* 20:19). Jesus entered the room and stood among them, saying "Peace be with you" (*Eirēnē humin* 20:19), and showing them his hands and side. Invoking the Holy Spirit in their behalf, Jesus then invests authority on the disciples to forgive and to withhold forgiveness of sins. As depicted in *John*, the episode ends with the note that Thomas, called "the Twin" (*Didumos*, 20:24), was not with the others when Jesus came.

More details on this first interaction between Jesus and the disciples are given in *Luke* 24:33-49. According to *Luke*, other people were in the room with the disciples when Jesus came, including the two who had encountered him on the road to Emmaus (24:33). When Jesus said "Peace be with you" (*Eirēnē humin*, 24:36), all were frightened and

thought they had seen a spirit (*pneuma*, 24:37). Reading their thoughts, Jesus asked why they were troubled and said to them “See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself” (*idete tas cheiras mou kai tous podas mou hoti egō eimi autos*, 24:39). “Touch me and see” (*psēlaphēsate me kai idete*), he said, “for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have” (*hoti pneuma sarka kai ostea ouk echei kathōs eme theōreite echonta*, 24:39). When he showed them his hands and feet they were incredulous with wonder and joy, whereupon he asked them “Have you anything to eat?” (*Echete ti brōsimon enthade*; 24:41). The disciples then gave him a piece of broiled fish, which he took and ate in their presence.

After eating the fish, Jesus “opened their minds to understand the Scriptures” (*diēnoixen autōn ton noun tou sunienai tas graphas*, 24:45), instructed them to stay in the city until “clothed with power from on high” (*endusēsthe ex hupsous dunamin*, 24:49), and led them to Bethany to witness his being “carried up to heaven” (*anephereto eis ton ouranon*, 24:51). This latter passage locates Jesus’ ascension within roughly one day after his resurrection, contrary to the forty days specified in *Acts* 1:3.

John 20:26-29 brings us back to the locked room eight days later, this time occupied by all the disciples including Thomas. Jesus again passed through the door and addressed Thomas, saying: “Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand and place it in my side; do not disbelieve, but believe” (*Phere ton daktulon sou hōde kai ide tas cheiras mou kai phere tēn cheira sou kai bale eis tēn pleuran mou, kai mē ginou apistos alla pistos*, 20:27). Apparently without actually touching Jesus, Thomas answered: “My Lord and my God” (*Ho kurios mou kai ho theos mou*, 20:28). Thomas

believed because he had seen Jesus. The sequence ends with Jesus calling “blessed” (*makarioi*, 20:29) those who believe without seeing.

John 20:19-24,26-29 and *Luke* 24:33-43 tell almost everything that can be known about the personal interaction between Jesus and the disciples on the evening of resurrection day. *Mark* 16:14-18, which also deals with this occasion, has little to add in this regard. The disciples clearly had good reason to be frightened by Jesus’ sudden appearance (undeterred by the locked door), and good reason to think they had seen a spirit. To prove he was not a spirit, Jesus offered the wounded parts of his body for their visual and tactual inspection, and ate a piece of fish while they were watching.

Beyond the implausible proximity of the ascension to the resurrection in *Luke* 24, there are several aspects of this composite account that seem puzzling. Despite centuries of theological speculation about the functioning (or lack thereof) of Jesus’ post-resurrection digestive organs, for example, the relevance of Jesus’ eating fish in the disciples’ presence remains unclear. There are passages in the OT about angels eating (*Genesis* 18:8, 19:1-3), which suggests that ingesting food is compatible with spiritual status. The point of Jesus eating fish here may be simply to show that he could still interact with his physical surroundings, in which case sitting down on a chair would have done as well. A rejoinder to this suggestion might be that someone who walks through closed doors would pass through chair seats as well.

What remains especially puzzling about these passages, however, is why viewing or touching Jesus’ injured members was supposed to counter the disciples’ fear that he was a spirit. There are several passages in the NT that depict spirits being seen and touched. *Matthew* 3:16, for example, records that Jesus saw (*eiden*) the Spirit of God

descending and coming to rest upon him; and in *John* 1:32 John the Baptist avows that on the same occasion he saw (first person *Tetheamai*) the Spirit descending and coming to rest on Jesus. Being seen by Jesus and John surely does not suggest that the Spirit of God is not a spirit after all. So why should being seen by the disciples indicate that the post-resurrection Jesus was not a spirit himself?

As far as touching is concerned, *John* 1:32 also reports that (according to John the Baptist) the Holy Spirit rested (*emeinen*) on Jesus after descending. And resting on something seems tantamount to touching it. There are also passages in the OT referring to angels engaging in touch. According to *1 Kings* 19:5, an angel touched (*hēpsato*) Elijah while he was sleeping under a broom tree, bidding him to rise and eat. The angel touches Elijah again at *1 Kings* 19:7, again telling him to eat and drink. Otherwise, the angel says, Elijah would not be strong enough for the long journey (40 days and 40 nights) he is about to undertake to Mount Horeb where Moses received the Ten Commandments (*Deuteronomy* 5:2). Although in all these cases the angel initiates the touching, the physical contact involved in touching is reciprocal. If the Spirit of God touched Jesus, there is a straightforward sense in which Jesus touched the Spirit of God as well. Given these precedents, it is not clear why being touched by Thomas and various other disciples should indicate that the post-resurrection Jesus was not a spirit.

As noted above, Jesus offered his hands and side for Thomas to touch (*John* 20:27), and Thomas apparently declined. Thomas' forbearance here contrasts dramatically with an earlier sequence in *John* 20, where Mary Magdalene initially mistakes the risen Jesus for a gardener and asks where she can find his body. When Jesus pronounces her name "Mary," she immediately recognizes him and calls out "Rabboni!"

(*Rabbouni*, 20:16). Jesus responds by admonishing her sharply: “Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father” (*Mē mou haptou, oupō gar anabebēka pros ton patera*, 20:17). This fits in nicely (despite differences in detail) with *Matthew* 28:8-10, where Mary Magdalene and another Mary encounter Jesus on their way to tell the disciples of his rising. In this latter sequence, the women came up to Jesus, “grasped his feet” (*ekratēsan autou tous podas*, 28:9), and worshipped him. In this version, Jesus does not object to their physical contact but rather advises them to tell his brothers (*adelphois*, 28:10) that they will see him in Galilee.

One can only speculate on the significance (if any) of Jesus’ differing attitudes toward being touched on these several occasions. As far as I can determine, *Matthew* 28:9 and *John* 20:17 are the only passages mentioning physical contact actually being made with the risen Jesus in the NT.

(2.2312) Visual Appearances of the Post-Resurrection Jesus

There are numerous occasions in the NT when the post-resurrection Jesus appears visually to his followers. According to *Mark* 16:9, his first appearance was to Mary Magdalene. More detail regarding this appearance is provided in book 20 of *John*. Mary came to the tomb before dawn and saw the stone rolled away. She ran to tell Simon Peter and the disciple Jesus loved, and the three ran back to the tomb together. The disciple Jesus loved arrived first to look into the empty tomb, but did not enter. Simon Peter then went in and saw the burial clothes piled neatly where Jesus had lain. The disciple Jesus loved followed. Without understanding what had happened, the two disciples then returned to their homes.

Mary Magdalene, however, stood by the tomb weeping, and soon went inside. She saw two angels clothed in white who asked her why she was weeping. Mary replied: “They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him” (*Hran ton kurion mou, kai ouk oida pou ethēkan auton, John 20:13*). Thereupon she turned around and saw Jesus standing near her, but mistook him for the gardener. When Jesus asked why she was weeping, she replied: “Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him and I will take him away” (*Kurie, ei su ebastasas auton, eipe moi pou ethēkas auton, kagō auton arō, 20:15*). Then Jesus said “Mary,” and she replied “*Rabboni*” (teacher). After telling Mary to loosen her hold on him, Jesus sent her to his “brothers” (*adelphous, 20:17*) with the message: “I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God” (*Anabainō pros ton patera mou kai patera humōn kai theon mou kai theon humōn, 20:17*).

A somewhat different account of this encounter between Mary Magdalene and Jesus is found in *Matthew* chapter 28. Mary Magdalene and another Mary (probably the mother of James and Joseph) arrive at the tomb while the stone is still in place, just in time to see a brightly clad angel descend from heaven and roll the stone away, which caused a “great earthquake” (*seismos ... megas, Matthew 28:2*). Upon seeing the angel, the guards trembled and became like dead men. In the conversation between the women and the angel that followed, the angel told them that Jesus had risen, showed them where he had lain, and instructed them to tell the disciples that Jesus would precede them to Galilee. Then when the women were running to tell the disciples, Jesus appeared before them, greeted them saying “*Chairete*,” and charged them to tell his “brothers” (*adelphois, 28:10*) to go to Galilee where they would see him. The account in *Matthew* ends with the

eleven disciples going to the mountain in Galilee where Jesus had directed them, worshipping him when he came (although some “doubted,” *edistasan*, 28:17), and being commissioned by Jesus to evangelize all nations, “baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (*baptizontes autous eis to onoma tou patros kai tou huiou kai tou hagiou pneumatos*, 28:19).

On the same day that the tomb was found empty, we hear in *Luke* chapter 24, two of Jesus’ followers were on their way to Emmaus (about two hours walk from Jerusalem) talking about all that had been happening. While they were talking, Jesus approached and walked with them; but “their eyes were prevented from recognizing him” (*hoi de ophthalmoi autōn ekratounto tou mē epignōmai auton*, 24:16). A conversation ensued in which Jesus asked what they were talking about. Cleopas (one of the two) explained the events leading up to the crucifixion, related how amazed they were when the women reported their “visions of angels” (*optasian angelōn*, 24:23), and mentioned that others of their group had gone to the tomb and confirmed that it was empty. Jesus responded by chiding them for lack of faith and launched into a lengthy account of OT prophecies anticipating his crucifixion. All this time they were walking together with Jesus who remained incognito. When they reached Emmaus it was nearly dark and Jesus agreed to spend the night with them. Then at dinner he took bread, blessed it, broke it and gave it to them. Thereupon their eyes were opened and they recognized him. With that, he vanished from their sight.

Cleopas and his companion then asked themselves: “Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened the scriptures to us?” (*Ouchi hē kardia hēmōn kaiomenē ēn [en hēmin] hōs elalei hēmin en tē hodō, hōs diēnoigen*

hēmin tas graphas; 24:32). That same hour the two returned to Jerusalem to join the eleven disciples in the locked room where Jesus would soon appear to offer his hands and feet for their inspection. Before Jesus appeared, others in the room told the two that “the Lord indeed has risen and appeared to Simon” (*ontōs ēgerthē ho kurios kai ōphthē Simōni*, 24:34). This particular appearance to Simon must have occurred before the two left for Emmaus (unless Jesus bilocated), but nothing more is said about it in the NT.

If we take the Gospel accounts at face value, by way of review, Jesus’ first post-resurrection appearance was to Mary Magdalene at the tomb, when she answered “*Rabboni*” to his “Mary.” The other report of this encounter, in *Matthew 28*, has Mary Magdalene and the other Mary meeting Jesus while hastening away from the tomb to do the angel’s bidding. These probably should count as two versions of the same encounter. If so, then the appearance to Simon mentioned at *Luke 24:34* would be the second appearance on record, with that on the road to Emmaus counting as the third. None of these, however, constitutes an appearance to the disciples as a group. The first appearance to a group of disciples occurs when Jesus enters the locked room, offers his hands and feet for the disciples to inspect, and eats a piece of fish in their presence. As *John 20:24* states explicitly, Thomas was absent on this particular occasion. When the others told Thomas what had happened, he famously answered that he would not believe unless he could put his hand and finger in Jesus’ wounds.

Eight days later the disciples were in the locked room again, this time with Thomas among them. Jesus again appeared among them and invited Thomas to touch his wounds, an offer Thomas apparently declined. Thomas instead responded: “My Lord and my God” (20:28, Greek above). Observing that Thomas had come to believe through

seeing him, Jesus then said: “blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed” (*makarioi hoi mē idontes kai pisteusantes, John 20:29*).

This second appearance in the locked room was the second time Jesus appeared to a group of disciples after his resurrection. The third time, according to *John 21:14*, was by the Sea of Tiberias (Galilee). Several disciples (Peter, Thomas, Nathanael, James and John, and two unnamed others) were in a boat close to shore at daybreak, having fished all night without success. Unrecognized at first, Jesus appeared on shore and asked about their catch. He then advised them to cast their net to the right of the boat, which led to a catch of 153 large fish (21:11). At that point John recognized Jesus and told Peter, who jumped from the boat and swam ashore. When all had reached land, they found that Jesus had prepared breakfast for them. A conversation ensued between Jesus and Peter in which Jesus asked three times whether Peter loved him and three times enjoined Peter to feed his flock. We return to this sequence in due course as part of a general examination of love as it figures in the NT.

So far, this adds up to six separate post-resurrection appearances attributed to Jesus in the four Gospels. Another, recorded in *Matthew 28:16-17*, is hard to relate sequentially to the other six. This seventh was the disciples’ meeting with Jesus in Galilee, of which Jesus had instructed the two Marys to inform the disciples at *Matthew 28:10*. Galilee is several days walk from Jerusalem, so that the journey there and back would have taken the better part of a week. It is hard to imagine why Jesus would want to meet the disciples in Galilee after having already having spoken to them twice in the locked room.

In additions to these seven, three additional appearances are mentioned in *I Corinthians* 15:6-7. One was to more than 500 “brothers” (*adelphois*), most of whom are still alive” (*hoi pleiones menousin heōs arti*). Another was to James specifically, and the third to “all the apostles” (*tois apostolois pasin*). Counting the Galilee meeting, this adds up to ten post-resurrection appearances. For present purpose, however, the exact number is irrelevant. Jesus interacted with many people in the forty days after his resurrection.

What is relevant for present purposes is the fact that all visual appearances of the risen Christ were to people who numbered among his followers before he died. This fact has a distinct bearing on the question whether Jesus’ activities during the forty days between his resurrection and his ascension constitute a proper object of propositional belief. Christians accept the appearances of the post-resurrection Jesus as essential to the story of his earthly presence. As the following section should make clear, however, the acceptance in question cannot plausibly count as a matter of belief(d).

(2.2313) Belief(d) and the Resurrection

The NT account of Christ’s activities after his resurrection is not a work of history. Apart from Paul, the authors of the account are not clearly identified. And even including Paul, the authors do not specify their sources. Beyond that, a man who returns to life from death is unnatural to the extreme. An account written about such a person is not count as a work of history. History is written about people whose lives are constrained by natural forces. And the resurrected Jesus was not constrained by forces of nature. Let us review respects in which the risen Jesus is supernatural, which is to say not a natural person.

In each appearance described in the Gospels, the risen Jesus either appears suddenly out of nowhere or else disappears with similar abruptness. The post-resurrection Jesus, as it were, “pops into” and “pops out of” an observer’s field of awareness. He disappears suddenly after being recognized by the two men at Emmaus, and he reappears suddenly to the frightened disciples in the locked room in Jerusalem. This does not happen with people subject to the forces of nature.

Another unnatural feature of the risen Jesus is that he had a way of being present to people without being immediately recognized. One occasion was his appearance to Mary at the tomb when she mistook him for a gardener. Another was his joining Cleopas and his companion on the road to Emmaus and remaining incognito until they had reached their destination. Yet another was his appearance to his disciples on the shore of the lake, where he was not recognized until he had told them where to cast their nets.

The most strikingly unnatural thing about the risen Jesus, however, is that he appeared only to people who had followed him before death. There is not a single instance in the texts we have been examining where he appears visibly to anyone outside his previous circle of followers. (Paul encountered Jesus as a voice and a blinding flash, not as a visible presence.) To be sure, this circle includes a considerable variety of people. There are the women at the tomb, Cleopas and his companion on the road to Emmaus, the 500 “brothers” of *1 Corinthians* 15:6, and of course the sons of Zebedee and the other disciples. Regarding the 500 brothers, it should be noted that the term *adelphos* generally means “fellow Christian” in Paul’s letters.

According to the testimony of Peter in *Acts* 10:40-41, this limitation of the risen Jesus’ appearances to his followers was not a mere happenstance. In *Acts* 10:40, Peter

attests that God raised Jesus on the third day and made him appear, but with a qualification added in the following verse. Jesus appeared “not to all the people but to us who had been chosen by God as witnesses” (*ou panti tō laō, alla martusin tois prokecheirotōnēmenois hupo tou theou*). *Acts* 10:41 concludes with a description of those chosen by God as “those who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead” (*hoitines sunephagomen kai sunepiomen autō meta to anastēnai auton ek nekrōn*).

Another passage alluding to this restricted range of visibility is *Acts* 13:31, which says of Jesus that after being raised from the dead: “he appeared for many days to those who had come up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are now his witnesses to the people” (*hos ōphthē epi hēmeras pleious tois sunanabasin autō apo tēs Galilaias eis Ierousalēm, hoitines [nun] eisin martures autou pros ton laon*). This passage is cited in the 1994 *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, in support of its explanation of “why the risen Christ does not reveal himself to the world, but to his disciples” (entry 647). Also cited in this regard is *John* 14:22, in which Judas (not Iscariot) asks Jesus: “Lord, why is it that you will manifest yourself to us, and not to the world?” (*Kurie, [kai] ti gegonen hoti hēmin melleis emphanizein seauton kai ouchi tō kosmō;*).

It was argued previously that competently written historical accounts qualify as appropriate objects of doxastic belief. Since the NT passages dealing with the post-resurrection Jesus are not historical accounts, they do not qualify as objects of belief(d) on that basis. Setting aside matters of historicity, we may recall other reasons why these passages are not suitable objects of belief(d).

By definition, belief(d) is directed toward propositional objects. Also by definition, a proposition is a representation of a state of affairs (SOA) along with an

indication of that SOA's being the case or of its not being the case. A SOA is an aspect of the world as it is or of the world as it might be. Aspects of the world as it is constitute actual SOAs, which is to say SOAs that actually occur or actually are the case. Aspects of the world as it might be constitute possible SOAs, which might be the case if the world were otherwise but as the world stands are not the case. All genuine SOAs are either actual or possible.

A SOA is genuine only if the circumstances of its occurrence are identified by criteria accessible to all members of a linguistic (language-sharing) group that might have occasion to communicate about it. Even if the relevant criterion is not met in a given case, members of the relevant group will have a shared understanding of circumstances under which the criterion would be met. Members of the communicating group, that is to say, agree in their understanding of circumstances under which the SOA in question is the case, and also agree that the SOA is not the case when those circumstances do not obtain. Agreement in both respects is essential for a SOA to be genuine. A genuine SOA might also be termed *objective*, in contrast with circumstances treated *subjectively* (idiosyncratically) by individuals apart from the group.

The qualifying term 'genuine' may be extended from SOAs to the propositions representing them. A genuine proposition is a representation of a genuine SOA as either being the case or as not being the case. A proposition, accordingly, is genuine only if it represents a SOA the occurrence of which is marked by circumstances generally agreed upon by members of a relevant linguistic group. The term can also be extended to doxastic beliefs regarding the truth-value of concerned propositions. A given belief(d) is genuine only if it is directed toward a genuine proposition. This means that a genuine

belief(d) is one regarding a SOA whose occurrence could be recognized as such by most members of the linguistic group in question.

As might be expected, the question whether Jesus' rising from the grave constitutes a genuine SOA hinges on the group of people deemed to have a shared interest in communicating about that singular occurrence. Without a common understanding of what constitutes Jesus' rising from the grave, a given group of concerned individuals could not have communicated effectively about that SOA. There are at least four groups of concerned individuals to be considered in this regard: (1) those "handpicked by God" to interact with the resurrected Jesus, (2) contemporaries who were not members of this select group, (3) NT authors who wrote about the resurrected Jesus, and (4) later readers of the NT accounts, ourselves in particular.

In the situation of those "handpicked by God" to interact with the resurrected Jesus there was no need for criterion of his having risen from the grave. At one time or another, all of them had encountered him personally. As far as they were concerned (Thomas eventually included), his presence was an unquestionable fact. It does not follow from this, however, that his post-resurrection appearance counted as a fact for other people. The confidence of those who interacted with him personally did not support a belief(d) on the part of other people that Jesus had actually arisen from the grave.

This was emphatically the case with the Roman authorities responsible for the story about Jesus' body being stolen (*Matthew* 28:11-15), with people like Saul (prior to his conversion) who persecuted Jesus' followers, and with many contemporary speakers of Aramaic (the language group in question) who may have heard about Jesus but were not following his story. For this miscellaneous group, or any subset thereof, there was no

shared agreement regarding circumstances that would constitute Jesus actually rising from the grave. For them, at least, the testimony of the disciples was far from adequate. From their perspective, accordingly, there was no genuine SOA tantamount to Jesus' resurrection, and no genuine proposition to serve as an object of belief(d).

To say this, we should note, is not to say that the latter group had no opinion about the belief(d) shared by the former group of Jesus' followers. Many within the latter group may have been convinced that members of the former were mistaken in believing that Jesus had arisen. Such conviction on the part of the latter, however, would not itself have taken the form of doxastic belief. Members of the latter would have had no clear understanding of what the belief(d) of the former amounted to, parsing it as merely a mistaken notion that Jesus had appeared in their midst. This is a consequence of God's determination, as reported by Peter, that only the faithful would encounter the risen Jesus, prohibiting others from understanding the full impact of his personal presence.

A situation shared by Jesus' initial followers and their contemporary detractors, nonetheless, was that of having been alive during the forty days following his resurrection. With one or two possible exceptions, the authors of the NT did not share in this situation. With the same possible exceptions, moreover, none of the of the NT authors had encountered Jesus personally. Their likely sources were various oral traditions stemming from testimony of the original Christians. For reasons discussed previously, oral traditions convey little or no propositional content. A consequence is that they have little to do with doxastic belief. Although the NT authors obviously wrote with conviction, the confidence they brought to bear was not a manifestation of belief(d).

This has ramifications for subsequent readers of the NT account as well. Given that the text of the NT was not inscribed from a position of belief(d), there is no reason to think that it can serve as a standpoint from which belief(d) can be transmitted to its readers. Oral traditions do not take on propositional content just by being put in writing. If the concerned books of the NT were historical documents, to be sure, they could serve as a basis for belief(d) on the part of subsequent readers. As argued previously, well-executed historical accounts provide criteria for the past occurrence of the SOAs they document. Generally speaking, however, there are few passages in the NT that qualify for historical status. This is the case particularly with the passages depicting Jesus' interaction with the disciples in the days following his resurrection. The point here is not that Jesus did not arise from the grave, or that he did not appear several times to the disciples during the forty days following. The point rather is that the NT account of these events cannot plausibly be read as a work of history.

Lacking historical status, the account of Jesus' resurrection in the NT fails to provide a criterion enabling present-day readers to determine either the occurrence or the non-occurrence of the events in question. And lacking a criterion by which its occurrence or non-occurrence can be determined, Jesus' resurrection as chronicled in the NT does not count as a genuine SOA for present-day readers. As far as current readers are concerned, Jesus' resurrection can be neither affirmed nor denied in the form of a genuine proposition. For a current reader, accordingly, there is no genuine proposition to serve as object of a belief(d) to the effect that Jesus rose from the dead.

Like the NT authors in question, one might be fully confident that such an event occurred. If so, however, the confidence one maintains would not be doxastic in nature.

(2.232) Theologically Formulated Doctrine and Belief(d)

The key doctrines of Jesus' virgin birth, his crucifixation, and his resurreciion were written into the NT by its late-1st and early-2nd century authors. Other prominent doctrines of Christianity took shape subsequently by action of various church councils, more often than not to suppress what was perceived as dissident teaching. Our concern now turns to religious doctrine that has beome codified for purposes of theological orthodoxy, of prosyletising, and of catechesis (instruction). Among the more prominent of these is the doctrine of the Trinity, which was promulgated in the year 381.

(2.2321) The Trinity

By the 3rd century AD, disagreements had broken out within the fledgling church, producing conflicting groups that claimed unique access to the truth and that branded each other as heretical. An especially bitter controversy concerned the relation between Jesus and God. One group (the Arians) thought that Christ, as Son of the Father, was a special creation of God and hence had a beginning and could not be eternal. The opposing group (the Athanasians) thought that Father and Son are one, although distinct from each other, and hence that they are coeternal. Issued in 313 AD, Constantine's Edict of Milan encouraged the general practice of Christianity within the Roman state. With large numbers of Roman citizens involved, a consequence was that the "Arian controversy" become a disruptive force both for the church and for civil society at large.

Emperor Constantine sought to defuse the conflict by convening the Council of Nicea in 325 AD. Of the 1,800 bishops representing the Roman Empire who were

invited, church historians tell us, only 318 actually attended. Although most of those attending probably lacked well-considered views on the issue in advance, Constantine's enthusiasm for the Athanasian alternative carried the day with near unanimity. (The two bishops who disagreed were excommunicated.) The Nicene Creed that resulted laid the matter to rest. From that point onward, church doctrine has held that Jesus Christ is "begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father" (*genitum, non factum, consubstantialem Patri*, Nicene Creed).

Although the Athanasian view regarding the relation between Father and Son had prevailed at Nicea, controversy continued regarding the status of the Holy Spirit. In the Creed of 325 AD, the Holy Spirit is mentioned only once. This mention comes in the last line, which adds the Holy Spirit to the other beings (God and Jesus Christ) in which belief is professed. As part of the subsequent effort to clarify the status of the Holy Spirit, the influential theologian Athanasius (source of the Athanasian position on Father and Son) had put forward a view according to which God, Christ, and Holy Spirit are one in being yet three distinct persons. Like the Athanasian position on Father and Son, this ran counter to the Arian view that God created everything other than himself from nothing. In order to settle this continuing conflict between the Arians and the Athanasians, a second ecumenical council was convened in 381 AD by the emperor Theodosius.

Tradition has it that only 150 bishops attended this council at Constantinople, less than half the 381 said to have taken part in the Council of Nicea. This small number of clerical attendees suggests that Theodosius' motives in calling the council were more political than theological. In point of fact, Theodosius had converted to Christianity only a year or so before convening the council. And when a verdict had been reached, the

emperor himself issued an edict ordering all churches to promulgate the new teaching and branding all who refused as heretical. Even further, he warned that all who refused to comply would be punished under his civil authority. Theodosius' sense of the importance of religious harmony for political unity was substantiated by the fact that he was the last emperor to rule over an undivided Roman empire. After his death, the empire was split in two parts, ruled separately by his sons Arcadius and Honorius.

The doctrine of the Holy Spirit that Theodosius' subjects were forced to accept was a compromise worked out by three philosophically sophisticated bishops from Cappadocia -- Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nyssa, and Gregory of Nazianzus. As formulated in the revised Nicene (or Niceno-Constantinopolitan) Creed, the teaching holds that the Holy Spirit is "the Lord and Giver of life" (*to Kurion kai Zōopoion*), that it "proceeds from the Father" (*to ek tou Patros ekporeuomenon*), that "with the Father and Son [it is] worshipped and glorified" (*to sun Patri kai Uiō sumproskunoumenon kai sundoxazomenon*), and that it "spoke through the prophets" (*to lalēsan dia tōn prophētōn*). Thus formulated, the Nicene Creed is used today by both the Eastern Orthodox and the Roman Catholic Churches, as well as by the Anglican and many other Protestant denominations.

Thus formulated, the conception of the triune God in the Creed had yet to reach the precision and succinctness of the "finished" doctrine of the Trinity. The main deficit lay with the term *ekporeuomenon* (proceeds). On one hand, there is proceeding in the sense that a particular effect proceeds from a particular cause (reminiscent of Arianism), and on the other proceeding in the sense that patience and forbearance proceed from each other (closer to the Athanasian view). Although church historians seem unable to

recover details of how it happened, the “undiluted” view of Athanasius eventually came to prevail and was ratified as church doctrine by the Council of Chalcedon in 431 AD. In its “finished” formulation, the doctrine of the Trinity holds that Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are on equal footing as three distinct Persons of a triune God. None depends on another for its existence, and none is subordinate to another in expressing God’s essence. As formulated in Eliade’s *Encyclopedia of Religion*, the doctrine of the Trinity that emerged from this contentious process states simply that God is “one in nature, three in person” (*mia ousia, treis hypostasis*).

Despite ratification of this doctrine by the Council of Chalcedon, the role of the Holy Spirit in the Trinity remained a subject of heated controversy within the church. In the version of the Creed approved by the Council, the Holy Spirit is said to proceed from the Father and thence to be worshiped along with the Son. This impressed some theologians as yet another intrusion of Arianism in giving the Father creative powers the Son did not share. To forestall this impression, certain western theologians (in communion with Rome) advocated language specifying that the Holy Spirit proceeds from both the Father and the Son. In the Latin version of the Creed, this amounted to adding *Filioque* to the Council’s statement of procession: *Qui ex Patre procedit*. At first church authorities in Constantople took little notice of the addition. As time went on, however, the *Filioque* clause took on major political significance.

The political context for this development took its rise from the aforementioned division of the Roman Empire following the death of Theodosius in 395 AD. By the end of the next century, the western part of the empire had been subject to numerous barbarian incursions, which interrupted contact of the western church with its eastern

counterpart. Whereas previously many churchmen spoke both Latin and Greek, moreover, after Theodosius' death use of Greek became increasingly confined to the east and use of Latin to the west. With increasingly less routine communication between them, the patriarchs of Constantinople and of Rome took on increasingly greater autonomy within their own territories. The two branches of the church developed their own rites and their own partialities in matters of doctrine. Conflict in doctrine began to break out within decades after the Council of Chalcedon. In 484 Pope Felix III excommunicated Acacius the Patriarch of Constantinople, causing a breach that was papered over 35 years later when the Byzantine Emperor Justin I sanctioned Acacius' excommunication.

Understanding the political significance of this excommunication requires knowing something about the then-current relation between the church authorities involved. Prior to the 4th century, the church had recognized three patriarchs, seated at Antioch, Alexandria, and Rome. The patriarch of Rome (the Pope) was "first among equals" (*primus inter pares*) by virtue of being the successor of St. Peter, but none of the three had ecclesiastical jurisdiction over the others. The dynamics of this interrelation changed substantially after the Council of Chalcedon, which added the patriarchs of Jerusalem and of Constantinople to the mix and gave "ecumenical" (universal, overarching) authority to the latter over his eastern fellows. From that point on, the main actors in the ecclesiastical power struggle between east and west were the Patriarch of Constantinople and the Bishop of Rome. The excommunication of 484 was a power move by the highest authority in the western church against the highest authority in the east.

The excommunication of 484 resulted from a split on the theological issue whether Christ is exclusively divine in nature or is both human and divine. If both human and divine, the Son who is one with the Father presumably shares in the procession of the Holy Spirit. After 484, the *Filioque* clause became the main bone of contention between east and west. Underlying the theological dispute, however, was the jurisdictional issue whether the western Pope had the right to determine the wording of the creed to be used by the Eastern Church as well. Jockeying for position in matters of jurisdiction continued through the next several centuries. The position of the west was solidified in the late-6th century, when the Visigoths who ruled in Spain were required to accept the *Filioque* clause when they entered into communion with Rome. Early in the 8th century, the same was required of the Franks under Charlemagne in the northern countries.

The rivalry became more intense in the mid-9th century when Pope Nicholas I excommunicated Photios, then Patriarch of Constantinople, on the ground that his appointment to that position was not canonical. (Both Photios and Nicholas I subsequently were made saints, producing the intriguing anomaly of one future saint excommunicating another.) In rejecting the Pope's action, Photios cited the *Filioque* clause as proof that Rome had a habit of exceeding its authority both in theology and in church discipline. As their resistance stiffened, the patriarches of Constantinople begin issuing excommunicatiions themselves. In 867, a major council in Constantinople excommunicated Pope Nicholas I. And in 1054, Michael Cerularius, Patriarch of Constantinople, excommunicated Pope Leo IX. Excommunication of Cerularius by Leo IX was underway at the same time, but since Leo died in the process this counter-excommunication was never officially accomplished.

Although incomplete, this interchange of condemnations was enough to bring about the so-called “Great Schism” of 1054 between the eastern and the western churches. In the creed henceforth professed by western Christianity, the Holy Spirit proceeds from both Father and Son, whereas in that of the east it proceeds from the Father alone. So it remains until the present day.

Intractable as it seems to be, this theological disagreement pales in comparison with the military recriminations that followed the schism. In 1204, armies of the Fourth Crusade descended on Constantinople and sacked the church of Hagia Sophia. At the time, Hagia Sophia was the seat of the Patriarch of Constantinople. Rancor stemming from this use of military force persisted for 800 years, until June of 2004 when Pope John Paul II (afflicted by advanced Parkinson’s disease) formally apologized for the military action to Patriarch Bartholomew I of Constantinople. Patriarch Bartholomew accepted, and graciously returned to Rome for John Paul’s funeral on April 8, 2005.

To what extent, we now ask, does the contested relation of the Holy Spirit to the Father and Son affect the propositional content of the doctrine of the Trinity? In view of the deepseated disagreement between east and west, it is perhaps tempting to postulate two doctrines in logical contradiction with each other. The doctrine upheld by Constantinople would endorse a Trinity in which one Person (the Father) has power (that of initiating the procession of the Holy Spirit) not shared by another (the Son), whereas the three Persons endorsed by Rome are equipotent and coeternal. In the eyes of their advocates, presumably, one doctrine would be true and the other false. The eventuality of Constantinople being right implies that Rome is wrong, and of course vice versa. Doctrines logically opposed in this manner cannot be true simultaneously.

Given the nature of propositional truth, however, this cannot be how the conflicting doctrines are related. A proposition has truth-value (true or false) only if it represents a genuine SOA. And a SOA is genuine only if members of a group purporting to communicate about it are in agreement regarding circumstances under which that SOA is or would be the case. Although purporting to communicate about competing conceptions of the Holy Trinity, Constantinople and Rome lack a shared agreement about circumstances under which either conception would correspond to an actual or possible SOA. The disagreement between Constantinople and Rome, accordingly, is not about genuine SOAs. This being so, the doctrines expressing their respective views on the Trinity lack propositional content. Lacking propositional content, these doctrines therefore are neither true nor false, and hence are incapable of standing in logical relations.

The reason these doctrines lack propositional content, we should be careful to note, is not merely that they are held by different groups, but rather that neither group has a coherent understanding of what it would be for one or the other SOA in question to be the case. Taking this into account should forestall another mistaken view of the relation between them. This is the view that each group has its own understanding of the SOA that would render its doctrine true, and that these understandings differ, making it possible for either doctrine to be true independently of the other. The two doctrines thus might be true together, albeit each only within the context of its respective group of adherents. One doctrine might be true within the jurisdiction of Constantinople, while the other is true for Christians in communion with Rome.

This view is mistaken for at least two reasons. One is that it presupposes a treatment of SOAs that makes them subjective (idiosyncratic) rather than objective. What is or might be the case in the world (actual and possible SOAs) do not vary with arbitrarily restricted perspectives. The second reason is more germane to our present interests. As suggested above, neither Constantinople nor Rome has a coherent understanding of circumstances occurrence of which would make either of their particular doctrines of the Trinity true. A spokesperson for Rome could claim: “God truly is ‘one in nature, three in person’ just in case God is one in nature and three in person.” But this is tantamount to saying (tautologously, hence vacuously) that the doctrine is true just in case its truth-conditions are met. A similar claim could be advanced in behalf of the Constantinopolitan doctrine. In point of fact, both claims leave unanswered the question what the relevant truth-conditions might be.

The doctrine of the Trinity plays a central role in Christian theology. Most branches of Christianity accept it, and those that don’t (e.g., Unitarians) typically make a point of explaining why they reject it. Neither those who accept it nor those who reject it, however, have put forward a clear conception of circumstances that might make a difference between its being and its not being the case. This is because the triune nature of God does not respond to a SOA that might conceivably be otherwise. As matters stand, the doctrine of the Trinity lacks propositional content. This does not preclude it from exercising a distinctive influence in the formation of a Christian life. But lack of such content does prevent the Trinity from standing as an object of belief(d). For those who accept the Trinity as a formative influence in their religious lives, their mode of acceptance is not doxastic. It is likely to be symphoric instead.

(2.2322) Doctrines Delivered *Ex Cathedra*

According to the *First Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, a publication of the First Vatican Council (1869-70), a Pope acts *ex cathedra* when “in the exercise of his office as shepard and teacher of all Christians, in virtue of his supreme apostolic authority, he defines a doctrine concerning faith or morals to be held by the whole Church.” Catholic theologians and Church historians agree that “definition *ex cathedra*” has occurred on two clear-cut occasions. In 1854 Pope Pius IX affirmed *ex cathedra* that the Virgin Mary “was preserved free from all stain of original sin,” a doctrine known briefly as the “Immaculate Conception.” And in 1950 Pope Pius XII proclaimed *ex cathedra* that the Virgin Mary “was assumed body and soul into heavenly glory,” known for short as the “Assumption.”

Also emanating from the First Vatican Council was the doctrine of papal infallibility. When a pope speaks *ex cathedra*, Vatican I affirmed, what he says is infallible, meaning not open to the possibility of error. The Second Vatican Council (1962-65) reaffirmed the doctrine of infallibility (with modifications in terminology), and put it forward “to be firmly believed by all the faithful.” Applied to the doctrines of the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption, papal infallibility purports to assure that those doctrines could not possibly be erroneous. Our concern in this section is whether such doctrines can serve as objects of doxastic belief.

If not possibly erroneous, it would seem to follow that these doctrines are necessarily true. To avoid entanglement in logical issues of modality, let us rephrase the status of these doctrines as being such that they hold true come what may. No matter how

things turn out in the world, according to *ex cathedra* promulgation, it holds true that Mary was preserved free from original sin, and it holds true that she was bodily assumed into heavenly glory. How does this translate into the language of SOAs?

A SOA is an aspect of the world as it is (an actual SOA) or of the world as it might be (a possible SOA). For every genuine SOA (excluding, e.g., one purportedly designated “mome raths outgrabing”), there is a publicly accessible criterion distinguishing circumstances under which that SOA is the case from those in which it is not. If there are no circumstances thus distinguished, the SOA is not genuine. A genuine proposition, in turn, is a representation of a genuine SOA accompanied by a status-ascription (being the case or not being the case). The proposition is true if the SOA it represents actually has the status ascribed to it; otherwise it is false. Accordingly, the proposition changes truth-value whenever the SOA it represents changes status.

In being promulgated *ex cathedra*, the doctrines in question are affirmed to be true come what may. That is, they are affirmed always to be true regardless of what else occurs in the world. In effect, they purport to represent SOAs that inevitably occur regardless of how the world might be otherwise. In the case of a SOA purported to occur inevitably, however, there is no distinction between circumstances in which it is the case and those in which it is not. The SOAs purportedly represented by the doctrines in question, accordingly, are not genuine SOAs. It follows that these doctrines do not constitute genuine propositions.

But only genuine propositions (unlike ‘mome raths outgrabe’) have propositional truth-values. The price of being infallible (not possibly erroneous), it turns out, is that the doctrines in question are not “necessarily true” after all. They are incapable of being

false, to be sure, but by the same token they are also incapable of being true. There of course may be other senses in which infallible doctrines might be considered true. But they are not true in the sense pertaining to genuine propositions. They are not true, that is to say, in the sense of representing a genuine SOA as having the status it actually has given how things stand in the actual world.

Belief(d) is acceptance of a given proposition as being true. A particular belief(d) shares the truth-value of its propositional object. Insofar as doctrines promulgated *ex cathedra* lack propositional truth-value, by way of conclusion, they are not available as objects of belief(d). There may be some other sense in which faithful Catholics can be called upon to believe that the Virgin Mary was preserved free from original sin, and to believe furthermore that she was assumed body and soul into heavenly glory. But if so, this will be a sense lacking propositional truth-value.

(2.2323) Belief(d) and the Conundrum of Papal Infallibility

The doctrine of papal infallibility promulgated by Vatican I was reaffirmed by Vatican II, albeit with subtle differences. In its dogmatic constitution *Pastor Aeternus*, Vatican I proclaimed as a “divinely revealed dogma” (*divinitus revelatum dogma*, Caput IV) that when the Roman Pontif “speaks *ex Cathedra*” (*ex Cathedra loquitur*, IV) regarding faith or morals, he “possesses ... that infallibility which the Divine Redeemer willed his Church” (*ea infallibilitate pollere, qua divinus Redemptor Ecclesiam suam ... voluit*, IV) to enjoy. Such pronouncements, the document continues, “are irreformable of themselves, and not from the consent of the Church” (*ex sese, non autem ex consensu Ecclesiae irreformabiles esse*, IV).

The dogmatic constitution *Lumen Gentium* of Vatican II, on the other hand, extended the “prerogative of infallibility” (*infallibilitatis praerogativa*, section 25) to the “supreme Magisterium” (*supremum magisterium*, 25), that is to the teaching authority of the bishops as a group. Explicitly stated, the teaching holds that “The infallibility promised to the Church resides also in the body of Bishops” (*Infallibilitas Ecclesiae promissa in corpore Episcoporum quoque inest*, 25). The bishops are endowed with this “prerogative” even when individually “dispersed throughout the world” (*per orbem dispersi*, 25). This is “more clearly” (*adhuc manifestius*, 25) the case, however, when they are “gathered together in ecumenical council” (*in Concilio Oecumenico coadunatae*, 25) with “the successor of Peter” (*Successore Petri*, 25). More clearly when convened in councils, that is to say, the bishops “are teachers and judges of faith and morals for the universal Church” (*pro universa Ecclesia fidei et morum doctores et iudices sunt*, 25).

Without repudiating explicit teachings on infallibility in *Pastor Aeternus*, Vatican II declared that infallibility resides also in the Magisterium. (As far as I can determine, the term ‘*ex cathedra*’ is not used in *Lumen Gentium*. Perhaps this is because the image of all the bishops sitting in one chair is too whimsical for a dogmatic constitution.) *Lumen Gentium* goes on to say that pronouncements of both Pope and Magisterium are infallible only if “in accordance with Revelation itself” (*secundum ipsam Revelationem*, 25). Whether written or handed down orally, Revelation is transmitted “under the guiding light of the Spirit of truth” (*atque prae lucente Spiritu veritatis*, 25). Innovative pronouncements, labelled “new public revelation[s]” (*novam ... revelationem publicam*, 25) in the text, are not to be accepted as “pertaining to the divine deposit of faith” (*ad divinum fidei depositum pertinentem*, 25).

Let us examine how these several pronouncements relate to each other. The Council of Vatican I decreed that the Pope is infallible when he speaks *ex cathedra*. In this regard, it is noteworthy both (i) that the Pope of the Council (Pius IX) did not declare himself infallible (thus avoiding self-referential circularity), and (ii) that the council did not claim infallibility for itself (similarly avoiding circularity). The infallibility of Vatican I, rather, follows by proclamation of Vatican II, with its claim of infallibility for assembled councils of bishops generally. With its claim of infallibility for councils of bishops generally, however, Vatican II decreed itself infallible, which at least seems to entrap it in self-referential circularity (something like “This sentence can’t be false, because being false is contrary to what it says of itself”).

The way in which *Lumen Gentium* in fact managed to avoid entrapment of this sort suggests that it was written with considerable care. The prerogative by which councils speak infallibly, the document says, is made known by “the Spirit of truth” (the Holy Spirit, according to *John* 14:16-17,26) to the parties concerned. What the Spirit made known in this particular case is that councils have enjoyed the prerogative of infallibility from their very beginning. Given this rationale, Vatican II would have been infallible even if it had said nothing at all about the infallibility of councils or popes. Vatican I likewise would have enjoyed infallibility even if Vatican II had not retroactively affirmed its infallible status. Infallibility in either case was established by “the Divine Redeemer having willed [it]” (*Divinus Redemptor ... voluit*, 25), and was conveyed to the council concerned by the Spirit of truth.

In brief, Vatican II was not infallible as a result of proclaiming itself so. Rather it proclaimed itself so because it was infallible already. By this rationale, at least, all

properly constituted Church councils are rendered infallible by the will of the Divine Redeemer. Prior to 1870, this had not been officially proclaimed. It became the particular lot of Vatican II at mid-20th century to make this known to the Church at large.

Regarding papal infallibility in turn, when a given pope pronounces judgment “as supreme teacher of the universal Church” (*universalis Ecclesiae magister supremus*, 25), that judgment is infallible because the Divine Redeemer wills it so. In the context of Vatican II, when Pope Paul VI proclaimed papal infallibility as its presiding bishop, thus proclaiming his own infallibility, the infallibility in question was not a consequence of Paul VI’s own infallible pronouncement. The claim of papal infallibility in this pronouncement accordingly was free from self-referential circularity. Pope Paul VI was not infallible because he proclaimed himself so. Rather he proclaimed himself so in (presumed) recognition that he was infallible already.

Viewed retrospectively, this is also the infallibility with which Pius IX proclaimed that the Virgin Mary was born without stain of sin, and with which Pius XII proclaimed that she was assumed bodily into heavenly glory. Both proclamations were infallible according to the will of the Divine Redeemer, and not just because they were pronounced *ex cathedra*. They were infallible regardless of the manner in which they were pronounced. As with all supreme pontiffs, it was the responsibility of Pius IX and Pius XIII alike to pronounce *ex cathedra* only doctrines that already have been rendered infallible by exercise of divine volition.

Theoretically, at least, this responsibility imposes a severe burden on individual pontiffs. For it is at least theoretically possible that a given pope should pronounce *ex cathedra* a doctrine that has not been rendered infallible by divine volition. It is at least

possible, for example, that the Divine Redeemer did not will as infallible the doctrine that Mary was assumed body and soul into heavenly glory. In this case, the doctrine infallibly pronounced by Pius XIII in 1950 would not be infallible after all. In this case, indeed, the doctrine might actually be false. Unlikely as one might think it be, the rationale for infallibility put forth in *Lumen Gentium* leaves open the possibility that no purportedly infallible teaching, proclaimed by either pope or council, enjoys the status assigned by its proclaimer.

This predicament brings into focus the question how anyone (pontiff or other) could tell what teachings divine volition has rendered infallible. A practical answer is needed to circumvent the theoretical possibility that particular teachings might be put forward as infallible that do not enjoy that status from a divine perspective. One practical tactic calls for a pope who is actively contemplating an *ex cathedra* pronouncement to seek the support of other bishops in advance. Pope Pius IX, for example, contemplating a pronouncement on the Immaculate Conception, appointed a commission of bishops to study the issue that met for several years before that teaching was actually proclaimed. After the commission advised him that the bishops generally were ready to receive such a teaching, the doctrine was infallibly pronounced in 1854.

Similarly, before Pope Pius XII officially issued the doctrine of Bodily Assumption in 1950, he personally consulted a large number of fellow bishops. Most approved enthusiastically, we are told, and many offered arguments based on scripture to support the Pope's infallible definition. The tactic employed by both Pius IX and Pius XII, at least in part, was to gain prior approval from those in a position to raise weighty objections later. A synonym for 'infallible' in *Lumen Gentium* is 'unalterable'

(*irreformabiles*, 25); and his fellow bishops are the only parties capable of “altering” a pope’s official pronouncements.

Another practical solution is to avoid circumstances in which the problem would arise. The problem, once again, is that of discerning when a pope’s purportedly infallible teaching accords with a doctrine already made infallible by divine volition. And the circumstances in which the problem would arise obviously are those in which a pope purports to speak infallibly. Pope John XXIII, I take it, endorsed this latter solution in his often-cited interchange with an audience of Greek seminarians. After telling them jokingly “I am not infallible,” John XXIII paused for effect before explaining what he meant. “The pope is only infallible,” he said, “when he speaks *ex cathedra*. I will never speak *ex cathedra*, therefore I am not infallible’ (*Commonweal*, vol. 102, 1975, p. 144; also *National Catholic Reporter*, Nov. 12, 2010). Pope Francis repeated these words (slightly altered) on the 2013 feast day of St. Melito of Sardis (<http://liturgy.co.nz/pope-renounces-infallibility>), with the apparent intent of applying them to himself.

Quite apart from the discomfort recent pontiffs have expressed with papal infallibility, the very concept of infallibility itself is hard to fathom. One problem is that it appears to mean different things when applied to a pope’s infallible pronouncements and when applied to the doctrines he pronounces infallible. The distinction is that between a speech act (act of saying) that cannot be corrected and something said that cannot be wrong. Another word for infallibility sometimes applied to *ex cathedra* teachings, as noted previously, is *irreformabiles*, commonly translated into English as ‘unalterable’. Other English translations are ‘unchangeable’, ‘irreformable’ and ‘unrevisable’. Whatever term is used to describe it, the sense of papal infallibility is that when a pope says

something (regarding faith or morals, etc.), he must not be gainsaid. The doctrine of papal infallibility in this regard has a negative thrust. It forbids other interested parties from opposing the pope when he speaks *ex cathedra*.

The sense of infallibility when applied to doctrines taught by a pope, on the other hand, is positive in character. An infallible teaching is one that necessarily gets things right. What it says not only is correct, but is correct in a way that precludes the possibility of being wrong. Its correctness is analogous to that of a necessary truth, for example the formula ‘p or not-p’ in two-valued logic. Whereas the formula ‘p or not-p’ is necessarily correct by the principles of logic, however, the purportedly infallible doctrine of Mary’s Assumption is necessary correct because God so willed it. Because the doctrine of the Assumption is necessarily correct in this manner, Pope Pius XII’s declaration of its infallible status is not to be gainsaid. But the infallibility of the Pope in proclaiming the doctrine is not the same as the infallibility of the doctrine he proclaimed. No more so than the necessary correctness of the formula ‘p or not-p’ is the same as the inevitable correctness of the logician who presents it as necessarily correct.

Because he proclaimed it *ex cathedra*, the Pope’s proclamation of the doctrine is not to be gainsaid. But the Pope’s proclamation itself was not a proposition. The Pope’s proclamation is a speech act, akin to his saying “you have my word that this is right.” And speech acts themselves (unless constative in J. L. Austin’s sense) do not constitute propositions. Since beliefs(d), by definition, are directed toward propositions, Pius XII’s proclamation itself is not an object of belief(d). If indeed the faithful are bound to believe this proclamation, the belief at stake is other than doxastic.

The companion issue, of course, is whether a doctrine proclaimed infallible by a pope itself is an object of belief(d). But a verdict on this issue has already been reached. Briefly recapitulated, the argument in the case of the Bodily Assumption is that the event to which this doctrine purportedly refers is not a genuine SOA. This is because there is no shared understanding among those concerned of objectively accessible circumstances under which this purported SOA would or would not be the case. Since only genuine SOAs can serve as objects of belief(d), the doctrine of the Assumption is not an object of doxastic belief. The same set of considerations leads to the same conclusion for the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception as well.

Let us generalize. Church historians disagree about occasions on which popes have made *ex cathedra* pronouncements. In addition to Popes Pius IX on the Immaculate Conception and Pius XII on the Assumption, pronouncements by Pope Leo I on the two natures of Christ (449 AD), by Pope Agatho on the two wills of Christ (680 AD), and by Pope Benedict XII on when after death the beatific vision occurs (1336 AD), are also sometimes listed. All these topics pertain to putative SOAs for which objectively accessible criteria are not and cannot be available. Indeed, if objectively accessible criteria were available, it would be pointless for a pope to speak with authority on the status of these SOAs. Lacking such criteria, however, such putative SOAs are not genuine, and cannot be represented by genuine propositions. It follows that doctrines purporting to represent such SOAs cannot serve as objects of belief(d).

By way of summary, neither papal pronouncements *ex cathedra*, nor doctrines so pronounced, are available objects of doxastic belief. If indeed the faithful are required to believe either or both, another kind of belief must be involved.

On balance, the doctrine of papal infallibility involves popes who exercise it in a peculiar sort of hubris. In defining this doctrine, Pius IX in effect put forward a claim that he was infallible himself. Charitably interpreted in light of *Lumen Gentium*, this means that he defined himself an incorrigible judge of what the Divine Redeemer willed regarding doctrines of faith and morals. He went on to pronounce that anyone who rejects this definition should “be anathema” (*anathema sit, Pastor Aeternus IV*). Put otherwise, Pius IX declared that he was infallible because God made him so, adding that anyone who disagrees is automatically excommunicated. It is not surprising that subsequent popes excused themselves from this exercise of self-exaltation.

(2.2324) The Opposing Roles of Doctrine: Unification and Division

Christianity took shape initially around a core of key doctrines. Several of these, including the doctrines of a personal God and of original sin, were carried over from OT Judaism. Others arose from events recorded in the NT. Primary among these latter are the doctrines of Jesus’ virgin birth, of his crucifixion, and of his bodily resurrection. As a result of church councils and burgeoning traditions, further doctrines joined the mix through subsequent centuries. By the 7th century AD, when Islam began to emerge as a world religion, Christianity had come to be identified by a fairly specific set of characteristic tenets. Islam followed suit in due course, with its central teaching that Mohammad was Allah’s (God’s) final prophet (preceded by Abraham, Moses, and Jesus). By the end of the 7th century, the world had gained three distinct monotheistic religions, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. As centuries progressed, each of the three came to be defined by its own set of distinctive doctrines.

The doctrines in question provide identity to their respective religious faiths. In this role, religious doctrines serve a unifying function. Christians band together around the beliefs they share; and the same with adherents of other religions. Without shared doctrines, there are no distinct religious faiths.

Also like other faiths, however, Christianity is divided within itself by doctrines at odds with one another. Eastern is divided from western Christianity by their opposing positions on the *Filioque* clause, and Protestantism is divided from Roman Catholicism by their opposing doctrines regarding powers of the pope. Religious doctrine, that is to say, can be divisive as well as unifying. Our concern in this section is with doctrinal divisions within Christianity in particular, although similar accounts could be given of the other major world religions.

Although precise counts are not feasible, standard estimates agree that there were roughly 43,000 Christian denominations across the world in 2012. Among reasons why precise counts are not feasible is that more than two new denominations on the average are added every day. Projecting ahead on this basis, observers have estimated that there will be 55,000 distinct Christian groups by 2025. These statistics clearly are not advantageous for Christianity at large.

Most of the larger denominations have issued their own catechisms. Generally speaking, catechisms are manuals of doctrine used to train children and adults preparing to enter a given church. The first Christian catechism may have been the *Didache* (also known as “Teaching of the Twelve Apostles”), a first century document purportedly recording what the original apostles taught their converts about personal conduct, baptism, church organization, and so forth. Catechetical manuals proliferated after the

Protestant Reformation. Luther's *Large Catechism* came out in 1529, followed by Calvin's *Geneva Catechism* in 1542. The Reformed Church produced the Westminster Catechisms (Larger and Shorter) in 1546. In 1563, the *Heidelberg Catechism* was issued as part of an attempt to adjudicate a violent conflict between Lutherans and Calvinists. Rome responded to this flurry of Protestant position papers in 1566, with its *Catechism of the Council of Trent*. The first edition of the *Baltimore Catechism* appeared in 1885, with subsequent editions leading to the current *Catechism of the Catholic Church* published in 1994. Interspersed were the Baptist 1680 version of the *Heidelberg Catechism* and the catechetical instructions included in the Anglican 1682 *Book of Common Prayer*.

It stands to reason that catechisms tend to get longer as denominations increase in number. The more competing denominations to contend with, the more words it takes for a given church to make its position distinct. The *Shorter Westminster Catechism* of 1646 was 107 articles long. Its larger counterpart adopted by the Presbyterian Church in 1789 contained 196 articles in all. The *Baltimore Catechism* of Roman Catholicism, issued in 1885, lists (by my count) 1785 articles of faith. Add to one end of this progression the 95 articles of the 1st century *Didache*, and to the other end the 2,865 articles of the 1994 volume I sometimes consult, and we have an increase in length of denominational catechisms that seems to keep pace with the growing number of Christian congregations.

If the increasing number of splinter groups is detrimental to Christianity unity, the accompanying growth of doctrinal position-statements itself cannot be viewed as a good thing. Catholic pontiffs concerned with Church unity have reasons beyond avoidance of hubris to refrain from dogmatic definitions *ex cathedra*. One effective way (perhaps the

only effective way) of healing divisions among Christian denominations is to reduce the number of official tenets on which agreement is required for a unified Church.

Church leaders may tend to overestimate the importance of official doctrine in the conduct of Christian life. Needless to say, official doctrine is important to church functionaries responsible for formulating it. By and large, however, the bulk of what is written in catechisms has little influence on the lives of ordinary Christians. Its limited influence, furthermore, will usually be indirect, in the form of personal advice received from priests and ministers who have been formally trained in doctrinal matters. And even here, the advice received might be ignored or on occasion deliberately rejected.

A widely publicized illustration of this is the high rate of rejection among American Catholics of their Church's teaching on artificial contraception. Church doctrine allows only "natural family planning," a method of birth control aimed at predicting and then avoiding a woman's monthly interval of fertility. In point of fact, however, more than 90% of sexually active Catholic women in America today employ methods explicitly prohibited by the Church (see, e.g., *National Catholic Reporter* website <https://www.ncronline.org/blogs/parish-diary/what-our-parish-does-about-contraception-and-family-planning>). According to the priest quoted in this source, there is "very little awareness of the church's view on artificial conception" among engaged couples, and most don't think it's any of my [the priest's] business." The same priest goes on to observe that the conflict between clergy and laity on this issue has become more "a struggle over authority" than over the issue itself.

Establishing church doctrine is the responsibility of the Magisterium (the teaching authority of the Church). In ways depending on manner of entry, new members

of the Church profess themselves responsible for obeying the dictates of this authority. The manner of entry for new adult members follows a fixed Rite of Reception. The celebrating priest issues an invitation to the candidate, and the candidate responds with the following words (no change in wording allowed): “I believe and profess all that the holy Catholic Church believes, teaches, and proclaims to be revealed by God.” If this profession is sincere in a given case, and effectively implemented, it should prevent the newly admitted communicant from disregarding the Church’s official teaching on contraception. And likewise for other things the Church believes and teaches.

There are certain oddities about this fixed formula of profession, however, which may help explain why many communicants (new and old) tend not to take it at face value. One is that the Catholic Church believes and teaches a large number of official doctrines (currently 2,865, as noted above), many of which will be unknown to an average adult entering the Church. The difficulty here is that professing doctrines one knows nothing about makes little sense. Another difficulty is that the list of doctrines taught by the Church frequently changes, occasionally shrinking (e.g., the Church no longer prohibits usury) but more frequently expanding. It also makes little sense to profess belief in a doctrine that has not yet been formulated. The general intent of the fixed formula of profession, clearly enough, is to commit the new communicant to believing whatever the Church tells him or her to believe. This is odd in itself, since it conveys the unsettling image of another agency “flipping the switches” by which an individual’s personal beliefs are “turned on and off.”

(2.2325) Theological Doctrine Generally is not Subject to Belief(d)

To be sure, there is a sense in which belief(d) can be “turned on and off.” By definition, belief(d) is acceptance of a proposition as being true. A proposition is a representation of a SOA as having a certain status, either being the case or not being the case. And a proposition is true if and only if the SOA in fact has the status it is represented as having. Without leaning too much on metaphor, we can think of a belief(d) being “turned on” when its propositional object is accepted as being true, and of being “turned off” when such acceptance is withdrawn.

We have examined a number of theological doctrines that the Church has put forward for acceptance by its faithful members. These include the doctrine of the Trinity, the doctrine of papal infallibility, and the doctrines of the Immaculate Conception and Bodily Assumption of the Virgin Mary. As argued previously, these doctrines have no propositional content. The reason is that they do not represent genuine SOAs. All genuine SOAs are identified by criteria that specify circumstances under which they either are or would be the case. People must agree on these criteria in order to communicate effectively regarding the presence or absence of the SOAs in question. Such agreement is a necessary condition for meaningful communication to occur about the status of these SOAs.

Theological doctrines generally lack propositional content because they do not represent genuine SOAs. And they do not represent genuine SOAs because people who purport to communicate about their status share no criteria that would identify circumstances under which they would be the case. The upshot is that the presence or absence of such purported SOAs cannot be determined objectively. Return to the

Filioque dispute for an example. If there were an objective criterion for determining whether or not the Holy Spirit proceeds from both the Son and the Father, that issue would not be a topic of theological dispute. Instead of precipitating a split between eastern and western Christianity, any dispute on the *Filioque* matter long ago would have been settled objectively. The fact that it could not be settled objectively is enough in itself to show that theological stances taken on the issue lack propositional content. And their lack of propositional content, once again, prevents the doctrines in question from serving as objects of belief(d).

So it is with theological doctrines generally. If they represented genuine SOAs they could be established objectively, in which case they would be beyond theological dispute. And since they do not represent genuine SOAs, the doctrines in question lack propositional content. Accordingly, they generally are not objects of doxastic belief. If theological doctrines were objects of belief(d), theologians who debate them would be out of business.

Other benefits flow from such doctrines not being objects of belief(d). Imagine a complete list of doctrines a faithful Christian is expected to believe. Then imagine an entirely evil being (say, Beelzebub) who nonetheless is rational and thus capable of entertaining doxastic beliefs. If the doctrines in question had propositional content, and thus were potential objects of belief(d), Beelzebub could believe(d) every doctrine on the list. That is to say, Beelzebub could accept as true the doctrines that there is one God in three Persons, that Jesus is fully God and fully man, that Jesus died to redeem human sin, and so forth. Being entirely evil, however, Beelzebub nonetheless could continue to resist

God's plan in every respect doctrine can capture. Beelzebub could believe(d) everything a Christian is supposed to believe and still oppose Christianity at its very core.

With this exercise in imagination we have further evidence that the belief faithful Christians are called upon to repose in these doctrines is not primarily doxastic. If it were, then Beelzebub could believe everything a faithful Christian believes and yet fail in every respect to be a Christian. What it shows is that Christian belief is of some other sort. Two other sorts of belief remain to be examined, believing in (belief(n)) and overarching symphonic belief (belief (s)). We turn presently to examine these two other forms of belief.

(2.2326) Postscript: Theological Doctrine Viewed as a Burden for Faith

On October 6, 2013, I attended Mass at St. Peter's Church in Chicago's Loop. Even with well-tuned hearing aids, I heard only about half of the homily. But what I heard led me to email a request for an online copy. My copy arrived two or three days later. The homily consisted largely of quotes from spiritually inclined theologians, including Edward Schillebeeckx, Thomas Merton, and Edward Hays. Most of it was taken from Fr. Hays' book *The Magic Lantern*. Here is the gist of Fr. Hays' story.

The narrator died and found himself at "some sort of security checkpoint" guarding the gates of heaven. Upon being questioned, a nearby angel explained "no hard, steely hearts are allowed inside." The narrator (N) passed through unimpeded and found himself in line for another security check. This second checkpoint was set up to eliminate grudges. Again N passed through without triggering a beep. He found himself in another line leading to a "dressing room" where he expected to be outfitted in a white robe, but

found instructions to exit the room stark naked instead. Naked was the condition in which he came into the world, the narrator observed, and in which Jesus left the tumb leaving his burial clothing behind.

He then looked up and saw “the throne of God and of the Lamb,” from which was flowing a great crystal-clear river. To approach the throne, N had to cross the river. Since no boat was available, he was told he had to walk across “like Jesus and Peter did on the Sea of Galilee.” Remembering that when Peter sank Jesus chided him with the words “O you of little faith,” N realized that his faith in the Lamb was about to be tested.

After walking about ten feet on top of the water, N sank to his knees. The angels who rescued him explained that he had sunk because he was “carrying too much creed.” In response to his bewilderment, an angel said “Faith is all one can carry; you’re weighted down with too many dogmas.” So N began to jettison his doctrinal commitments, beginning with “I believe in the Holy, Catholic [sic], Apostolic Church.” As fewer and fewer dogmas remained, he got further across the river each time he tried before sinking beneath the surface. Finally only one belief remained, which N repeated with all the faith he could muster. Again N “started across the river for the throne of God.” In “the instant of a lightning flash” N had crossed the river and found himself “at the golden throne of heaven in the vast embrace of God.” The sole doctrine remaining, which he kept repeating (like an echo), was “I believe in God” (“I believe in God.” (I believe in ...)).

“I believe in God’ is the first article of the Apostles’ Creed. “I believe in the holy catholic church” comes toward the end. In discarding his load of burdensome doctrine, N had begun at the bottom of the Creed and worked upwards. The upshot of the homily

seems to be that simple faith is sufficient to gain God's presence, whereas doctrinal embellishment is a distraction and perhaps even a hindrance.

The upshot of this modest homily in St. Peter's in the Loop seems to resonate with the central message of a homily delivered more recently in St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. Pope Francis was speaking to thousands of priests gathered to celebrate Holy Thursday on March 24, 2016. The Pope's central message on this occasion was that we too often are blind to "the radiant light of faith ... because of an excess of complicated theology" (*National Catholic Reporter*, March 24, 2016).

(2.3) Believing(n) and Religious Faith

Like belief(a) and belief(d), belief(n) is a form of acceptance. In our earlier discussion, belief(n) was divided into three more or less distinct categories. One is (i) believing in persons, exemplified by belief in one's primary-care physician and belief in the mayor of one's city. Another is (ii) believing in institutions, of which belief in democracy and belief in the nuclear family are familiar examples. And third is (iii) believing in sources of information, as when one resides confidence in the *New York Times* or in the *Wall Street Journal* to keep one abreast of daily news.

There are differences among these categories of belief(n) that factor into our ongoing discussion of religious belief. Unlike belief (ii) in institutions and belief (iii) in sources of information, belief (i) in persons involves one or another sort of personal relationship. I relate to my primary physician as a person, and similarly to the current mayor of my city. As far as religion is concerned, people who believe in God often speak

of relating to him personally. For Christians in particular, the God in whom they believe typically is a personal God.

Another difference has to do with presumption of existence. In the normal course of events, the objects in which one believes exist prior to the onset of belief(n). I believe in the *New York Times* as a source of information. That paper was in circulation long before the onset of my belief in it. It would make no sense to believe in a news source that did not exist. I also believe in the current mayor of my city. That person existed years before I came to believe in him. It would make no sense to believe in a public figure who did not exist. With belief in institutions, however, there is no presumption of antecedent existence. Someone might have believed in a world government before the United Nations was established. And someone might believe in a form of capitalism immune from corruption, in full awareness that such an institution will never exist.

Presumption of existence, in these cases, is not a matter of logical entailment. The fact that a given person believes in the *New York Times* does not entail the existence of that publication. There is no inconsistency in denying that such a paper exists (perhaps publication has just been terminated), while at the same time affirming that someone believes in it. Similarly, it is logically possible that someone believe in a public figure who does not exist. This could happen if the latter had just died in office, unbeknownst to the former who has not heard the news recently. As far as religious belief is concerned, for someone truly to profess a belief in God does not entail that God exists. Belief in God, that is to say, is logically compatible with uncertainty regarding God's existence. (Otherwise Pascal's Wager would make no sense.)

As noted previously, however, there are cases of belief(n) where existence is of the essence. Examples previously discussed are belief in ghosts and belief in life on other planets. Belief in ghosts is not a matter of trust, but rather a confidence that ghosts are included among things in the world. Similarly, belief in life on other planets amounts to a conviction that life exists on planets other than earth. Regarding logical entailment, a case could be made that avowing belief in extraterrestrial life is incompatible with denying the existence of life on other planets. If such a case were made, however, it would rest on the relation between the avowal and the denial. Taken by itself, belief(n) lacks truth-value, and hence is incapable of participating in logical relations.

In some respects, avowing belief in extraterrestrial life is similar to reciting the Christian Creed. Let us examine the similarities and the residual differences.

(2.31) Believing(n) and the Christian Creed

The 1994 *Catechism of the Catholic Church* displays the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed side by side. There are numerous differences between the two creeds. One of the more obvious is that the former is expressed in singular voice ("I believe") and the latter in the plural ("we believe"). Other differences include articles of faith that appear in one but not the other. For example, only the Apostles' Creed has Jesus Christ descending into hell (*ad inferna*) and it alone includes belief in the communion of saints. The Nicene Creed, on the other hand, is alone in portraying Christ as eternally begotten of the Father and in anticipating that the Father's kingdom will have no end. These disparities suggest that neither creed should be considered a definitive list of what a faithful Christian might be presumed to believe.

Immediately following the Creeds, the *Catechism* explains that reciting one of them amounts to the following: “Whoever says ‘I believe’ says ‘I pledge myself to what *we* believe” (entry 185, italics in text). Several things about this explanation are noteworthy for our purposes. One obvious point is that the singular “I believe” in the Apostles’ Creed is said to carry the same force of group commitment as the plural “we believe” of its Nicene counterpart. Less obvious, perhaps, is that nothing in the explanation indicates that either creed amounts to an itemization of what Catholics are supposed to believe. That is to say, there is no suggestion that reciting one of the creeds should count as a profession of “what *we* believe” in the first place. At very least, the explanation leaves open the possibility that reciting the creed has a function beyond merely enumerating things a faithful Catholic is expected to believe.

Most noteworthy, however, is the characterization of reciting the creed as a *pledge*. In standard usage of the term, a pledge is a solemn promise or commitment. And making a commitment (as in a marriage vow) normally does not count as an expression of belief. A seemingly appropriate analogy here is pledging allegiance to the flag. When one says with due solemnity “I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the republic for which it stands, one nation, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all,” one surely is not professing belief that the nation is indivisible (which it is not), or that it provides liberty and justice for all (which it does not). To the extent that this analogy holds, pledging oneself to certain beliefs should be distinguished from actually believing them.

In Latin, the Nicene Creed is designated *Symbolum Nicaenum*. The term *symbolum* has several meanings, among them “token,” “signet ring,” and “matching

objects proving identity.” Help in understanding this last expression comes with reflection on the Greek term *symbolon*, as it occurs in the Creed’s Greek designation *Symbolon tēs Nikaias*. In one meaning, *symbolon* stands for matching halves of a coin retained by each of two people as a sign of mutual commitment. Another meaning is “sign by which something is known.” Bringing these several meanings to bear, we have reason to understand recitation of the Creed as affirmation of a shared commitment to the Christian faith.

These reflections add depth to the 1994 *Catechism*’s statement that saying “I believe” amounts to saying “I pledge myself to what *we* believe.” Reciting the Creed publicly is a sign by which someone is known to be a Christian. Like coin halves shared by two mutually committed persons, the Creed is a sign (a “token”) of shared identity with other Christian believers.

None of this should divert attention from the fact that the Creeds are formulated in a manner purporting to affirm certain beliefs. When someone publically avows “I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth,” there is a straightforward sense in which that person acknowledges belief in God the Father and creator. Let us compare belief in God the Father and creator with other beliefs(n) considered previously.

One such is belief in extraterrestrial life. Belief in God the Father is similar to belief in extraterrestrial life in that both reflect the believer’s confidence that certain entities are include in the world as it is. In like fashion, belief in God the Father is similar to belief in ghosts, inasmuch as both manifest confidence that certain things exist in the world. But the differences are more striking than these obvious similarities.

As a reminder of context, recall that research is currently underway to determine whether life is present on other planets. Scientists conducting this research have a shared understanding of what they are looking for. They agree on circumstances that, should they occur, would constitute the presence of life elsewhere than on planet Earth. For this reason, life's presence elsewhere is a genuine SOA. If the relevant circumstances are found to occur, scientists will have established that the SOA of life elsewhere than on Earth in fact is the case. And if this should happen, the belief(n) of the persons involved would be replaced by a true belief(d). The persons involved would then believe(d) that life exists on other planets.

Belief in God the Father differs from belief in life on other planets in at least one crucial respect. Although parties with various interests (theologians, atheists, ordinary believers, etc.) are concerned with the issue, there is no shared agreement about circumstances that would constitute the presense of God the Father in either the actual or the possible world. In this respect, belief in God the Father and creator is more like belief in ghosts. Although various people (conductors of séances, exorcists, paranormal skeptics) are concerned with the existence of ghosts, there is no shared agreement regarding circumstances that would count as ghosts actually being present in the world. As a consequence, the supposed presence of ghosts does not constitute a genuine SOA.

So it is also with belief in God the Father. Concerned parties (theists, atheists, ordinary believers, etc.) share no common understanding of circumstances that would constitute God's presence in the actual world. They do not agree on criteria for determining whether God exists. As with belief in ghosts, accordingly, belief in God the Father fails to engage a genuine SOA. And insofar as it fails to engage a genuine SOA,

belief in God the Father is not correlated with publicly agreed upon circumstances that would provide occasion for belief(d) that God the Father actually exists.

This conclusion has ramifications for the perennial debate between the theist and the atheist. The standard thesis of atheism is that God does not exist. The atheist claims, in effect, that the actual world is such that God is not present in it. But there is no agreement between atheist and theist regarding publicly accessible circumstances that would constitute God's presence in the actual world. If there were such circumstances, their absence would serve as a criterion for the world's being such that God is not contained in it. If there were such circumstances, their presence and their absence would both constitute genuine SOAs. Lacking agreement on such circumstances, however, the atheist shares the theist's predicament. Neither can claim a criterion for determining whether or not God actually exists. For the theist and the atheist, respectively, neither God's existence nor God's nonexistence figures among genuine SOAs. As a consequence, neither is in a position to entertain a belief(d) regarding whether God exists.

Let us suppose, contrary to fact, that all parties concerned were to agree upon criteria for determining whether God exists. This is to suppose that theists, atheists, and ordinary believers, etc., all agree on what the world would be like if God's existence were included among its actual SOAs. If so, then all parties would be in a position to cooperate in determining whether God actually exists. If this were the case, then the question whether God exists could be settled by a cooperative public inquiry. Regardless of how this inquiry turned out, belief in God would no longer be a matter of religious faith. It would become a matter for public investigation instead. This would bring belief in God in line with belief in life on other planets. The price of making the disagreement

between theist and atheist a matter of proper belief(d) is to divest belief in God of its religious significance.

The conclusion at hand is that a creedal profession of belief in God is not an affirmation of propositional belief(d) that God exists. It should be carefully noted, however, that this is a conclusion about the belief(n) involved when someone makes a creedal profession. This belief(n) has to do with a believer's relation to God in the life of faith. Belief in God is a form of acceptance that has little to do with propositional belief.

(2.4) Symphoric Belief and its Proper Object

As previously characterized, belief(s) amounts to acceptance of a comprehensive worldview as a context for living a meaningful and rewarding human life. The adjective 'symphoric' comes from the Greek *sumpherō*, which means to consolidate or to bring together. The object of belief(s), accordingly, is a way of regarding the world overall that provides a significant role for one's own personal life. It is time to develop this brief characterization in more detail.

In any given case of belief(s), the corresponding worldview is the object of that belief. Comparing this with other forms of belief, we recall that the object of belief(a) is the range of SOAs the subject is prepared to deal with in everyday experience, which is known alternatively as the believer(a)'s horizon of expectation. The object of belief(d) is a proposition accepted as true by the subject in a given set of circumstances. And the object of belief(n) is the person or institution the subject accepts as trustworthy to serve his or her interests in a relevant area of concern. Although beliefs of these other sorts on occasion might be systematically interrelated (as distinct from occurring in isolation), the

worldview of belief(s) is not merely a composite of these other forms of belief. The worldview of belief(s) is composed rather of attitudes and perspectives the subject brings to bear in making sense of his or her life.

By virtue of its overarching character, the worldview associated with a given person's belief(s) influences that person's quality of life in numerous ways. For one, a given individual's worldview not only touches on a broad range of concerns, but tends also to bring these concerns together in a comprehensive interrelationship. Illustrations can be drawn from the worldview of secular humanism examined previously. In the worldview of secular humanism, "the quest for the good life is ... the central task for mankind," and this ties in with the "quest for abiding values" which is "an inseparable feature of human life" (*Humanist Manifesto I*, 1933).

Another influence bearing on quality of life is a worldview's central focus on life's meaning or purpose. In the initial paragraph of the 1933 *Humanist Manifesto*, the authors state that the document's importance lies in the fact that they "have come to general agreement on matters of final concern." Fundamental among these "final concerns" is that of "the end of man's life and ... its development and fulfillment," which the authors identify as "the complete realization of human personality." The second *Humanist Manifesto* of 1973 goes on to endorse the purpose of providing "humankind with unparalleled opportunity for achieving an abundant and meaningful life," which is considered the right of all people regardless of "race, religion, sex, age, or national origin." This second document includes the summary statement: "Humanism can provide the purpose and inspiration that so many seek; it can give personal meaning and significance to human life."

As with worldviews generally, secular humanists realize that their view overall is supported by faith. This acknowledgment of faith initially may seem surprising. A hallmark of secular humanism is its reliance on “knowledge ... derived by observation, experimentation, and rational analysis” as a means enabling people “to live life well and fully” (*Humanist Manifesto III*, 2003). In apparent contrast with this avowed reliance on reason, however, is the 1973 manifesto’s concluding description of itself as “an expression of a living and growing faith.” In the Preface of this same document, moreover, the authors acknowledge that “(f)aitth, commensurate with advancing knowledge, is also necessary” as humankind approaches the 21st century. Indeed, they consider reason essential for addressing the problems of the contemporary world. But faith is necessary as well to sustain the humanist’s confidence that reason is up to the task.

The efficacy of reason is sustained by faith. In this regard, there is a parallel between secular humanism and the metaphysical doctrine of scientific materialism. As commonly conceived, scientific materialism maintains that everything in the world can be explained by physical science, and that since scientific explanations are formulated exclusively in terms of physical matter, everything in the world is material by nature. The doctrine that everything can be explained by physical science, however, cannot itself be established scientifically. Regardless of how many things have been explained by physical science in the past, there is always the possibility of encountering things in the future that cannot be physically explained. In like fashion, the worldview of secular humanism is premised on the thesis that reason is capable of dealing with everything of

human concern. But this thesis itself cannot be established by reason. This is why faith is necessary to keep the humanist's worldview in place.

So it is with worldviews generally, including worldviews that serve as objects of religious beliefs(s). Just as the worldview of secular humanism is sustained by faith, so also is the set of attitudes and perspectives that comprise Christianity's overall view of the world. Let us turn to the worldview of Christianity, first in comparison with its counterpart in secular humanism.

(2.41) The Christian Worldview Compared with that of Secular Humanism

Like that of secular humanism, the worldview of Christianity is integrative and comprehensive. It also is focused on the meaning of life, and also relies on faith to keep it in place. But as the following considerations show, there are several features of the Christian worldview that the worldview of secular humanism lacks.

Religious belief(s) typically emphasizes the importance of community. This is the case with Christian belief(s) in particular. Being Christian is not something done just by oneself, but involves doing things with other people. Involvement with a community is essential in several respects. Unlike secular humanism, but like other religions generally, Christianity calls for common worship. All religions have buildings dedicated to worship, and these buildings typically accommodate sizeable numbers of people. Beyond bringing large numbers of people together in community, Christianity generally incorporates rituals in which individuals address their fellow worshippers as a group. An example is public confession of sins. Following the advice of *James 5:16* that Christians "confess [their] sins to one another" (*exomologeisthe ... allēlois tas hamartias*), Christian churches

(Orthodox, Roman, and many protestant) often begin their services with words like “I confess to almighty God, and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have sinned, etc.”

Public confession is a way of showing oneself accountable to one’s fellow believers.

Yet another respect in which community is integral to Christian life is anticipated in *Romans* 1:1, where Paul announces that as an apostle he is “set apart for the gospel of God” (*aphōrismenos eis euangelion theou*). The term translated ‘gospel’ here (*euangelion*) literally means “good news.” The good news according to Paul is that Jesus Christ, Son of God, by his resurrection from the dead, has brought “salvation to all who believe” (*sōtērian panti tō pisteuonti, Romans* 1:16). This is the good news of which the resurrected Jesus speaks in *Mark* 16:15, when he says “Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation” (*Poreuthentes eis ton kosmon hapanta kēruxate to euangelion pasē tē ktisei*). The verb form of *euangelion* is *euangelizō*, which translates literally as “to evangelize.” To evangelize is to encourage others to join the Christian community. So in this respect also, community is part and parcel of the Christian worldview.

Closely associated with its emphasis on community is the role of creed in the life of a Christian. As noted previously, the Greek term for creed is *symbolon*, one standard meaning of which is matching halves of a coin retained by two people as a sign of reciprocal commitment. In addition to their other roles, the creeds of Christianity serve as symbolic pronouncements by which believers make their respective commitments known to each other. Recited with others in a communal setting, a creed serves as an acknowledgment of shared Christian identity. When secular humanists get together to discuss their common commitments, the discussion typically results in official minutes

and public manifestos. Commitment to secular humanism does not involve public creedal avowal. Monotheistic religions, on the other hand, are overtly creedal by nature. And Christianity is no exception.

Creedal recitation is a typical Christian practice. Other Christian practices include participating in various sacraments (e.g., baptism, communion), engaging in works of mercy (e.g., visiting the sick, feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless) and, during Easter particularly, praying, fasting and giving alms to the poor. Corresponding practices of Judaism include participating in Bar (or Bat) Mitzvah, keeping the Sabbath, and restricting one's diet to kosher food. A faithful Muslim in turn, fasts during the month of Ramadan, prays five times daily toward Mecca, and makes a pilgrimage to Mecca at least once during his or her lifetime. These all are examples of religious practices.

As used in this context, the term 'practice' means an activity or procedure performed for the realization of certain goals, in a manner set by tradition or custom. With religious practices in particular, the traditions that establish the procedures in question engage previous efforts to establish the relevant way of life as an ongoing communal enterprise. The goals toward which this enterprise is directed, in turn, are derived from the given religion's view of the fundamental purpose of human life. In the worldview of Christianity, the fundamental purpose of human life is to gain eternal repose in the presence of God. The religious practices of Christianity, accordingly, are aimed at the realization of this ultimate goal.

Taken together, the preceding considerations show that a religious life is a life in process. In its religious aspects specifically, an individual Christian life begins with baptism, develops through a progression of communal practices, and hopefully ends in a

state worthy of entering God's presence. Although certainly not unique in its progressive development, the life of an individual Christian has a beginning, an extended middle, and a projected end. A similar progression is integral to the development over time of the Christian way of life itself. The worldview of Christianity posits a temporal beginning (*archē*, *John* 1:1), followed by a developing progression of scriptural events, leading to a "last day" (*eschatē ēmera*, *John* 6:40) when those who believe in the Son "shall have eternal life" (*echē zōēn aiōnion*, *John* 6:40). As we shall see presently, this pattern of temporal development shared between the individual Christian life and the Christian way of life generally provides the basis of Christian belief(s).

Progression from beginning to middle to end is commonly taken to be the hallmark of narrative form. Well-written novels and short stories exhibit this form, as do many stories passed on by word of mouth. So also do the unspoken personal stories we keep to ourselves, connecting one's memories of the past to one's foreseeable future. And as just noted, so also do the narratives drawn from scripture and tradition upon which our religious beliefs(s) are based. It is by virtue of their common structural format that personal life-stories can be assimilated into the narratives provided by religious worldviews. We turn presently to an elaboration of this process.

To conclude our comparison of the respective belief-systems of secular humanism and Christianity, we note that the typical discourse of secular humanism is obviously lacking in narrative form. To be sure, humanist manifestos and reports of group meetings begin with a beginning and finish with an end. But they are unlike stories in most other respects. Their beginning is not the start of a storyline, and their finish is not the climax of an accomplished plot. As a consequence, they have no structural isomorphism with the

personal stories of individuals who are guided by their principles. To be guided by principles without an accompanying storyline is to risk a life short of final fulfillment.

In summary, the worldviews of Christianity and of secular humanism both serve as proper objects of symphonic belief. As such, both are integrative (bringing disparate factors together), both address the question of life's meaning, and both rely on faith to hold them in place. The worldview of Christianity, however, differs from that of secular humanism in stressing the community of believers, in incorporating creeds and practices, and in providing a narrative into which the life-stories of individuals can be assimilated. It differs also in providing room for eternal life. Let us now set secular humanism aside and proceed with our examination of Christian belief(s).

(2.42) Merging Personal Life-Stories with Religious Narratives

My dominant theme from this point onward is that Christian belief(s) on the part of a given individual consists in the joining of that person's life-story with the Christian narrative. Christian belief(s), that is to say, amounts to an interaction between two kinds of story. There is the story we shall continue referring to as the Christian narrative. And there is the life-story of the believer in question. The interaction between these two stories is such that it invites description in terms of merging and assimilation. Before proceeding further, some preliminary remarks are in order regarding the present understanding of the Christian narrative, that of the individual life-story, and that of the relation between them.

To begin with, the Christian narrative is not merely a series of verses in the NT pertaining to the life and times of Jesus Christ. The Christian narrative is based on biblical

texts, to be sure, but does not consist of those texts themselves. In particular, the Christian narrative does not consist of a subset of biblical texts reporting episodes in which Jesus participated. Even when arranged in chronological order, a series of episodic reports does not constitute a narrative. Although occasional sequences of passages in the NT are presented in narrative form, for example *Matthew 26:36 - 27:50* leading from the betrayal to the crucifixion, these passages together add up to only part of the Christian narrative itself. Other material is needed to complete the narrative, and this material cannot be found verbatim in the NT account.

Granted that the Christian narrative is based on material found in the Bible, there are questions regarding the range of biblical material it should be thought to cover. One possible answer is that the Christian narrative covers only the life, death, and resurrection of Christ himself. In this case it would be based on the NT exclusively. A more plausible answer is that the narrative in addition should cover Hebrew prophecies of Christ's coming, in which case it would rely on the OT as well. Yet another possibility is that the Christian narrative should be understood as also encompassing Christ's influence on subsequent eras, perhaps up to the present and even beyond. For reasons soon to become evident, this third alternative is the one adopted by the present study. The Christian narrative, in brief, is the story of Christ's interaction with humankind, including both its OT antecedents and its projected future.

A further remark about the term 'Christian narrative' is that it should not be understood as univocal. The assumption that there is one and only one story meriting this title should be studiously avoided. In point of fact, there are various ways of putting biblical episodes together in narrative form. Various circumstances and events might be

chosen for inclusion, and these might be integrated by various kinds of connective material. As a bare minimum, a Christian narrative should include Christ's virgin birth, his crucifixion, and his resurrection.

In one version or another, the narrative in question is an essential component of the Christian worldview. Like this worldview itself, the Christian narrative is an abstract construct in which any number of individuals can participate. The worldview is a construct in the sense that it is held in place by the faith of the many individuals who participate in it. So it is with worldviews generally, including those of scientific materialism and of secular humanism. The Christian narrative is a construct in this faith-dependent regard as well. A major difference between worldview and narrative is that only the narrative has temporal features. Although the worldview includes things that occur in time, it is not an occupant of time itself. The Christian narrative, by contrast, is temporal by nature. Its beginning and its end are temporally related, and its middle occupies time in between. Participation in the narrative takes place in time as well. An individual participates in the Christian narrative by making it part of his or her own life-story.

Unlike the Christian narrative, the life-story of a given person is unique to the individual involved. While any number of individuals can participate in the Christian narrative, the life-story of a given individual is essentially private. An individual life-story is private in two important senses. One is that a life-story is a story the individual concerned tells about him or herself. One's life-story is an integral part of one's personal identity. Just as no two people are the same individual, so the life-stories of different individuals always differ from each other. One's life-story is private property in the sense of belonging to oneself alone.

A given person's life-story is also private in the sense that no one else has direct access to it. Unlike an autobiography, which is written to be read, one's life-story is not displayed in a public format. A person of course can describe details of his or her life-story to other people. And other people can sometimes arrive at educated guesses about aspects of a person's life-story by careful observation of that person's behavior. But the actual contents of one's life-story are privy to oneself alone. In a manner of speaking, one's life-story is private in the manner of one's very self.

Of special relevance for present purposes is the temporal character of an individual life-story. Although present awareness is frequently (not always) a factor, a given individual's life-story is composed mostly of memories. Whereas memory itself is directed toward what is past, the process of remembering takes place in present (ongoing) time. Such observations bring to bear the distinction between private time and public time. Being private themselves, the memories constituent of an individual life-story relate to their objects in private time. This time cannot be measured by chronometers. The time in which the process of memory takes place, however, is the same as that in which other physiological processes occur, which means that it can be measured by instruments in the hands of other people. Since life-stories are constantly being expanded as the subject ages, and since the subject ages in public time, the coherence of a life-story depends on its private time remaining synchronized with the time in which public events take place. This distinction between private and public time will come back into play when we come to look more carefully at the nature of individual life-stories.

A leading theme of this study, to say it again, is that religious belief(s) amounts to a merger of an individual life-story with the religious narrative concerned. A basic

condition for such a merger is that life-stories and religious narratives share the same narrative format. The Christian narrative begins with events in the OT, proceeds with events in the NT leading up to Christ's resurrection and ascension, and looks ahead to an endtime providing believers with eternal life. The life-story of a typical Christian, in turn, begins with circumstances of the person's birth, proceeds with events bringing the person's life up to the temporal present, and looks ahead to an end in keeping with the Christian worldview. The narrative format shared by the two stories provides for an orderly progression of earlier to later events, leading through a sequence of events in the middle that hold beginning and end together.

What happens, we now ask, when these two stories merge, each becoming a part of the other? A short answer comes in two parts. From the perspective of the individual life-story, merger is a matter of adapting the projected end of the individual story to fit in with the end projected by the Christian narrative. The projected end of the Christian narrative, once again, is a final time in which believers in Jesus Christ gain eternal life. The upshot from the perspective of the individual life-story is that the story itself adopts eternal life as its projected end.

From the perspective of the Christian narrative, on the other hand, merger with an individual life-story is a matter of assimilating the person identified by that story into a body of believers dedicated to continuing Christ's work on earth. Use of the term 'body' here follows that of Paul in his letter to the Romans. In *Romans* 12:5, Paul addresses his audience saying "we, though many, are one body in Christ" (*houtōs hoi polloi hen sōma esmen en Christō*). The purpose of this body, Paul says later in *Ephesians* 4:13, is to attain unity in "the acknowledgment of the Son of God" (*tēs epignōseōs tou huiou tou*

theou). From the perspective of the Christian narrative itself, the upshot is that the body of Christ continues to grow with the addition of yet another believer.

This is a short answer to the question of what happens when the two stories merge. For a more complete answer, we need a more detailed account of how an individual life-story is composed.

(3) Individual Life-Stories

The term ‘life-story’, as used in this study, carries a meaning not found in standard dictionaries. A life-story is not simply an account of things that happen in someone’s life. If it were, another person could tell one’s life-story as well as oneself (as in a biography). But other people cannot tell a given individual’s life-story. Nor is a life-story the same as an autobiography. If it were, it would be written for others to read. But a person’s life-story is not written for other people. In point of fact, a life-story typically is not written at all. Instead, it is situated within the self-awareness of the individual involved.

As the locus of an individual’s life-story, with its progression of beginning, middle, and end, self-awareness is a process that takes place in time. It is a process, however, that is disrupted when one’s attention is directed toward other things. When one’s attention is preoccupied with things in the external world, for instance, the process of self-awareness is suspended. A consequence is that an individual’s life-story remains latent while attention is directed outward, and becomes manifest only in moments of introspection.

Self-awareness occurs only when one's attention is directed inward toward oneself. Like attention more generally, self-awareness is intentional. Like attention generally, that is to say, self-awareness is directed toward a specific object. And clearly enough, the specific object toward which self-awareness is directed is the self of which the subject is aware. In self-awareness, the attention of a subject-self is directed toward an object-self. A subject-self can attend to many different objects; but an object-self can be the intentional object only of its corresponding subject-self.

An individual life-story is a composite of successive moments of self-awareness. These moments are held together by personal memory. A person's life-story contains memories of two quite different sorts. One is episodic memory, which is memory of specific events. The other is discursive memory, which is memory that certain events took place. Episodic memory is directed toward things that happened, whereas discursive memory is directed toward propositions concerning such things. Episodic memories can convert into discursive memories, but not vice versa.

Other ingredients of life-stories include desires, hopes, fears, and anticipations. Sometimes called "attitudes of projection," these factors also are creatures of self-awareness. Neither episodic nor discursive, attitudes of projection are directed toward future circumstances in which one might or might not participate. A final ingredient is one's awareness of oneself in circumstances occurring currently. Present self-awareness occupies the temporal median between remembered past and projected future.

An individual life-story is cast in a narrative format consisting of beginning, middle, and projected end. The primary moments of this format are briefly characterized

in the synopsis above. We proceed now to a detailed examination of the several factors involved.

(3.1) Why Life-Stories are not Autobiographies

Both life-stories and autobiographies have narrative form. Both are about the life of the person who formulates them. And both are formulated in a coherent manner using terms generally intelligible to other people. How, then, do they differ?

One set of differences has to do with their respective origins. An autobiography is a deliberately fashioned artifact. It is the end product of a specific endeavor, typically articulated in written or spoken language. The purpose of the endeavor is to convey the story concerned to a receptive audience. An autobiography, in short, is deliberately produced, is formulated in public language, and is aimed at an audience of readers or listeners. The life-story of a living person differs in each respect.

To begin with, the life-story of a living individual is not the outcome of a deliberately initiated endeavor. Life-stories unfold spontaneously as one's life progresses, often without the person concerned even realizing that this is happening. My personal life-story, for instance, began unfolding when I was an infant, many years before I realized that such a story was underway. Even after I began to realize what was happening (i.e., even after gaining self-awareness), there was no conscious effort on my part to influence the story's development. Although this changed in later years, in ways yet to be discussed, at no point did I assume more than partial control over the story's progression.

A second point of difference is that, whereas autobiographies are presented in written or spoken form, a life-story is presented within the private self-awareness of the person concerned. As with other stories in the public domain, autobiographies rely on public language to convey their contents. The contents of an individual's life-story, however, are displayed to that person as a subset of the contents of his or her internal awareness overall. Although such contents on occasion can be expressed in public language (as when one reports a memory, for example), their primary mode of expression is not linguistic. Their primary mode of expression is introspective, inasmuch as self-awareness is a mode of introspection. A consequence is that life-stories of living individuals are essentially private, in contrast with the public character of autobiographies.

Other differences follow regarding characteristic features. By very nature, an autobiography is exclusively retrospective. It tells about the life of its author up to some point prior to the time it was made public. For obvious reasons, a proper autobiography does not recount events that have not yet happened. Even though the author's life may continue past the end of the narrated account, the account itself reaches completion with events that are already past. There is no room in a proper autobiography for events that have yet to occur.

Life-stories of living people, on the other hand, are open to the future. They deal with lives that are still in process. As long as the life concerned remains in process, its story is oriented toward projected ends. In effect, a life-story is prospective as well as retrospective. It is engaged with the life's progression from past to present. But it is engaged as well with where the life is headed.

A life-story in some respects is like the script of a play. Both involve storylines that progress from past to future, which progression is part of the story itself. Unlike the dynamism of the stage production, however, the progression of a life-story is not scripted in advance. The “script” of a life-story, as it were, is composed simultaneously with its being acted out. As will be seen shortly, individuals are at least partially responsible for the course their life-stories follow. The overall sequence of one’s life-story incorporates the steps one takes along the way.

These considerations should make it clear that a life-story is not an internalized autobiography, and that an autobiography is not a public version of a life-story. Both are stories featuring the person mainly responsible for their happening, and both exhibit a narrational form. But they relate in entirely different ways to the life of the person they feature. An autobiography provides a public record of the author’s past life, whereas a life-story provides a private overview of a life still underway.

(3.2) Self-Awareness

Given the role of self-awareness in sustaining an individual’s life-story, self-awareness itself merits closer examination. Our approach will be to compare self-awareness with other interactions designated by use of the term ‘self’, in an effort to isolate what is unique about the self of self-awareness. As we shall see, self-awareness is reciprocal, intentional, and personal (confined to persons), a combination of characteristics not found in other interactions under consideration. The self of self-awareness, that is to say, itself is unique.

There are several locutions employing the term ‘self’ in which the relevant self has nothing to do with persons. One is the self of self-contradiction. By definition, a sentence or statement is self-contradictory when it contradicts itself. An illustration is the following sentence written in a box, namely “the sentence in this box is false.” (If it’s true, then it’s false; if it’s false, then it’s true.) The self of self-contradiction is impersonal inasmuch as people do not contradict themselves. A person might make statements that contradict each other, which sometimes is referred to as “contradicting oneself.” But people as such cannot be logically opposed to themselves.

Similarly impersonal is the self of self-inclusion. A catalog of reference works, for example, is self-inclusive if it lists itself. For another example, Russell’s paradox trades on the notion of classes that include themselves. (If a class is a member of the class of classes that do not include themselves, then it does not include itself and hence cannot be a member.) Like the self of self-contradiction, the self of self-inclusion lacks personal import. Individual persons do not include themselves.

The relations of self-contradiction and self-inclusion are both reciprocal. Two things are reciprocally related, let us say, if each inherently pertains to the other. The truth of the sentence in the box inherently pertains to (bears upon) its falsehood, and its falsehood inherently pertains to its truth. Hence the sentence incorporates reciprocity with respect to truth-value. Similarly, a list of reference works inherently pertains to (shows, designates) each item on the list. And when the reference work itself is one of those items, that item inherently pertains to (refers to, designates) the list as a whole. Thus the self-inclusive reference work is reciprocal with respect to designation. As we shall see

presently, self-awareness is reciprocal as well, inasmuch as subject-self and object-self inherently pertain to each other.

Self-contradictory statements contradict themselves and self-inclusive reference works include themselves. These are things statements and reference works might do *regarding* themselves, which is what makes the relations of self-contradiction and self-reference reciprocal. There is another group of expressions employing the term ‘self’ that refer to conditions that are not reciprocal and that commonly obtain without involvement of persons. Examples include ‘self-supporting’, ‘self-propelling’, and ‘self-healing’. These are conditions pertaining to what things do *by* themselves.

A cathedral wall is self-supporting if it stands on its own without external reinforcement, for example by flying buttresses. It is self-supporting in that it stands upright by itself. (People also can be self-supporting, but in a financial rather than the structural sense here intended.) A ship is self-propelling if it moves by itself, without benefit of tugboat, wind, or human oarsmen. The engines that drive it are part of the ship itself. A self-healing wound, in turn, is a wound that heals without external medication, which is to say that it heals by itself. What happens in such cases comes about without deliberate involvement of specific agents. (In the proverbial “Physician, heal yourself” of *Luke 4:23*, by contrast, the physician presumably would be agent of his own deliberate healing.) Like self-supporting and self-propelling, self-healing is a condition and not a relation. This precludes the complex relation of reciprocity. Things done by themselves also are done impersonally, inasmuch as no deliberate agency is involved.

Yet another group of expressions prefixed by ‘self’ refer to what something is just *in* itself. An example is the state of being self-evident. The Founding Fathers held certain

truths (doctrines, tenets) to be self-evident, in the sense of being evident in themselves. Another example is the state of being self-explanatory. The title of a book might be self-explanatory in that it makes immediately intelligible what the book is about. Like being self-evident, the state of being self-explanatory does not apply to persons. (When the caterpillar in *Alice in Wonderland* asked Alice to explain herself, it meant she should explain something she said; persons as such do not call for explanation.) Being states, self-evident and self-explanatory also are non-relational. This rules out their being reciprocal.

All of the illustrations thusfar involve things being in certain relations (contradiction, inclusion), things acting in certain ways (propelling, healing), or things possessing certain features (evidence, intelligibility). And all are impersonal, involving things but not people. There are other compounds of the term 'self' that are used both personally and impersonally. Two interesting examples are the expressions 'selfsame' and 'self-identical'.

Personal use of 'selfsame' is illustrated in the sentence "The selfsame person won the lottery two weeks in a row." An impersonal illustration is "On every day of class, John sat in the selfsame seat." In both uses, 'selfsame' is equivalent in meaning to 'the very same' or 'exactly the same'. It may be noted in passing that 'selfsame' is not equivalent to 'the same as itself'. The sentence 'Every day John sat in a seat that is the same as itself' is uninformative, inasmuch as all seats are the same as themselves.

'Self-identity', in turn, means the sameness of an entity with itself. In most cases, the entity in question will be a human being. Consider the example 'John suffered from a faltering sense of self-identity', meaning that John lacked confidence about who he really

was. Occasionally, however, the expression will be used with an impersonal reference. An example is the title of the self-identity axiom in logic, to the effect that any given thing is the same as itself. As with selfsameness, self-identity is a property and not a relation. It follows that neither involves reciprocity.

We turn now to examine compounds of the term 'self' in which the selves in question are exclusively personal. For present purposes, the referents of these expressions are divided into character traits (e.g., self-respecting), momentary attitudes (e.g., self-reproach), and momentary states (e.g., self-delusion).

The expression 'self-respecting' applies to someone who tends to think positively about his or her standing, worth, or personal integrity. Other such traits are self-pride and self-esteem. A person given to self-pride is someone inclined to find satisfaction in his or her achievements, possessions, or individual status. And self-esteem is a propensity to think highly of one's character. Like capacities and abilities, traits like these are dispositional. They are manifested only occasionally, and remain properties of the persons they characterize even when not manifested. As dispositions, moreover, they are properties and not relations. And since reciprocity is a relation, it follows that these traits are not reciprocal.

Whereas character traits are dispositional, attitudes by and large are mental states that characterize a person only when actually being exercised. This is true of momentary attitudes in particular, which are confined to specific occasions. Specific occasions might arise, for instance, in which a person is afflicted with self-blame, self-reproach, or self-disgust. These attitudes are negative feelings one experiences regarding things one has done and then regrets. Of more positive character, there might be occasions on which one

experiences self-fulfillment in the outcome of a certain endeavor or self-satisfaction in completing a particular task. Feelings such as these presumably are confined to human agents. And being feelings, they are not intrinsically relational, which precludes their being reciprocal in nature.

Momentary states include self-delusion and self-deception on one hand, in contrast with self-discipline and self-restraint on the other. A job candidate might be self-deluded in holding out for a better offer, and a ballerina might be self-deceived in thinking she deserves a better role. On the other hand, a politician might exhibit self-restraint in refusing to answer a heckler's insults, and a weight watcher might exercise self-discipline in declining a second piece of cake. Although in each case the subject enters the concerned state in response to particular circumstances, the state itself is not a relation the subject bears toward those circumstances. The state of the subject, that is to say, is not relational. Accordingly, it is not a reciprocal relation.

We turn now to the reflexive pronouns, namely 'myself', 'yourself', 'itself', and so forth. By definition, a term is reflexive if it is used to reflect or to refer back to something mentioned previously. Illustrative uses occur in the sentences "I was in favor of his appointment myself," and "You yourself must realize the appointment was reasonable." In the first, 'myself' refers back to the subject previously mentioned by use of 'I', as in the latter 'yourself' refers back to the subject previously mentioned by use of 'you'. 'Myself' in the former inherently pertains to the referent of 'I', whereas 'I' inherently pertains to the referent of 'myself'. Likewise, 'yourself' inherently pertains to the referent of 'you', and of course vice versa. As these illustrations show, reflexivity generally is a variety of reciprocity.

While most reflexive pronouns are personal (i.e., used in reference to persons), there is one that for the most part is used impersonally. In use of the pronoun ‘itself’, the reciprocal term generally does not refer to a person. An illustration comes with the sentence “John’s rose garden outdid itself this year,” in which the subject refers not to John but to his rose garden. Another illustration is provided by “Mary’s painting draws attention to itself by its vivid colors,” in which again the reference of the subject term is a thing and not a person.

Although the singular ‘itself’ almost always is used impersonally, the plural ‘themselves’ can refer back either to things or to persons. Impersonal use of the plural is illustrated in “England’s rose gardens generally exceeded themselves in beauty this year,” meaning that most of England’s rose gardens were more beautiful this year than last. But the personal use of the plural seems no less common than the impersonal. Witness the personal use in “All elected members of the committee declared themselves in favor of the resolution.”

With the remaining reflexive pronouns, however, reference back to persons seems invariable. The selves of ‘myself’ and ‘ourselves’ (first person grammatically) are almost always personal, as are those of ‘yourself’ and ‘yourselves’ (second person) and of ‘himself’, ‘herself’, and ‘themselves’. The gender-neutral ‘oneself’ typically refers to a personal self as well. It is hard to think of a context in which ‘oneself’ would be a suitable substitute for the impersonal ‘itself’.

The same divisions between personal and impersonal selves apply when reflexive pronouns are used in their intensive senses. A reflexive pronoun used intensively is roughly equivalent to ‘per se’ or ‘as such’. Whereas intensive use of ‘itself’ is exclusively

impersonal (as in “The idea itself has merit”), the intensive ‘themselves’ can be used either personally or impersonally. An illustration of the former is “The fundraisers themselves maintained a low profile,” of the latter “Rose gardens and paintings themselves are not persons.” The remaining intensive pronouns (‘myself’, ‘yourself’ ‘ourselves’, etc.), when used properly, are always used in reference to persons.

In brief, reflexive pronouns are reciprocal by very nature, although some refer to things other than persons, and some refer to either things or persons depending on context. As already observed, self-awareness is reciprocal and always personal. This in itself is enough to distinguish the self of self-awareness from those of the other self-locutions we have been studying.

We have yet to compare the self of self-awareness with that of self-consciousness. It might appear at first that they are identical. If so, the appearance may stem from the fact that the states of awareness and of consciousness are mutually dependent. A person must be conscious in order to be aware of anything (awareness depends on consciousness), and a person cannot be conscious without somehow being aware (consciousness depends on awareness). In some contexts, mutual dependency is read as equivalence (consider the “if and only if” of logic). And if awareness and consciousness are equivalent, then self-awareness and self-consciousness would seem to be equivalent as well. The seeming consequence is that the selves implicated in these two mental states are the same.

But the mutual dependence of awareness and consciousness does not mean that they are the same mental state. Chickens and eggs are mutually dependent, yet not the same organic entities. The difference between awareness and consciousness is indicated

by the fact that one can be conscious without being aware of anything in particular. Consider the progression of mental states when one is recovering from a fainting spell (or from anesthesia, etc.). In regaining consciousness after a fainting spell one first “comes to,” which amounts to the onset of various indistinct color and shape impressions. In the words of William James (*The Principles of Psychology*), these impressions add up to little more than a “blooming, buzzing confusion.” The next step of recovery is the coalescence of these first impressions into objects with distinct colors and stable configurations. This is the point at which the recovering subject regains awareness of the objective world. Sheer consciousness comes first, then awareness of persistent objects. This could not happen if consciousness and awareness were not somehow distinct.

In this sequence of recovery, the step from sheer consciousness to awareness of objects is marked by the emergence of what philosophers sometimes refer to as intentionality. The sense of the term ‘intentional’ involved here is not that in which the term is synonymous with ‘deliberate’ and ‘purposeful’. The sense intended, rather, is that of being *about* some thing or another. Many mental states are intentional in this sense, including the states of thinking, believing, noticing, hoping, and perceiving. Another way of putting it is that intentional states are *directed toward* one or another object. In hoping that the rain will stop soon, the object toward which one’s hope is directed is the SOA of the rain’s soon stopping. The rain’s soon stopping is the intentional object of that intentional state. Similarly, when one perceives a bird in a tree, the bird is the intentional object of one’s state of perceiving. And so on for other intentional states, and the respective objects toward which they are directed.

The key difference between sheer consciousness and awareness of objects in the sequence of recovery described above is that awareness of objects is intentional and sheer consciousness is not. This difference carries over to self-awareness and self-consciousness. In its state of self-awareness, the subject's attention is directed toward himself or herself as intentional object. The subject-self is intentionally aware of the object-self. Self-consciousness, however, is another matter. In one common usage, the expression 'self-conscious' is roughly synonymous with 'embarrassed' or 'ill at ease'. Being embarrassed generally is not an intentional state. If the prefix 'self' in this expression refers to anything at all, it identifies the person who is ill at ease.

The expression 'self-conscious', however, is not univocal. There is another sense in which self-consciousness amounts to one's attention being focused on one's own self. For an example, imagine a young man in a formal gathering who has come to realize that his sportcoat is buttoned unevenly. Noting that people are staring at his attire, he not only feels embarrassment (feels self-conscious in the first sense) but also is conscious of the cause of his embarrassment. He is acutely conscious of other people's reaction to his improperly buttoned coat. His self-consciousness in this case is fully intentional. It is directed explicitly toward himself in an awkward set of circumstances.

Even in this latter form of self-consciousness, nonetheless, the self toward which the young man's attention is directed is quite different from the self of self-awareness. The self of self-awareness is the inner self. This means that it is revealed when attention is turned inward. It is a self capable of playing the roles both of subject and object, which both are played in the domain of introspection. The self of intentional self-consciousness, on the other hand, occupies the world it shares with other people. This self comprises all

the psychological, social, and physical features (including attire) that make someone a particular person among others in the world at large. And the world at large is not accessible by introspection.

The self of self-consciousness occupies the public world, and accordingly might be termed the public self. This self comes into view only when one's attention is directed outward. But the self of self-awareness is a private self, to be viewed only when looking inward. The difference between private self and public self is no less distinct than that between introspection and perception of the external world.

In sum, the self of self-awareness is unique among the many different selves we have been considering. It alone is exclusively personal, reciprocal in relationship, and directed intentionally toward an internal object. As we shall see presently, it also is the locus of personal identity.

(3.21) Subject-Self and Object-Self

Self-awareness is the self's awareness of itself. The surface grammar of 'self's awareness of itself' invites comparison with something like 'Mary's awareness of daybreak', where Mary is the subject of awareness and daybreak the object. Read with this comparison in mind, the term 'itself' in the initial phrase refers to the object of awareness with the self in question as subject. In view of the grammatical role of 'itself' as a reflexive pronoun, this seems to support the assumption that the subject and the object of self-awareness are identically the same self.

A seeming analogy that comes to mind is seeing oneself in a mirror. Given the reflexive nature of self-awareness, the analogy is supported by the shared etymology of

the terms 'reflexive' and 'reflective'. Both retain the meaning of being directed back on itself. The person reflected in the mirror is the same as the person positioned in front of it. Since seeing is a form of awareness, moreover, seeing oneself in a mirror is a way of being aware of oneself. This leads to the thought that the relation between subject-self and object-self may be like that between the person looking in the mirror and the image reflected back, except that the awareness involved is not visual in character.

On further thought, however, disanalogies appear that seem to be crucial. One is that the self-awareness we are interested in involves nothing like a reflective surface. Although the subject and object of self-awareness in some sense may seem to be identical, there is no respect in which the latter is a reflective image of the former. The seeming identity, that is to say, cannot be understood in terms of the physical principles of light reflection.

Another instructive disanalogy has to do with the intentional character of self-awareness. To be aware of oneself requires that the awareness of the subject-self be directed toward the object-self. In the phenomenon of self-awareness, as it were, the subject-self and the object-self are related by the intentionality of the mental state involved. In the relation between the person in front of the mirror and the mirror image, on the other hand, there is no conceivable sense in which that relation is intentional. Intentionality is a feature of a mental state, whereas the relation between person and mirror image is entirely physical.

In view of the intentional character of self-awareness, we must modify our prior assumption that the subject-self and the object-self are identical. The same self is somehow involved, to be sure, else we would not have a genuine case of a self being

aware of itself. But in self-awareness the self plays two quite different roles; and different capacities come into play in these respective roles. In its role as subject, the self exercises its capacity of awareness. And in its role as object, it exercises its capacity to be addressed as an entity with a stable and persistent identity. While the self underlying self-awareness possesses both capacities, exercise of one or the other depends on the role being played.

Since being aware is an active state, the self in its role as subject is an active self. And since being addressed is a passive state, the self in its role of object is a passive self. The subject-self is never passive, and the object-self is never active. It follows that the object-self presented to the subject of self-awareness is never presented in an active role. In effect, one is never aware of oneself being aware of other things.

(3.22) Self-Awareness and Personal Identity

This account of the object-self might at first seem similar to the so-called “bundle theory of the self” advanced by David Hume (see the Appendix on Personal Identity of his *A Treatise of Human Nature*). According to Hume, introspection reveals a profusion of fleeting sensations and feelings, but never an underlying self that sustains these many experiences. His (somewhat hesitant) conclusion was that the self is nothing more than a collection of diverse impressions given in introspection.

Among points often raised in objection to this bundle theory are that (1) there must be a sustaining factor that supports the impressions in question, (2) there must be a clustering factor that binds the relevant impressions together at a given moment of introspection, and (3) there must be some integrating factor that lends a persisting identity

to a given bundle of impressions through time. By examining how the present account deals with these issues, we can see that its differences in comparison with the bundle theory are more extensive than its similarities.

The present account is compatible with Hume's characterization of the impressions presented in introspection. These impressions are diverse, multitudinous, and constantly changing. In these respects, they are like the colors, sounds, and shapes introduced to the mind by external sense perception. The present account differs from Hume's, however, in his depiction of these impressions as floating unsupported in some sort of inner space. Contrary to Hume, what is revealed in introspection is a self undergoing a changing panoply of feelings, sensations, and emotions.

This is another manifestation of the object-self's passivity. The object-self is passive in being addressed by an active subject-self. And it is passive as well in suffering a profusion of emotions and feelings. Whatever agency produces these impressions, the object-self is the patient (from the Greek *paschō*, to be affected) that receives them. Instead of free-floating impressions as Hume would have it, introspection reveals an object-self in the process of undergoing an array of changing affections. Regarding issue (1), this object-self is the factor that sustains the impressions in question.

The second issue concerns the factor that "bundles" these impressions together in a given moment of introspection. In the context of Hume's theory, in which the self is nothing more than a collection of impressions and sensations, the problem is to circumscribe the membership of the particular collection that comprises a given self at a given time. Although this problem is nontrivial for a bundle theory like Hume's, it simply does not arise for the present account.

The present account begins with a distinction between subject-self and object-self. It proceeds with the observation that the object-self is affected by certain feelings and emotions. In Hume's account, there also is a collection of sense impressions, including colors, sounds, and shapes, which are subjectively present from moment to moment. For Hume, these sense impressions join the feelings and emotions out of which the subjective self is to be constructed. Hume's problem (2) is to identify a clustering factor that holds these various affections and impressions together during a given moment of experience. From the present perspective, the answer would be that the cluster in question is none other than the collection of affections and impressions of which the subject is aware during that particular moment. There are further issues with grouping affections and sense impression in this manner, however, that will be postponed for later discussion.

In brief, problem (2) of Hume's bundle theory is inconsequential for the present account. This problem arises for the bundle theory as a result of that theory's attempt to explain the self in terms of its associated impressions. The present account avoids this problem by explaining the associated impressions in terms of the relevant self.

The third problem for a bundle theory like Hume's concerns the factor that provides continuing identity to the personal self through time. What makes a self the same self from moment to moment? What is the source, as it were, of its self-identity? These are ways of posing what philosophers term the "problem of personal identity."

The problem emerged in post-cartesian western philosophy with the rejection of Cartesian dualism. If the individual person is a synthesis of soul (mind) and body, as a mind/body dualist typically maintains, then the soul can serve as the conveyor of self-identity through time. The soul-self joins the body in the womb, resides in it during the

person's lifetime, and (for some dualists at least) persists immaterially after bodily death. Selfhood, that is to say, is bestowed by the soul, and remains intact as long as the soul endures.

This intuitively straightforward solution to the problem of personal identity, however, was not available to post-cartesian non-dualists. Other solutions were needed to fit in with the empiricism of Descartes' successors. John Locke, for instance, in his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, came up with a theory that locates personal identity in consciousness (the "psychological" approach). A person retains self-identity by being conscious of the continuity of present experiences with experiences of the past. An obvious difficulty of this approach is posed by gaps in consciousness, for example during sleep. Another problem is that conscious connections of this sort are entirely retrospective. Consciousness has no way of connecting past and present experiences with happenings involving the self in future time.

Descartes and Locke both made mind the locus of personal identity. A contrasting approach relies on bodily factors instead (the "somatic" approach). One version makes continuing self-identity a matter simply of bodily continuity. A problem here is that the body is constantly changing, which seems to render the self subject to change as well. Another version associates personal identity with individual traits, such as habits and behavior patterns, which are more likely to endure through time. In this case, more precisely, personal identity is thought to reside in the brain functions underlying these traits, which can persist despite change in the brain itself. Philosophers attracted to such proposals are prone to debating their merits in terms of thought experiments inspired by science fiction. For example, if an individual's cerebrum were surgically severed into two

still-functioning hemispheres, and each part transplanted into a different empty cranium, would one self come to occupy two separate bodies? Or would the originally unique self have been split into two selves with separate identities? Thought experiments of this sort may be fun to play with, but are unlikely to contribute much to our understanding of personal identity.

Both the psychological and the somatic approach attempt to explain personal identity with reference to aspects of the human person that are constantly in flux. The contents of consciousness vary from moment to moment, as do the brain configurations (on a micro level) underlying the organism's behavior. In either case, there is an attempt to account for an integrated and continuous self in terms of disparate and discontinuous features.

A more promising approach would rely on some facet of human experience in which self-identity is tied to more permanent factors. Particularly desirable would be an approach in which problems like those above do not even arise. The present approach, based on the provisions of a personal life-story, fits this general description. Let us expand on our previous discussion of life-stories with this application in mind.

(3.221) Life-Stories and Personal Identity

Like the life of a character in a novel, the life-story of a living person has narrative structure. In its literary depiction, the life of a fictional character typically is endowed with a beginning (birth or early years), an extended middle, and a final terminus or culmination. So it is also with the life-story of a living person, save that while life continues its culmination remains indeterminate. The life-story of a living person

includes a beginning, an extended middle, and a projected end. The end is projected in the sense that it is situated beyond the present. This narrative structure of beginning, middle, and end is the factor that holds an individual's life-story together.

An individual's life-story contains pieces that must be integrated to make the story coherent. There are pieces pertaining to the past, some pertaining to the present, and yet others with future relevance. Pieces pertaining to the past are contained in memory, those pertaining to the present in present experience, and those of future relevance in conscious anticipation. Like memory, present experience and conscious anticipation are modes of personal awareness. They are modes of personal awareness in which the subject-self is attentive to the object-self. Coherence of a person's life-story, accordingly, is achieved within the context of that person's field of internal awareness.

In a manner of speaking, a person's field of internal awareness (FIA) is the medium within which features of that person's life-story are displayed. Woodprints result from etching designs on wood. Calligraphic art results from inscribing penmarks on paper. In a not dissimilar way, life-stories result from recording aspects of human experience on an individual's FIA. It is within this medium, at any rate, that a person's memories, present experiences, and conscious anticipations are brought together in mutual relevance. A person's life-story takes shape with the integration of all these pieces into a coherent pattern.

Once formulated in a coherent pattern, the course of a personal life-story can endure frequent interruptions. For one thing, the coherence of a life-story does not require temporal continuity. Lapses of consciousness (e.g., dreamless sleep) that punctuate one's stream of self-awareness produce gaps in one's life-story as well. These are comparable

to the gaps that occur in a fictional storyline when the author finishes one episode (say at the end of a chapter) and takes up the next. In neither case do successive gaps disrupt the coherence of the overall narrative. Lapses of self-awareness also occur when one's attention is directed outwardly. Self-awareness is a mode of introspection, which is interrupted when attention is turned to the external world. As with lapses of consciousness generally, however, interruptions of this sort leave the integrity of one's life-story undisturbed. Its integrity persists despite such interruptions. In similar fashion, the integrity of one's workday persists despite occasional coffee breaks.

For another thing, the coherence of a person's life-story can withstand interruptions on a more fundamental level. As previously indicated, there is a basic form of religious belief that involves the merging of a person's life-story with a religious narrative. This merger can alter both the projected end toward which the life-story is directed and the path followed by the story in approaching that end. The overall effect of such a merger, seemingly interruptive at first, may work to make the personal storyline even more coherent than before. We shall return to this topic in a later section.

The narrative structure of a life-story imparts a continuity that resists disruption and tolerates change in course. We turn now to consider the manner in which this continuity in life-story extends to the self of the self-awareness by which the life-story is sustained. It is by virtue of this extension that one's life-story establishes the self-identity of one's person. In point of fact, the relation between self and life-story is reciprocal. Not only does one's life-story establish the identity of one's self, but moreover one's self establishes the identity of one's life-story. Although the former is our main concern of the moment, looking at the latter first may help prepare the way.

Self-awareness is one's awareness of oneself. Self-awareness also sustains the FIA that is the medium on which one's life-story is inscribed. If (a) there were no self, there would be no self-awareness. And if (b) there were no self-awareness, there would be no life-story. It follows that (c) a person's self is a prerequisite for the possession of a personal life-story. The self of a person's self-awareness determines whom that individual's life-story is about. In effect, the self contributes identity to the life-story itself.

Conversely, one's life-story provides identity to the self it is about. The subject-self (i) that a person's life-story is about is the same as the self that sustains the FIA on which the story is inscribed. And the subject-self (ii) of self-awareness is the same (by definition) as the subject-self in relation to its corresponding object-self. It follows that the self (iii) a life-story is about is the same as the subject-self involved in self-awareness. In upshot, the self featured in an individual's life-story gains persistence from the narrative structure of the life-story itself. Since this self is the same as the subject-self of self-awareness, that subject-self gains persistence from the life-story in which it figures. And since things persist only insofar as they remain the same things, the persistent self remains the same as itself, which is to say that it has self-identity. This is the manner in which one's life-story establishes one's personal self-identity.

Put otherwise, and more succinctly, one's self is the person whom one's life-story is about, which is to say the person occupying the central role in the story. Because of its narrational structure, the life-story presents a coherent depiction of one's life as it continues into the future. Matching the continuity of the story itself, the role one plays in the story retains continuity from start to finish. As the occupant of the same continuing

role, one's self remains identically the same throughout. The same self plays the same role in the same continuously developing story. In this manner, to say it again, one's life-story is the source of one's uninterrupted personal identity through time.

(3.23) Memory

Self-awareness extends through the past, continues in the present, and is projected into the future. The part in the past resides in the domain of memory, the part in the present belongs to present awareness, and the projected part takes place in conscious anticipation. If the self-awareness of a standard subject were conceived as an arc, and the arc divided into past, present, and future, by far the largest portion of the arc would correspond to the past. In terms of extent through time, by far the greatest portion of self-awareness is given over to memory. The portions given over to present awareness and to conscious anticipation are minor by comparison.

With regard to roles played in self-awareness generally, however, the most prominent role by far is played by present awareness. This is so in several respects. For one, present awareness provides the reference point that separates past from future, and accordingly separates memory from conscious anticipation. For another, present awareness is the "default" mode to which self-awareness returns when not occupied by memory or anticipation.

Of particular interest for present purposes, however, is the fact that present awareness is constantly in flux. Memories and anticipations change as well, but not in the way characteristic of present awareness. Memory is constantly augmented as time moves forward, but (forgetfulness aside) tends to retain memories gained during earlier times.

Conscious anticipation, on the other hand, is divested of active content as time moves forward, but tends to retain content relevant to yet future times. Memory and anticipation, in brief, both change in those parts of their temporal spans that are closest to the present, but remain more or less constant in parts that are further away. Present awareness, however, is constantly changing in both directions. It is constantly losing present content to memory, and constantly gaining fresh content from the realization or failure of conscious anticipations.

Viewing the spectrum of self-awareness overall, we see a continuum of memories and anticipations connected by changing moments of present awareness. Present awareness, as it were, is a “zipper” meshing past awareness and future awareness together. Philosophers have a name for present awareness functioning in this capacity. Following William James, it is referred to as the “specious present.” As a prelude to a fuller treatment of memory, let us consider the “ins and outs” of the specious present.

(3.231) The Specious Present

In his *The Principles of Psychology*, William James identifies the specious present as the “unit of composition of our perception of time,” and describes it as “a duration with a bow and a stern, as it were—a forward and a rearward-looking end.” By his estimation, its duration varies “in length from a few seconds to probably not more than a minute” One reason for calling this present “specious” (deceptive) is that it comprises both past and future. That is, both what was and what will be are perceived as contained in the (speciously) present moment. In the spirit of T.S. Eliot’s *Burnt Norton*, one might say “time past and time future are both contained in time present.”

A concrete illustration should help make this more perspicuous. Suppose I am in the process of examining an interesting sycamore leaf I have just picked up from the ground. Although I had started to focus on its details a moment or two earlier, I am still aware of those details when I begin to look at it from another angle. My initial awareness of those details is already past, yet they are still retained in present awareness as they pass into recent memory. There is no distinct border between past and present in my awareness of the leaf.

As the process of examining the leaf progresses, furthermore, there is a seamless transition from moment to moment. The uninterrupted flow of awareness from moment to moment leads me to anticipate its continued progression. Present awareness leads to anticipation of the future without any sense of leaving the present. While one's awareness normally does not extend far into the future, awareness of the present is tinged with a sense of what will momentarily appear. The cumulative result is a present awareness that blends receding awareness and approaching awareness together in an unbroken progression.

William James estimated the duration of the specious present as somewhere between a few seconds and a minute. This seems dubious from the outset, inasmuch as the specious present eludes measurement by clocks and chronometers. Chronometric time (the time measured by clocks and chronometers) is neatly divided into units that exclude each other. Each minute is later than the minute that preceded it and earlier than the minute that comes after it. And each microsecond comes after the preceding microsecond and before the microsecond immediately following. No matter how small, each unit is distinct from adjacent units in the scale, with no overlap of adjacent units. Given the

reach of the specious present into past and future, its dimensions cannot be pinpointed in chronometric time.

Chronometric time is objective and impersonal, whereas the time of self-awareness is personal and subjective. Inasmuch as clocks are objects in the external world, they can be read only when one's attention is directed outward. Self-awareness, on the other hand, requires that one's attention be directed inward. Since extrospection and introspection are incompatible, one cannot read a clock simultaneously with being aware of oneself. This constitutes a further reason why the specious present cannot be gauged by clocks and chronometers. The specious present is a feature of self-awareness, which means that it is present only to introspection. Since there is no way inner and outer awareness can coexist, there is no way of measuring the specious present by clocks and chronometers.

There are reasons as well why the specious presents of different individuals cannot be compared with each other in length. Inasmuch as no two people share the same personal awareness, no two share the same specious present. And since chronometric measuring devices cannot be used to gauge the reach of a given individual's specious present, there is no way different individuals can compare their respective specious presents in extent. Although different people can describe their respective specious presents to each other in a commonly shared language, such descriptions are inevitably subjective. There is no objective way of comparing the specious presents of different subjects in length.

For similar reasons, there is no way of comparing the introspective reach of different people's memories. Relying on memory alone, people make distinctions among

things that happened recently, things that happened a while ago, and things that happened in the distant past. Although the happenings in question can often be dated in chronometric time, there is no direct correlation between chronometric date and location in the introspective time of self-awareness. In the case of two people who remember the same objective occurrence, the chronological date of that occurrence can often be established. They remember the same occurrence as identified by chronological date. Quite apart from the chronological date of the occurrence, however, is the span between the situation of that occurrence in a person's memory and the current specious present of the person involved. With these observations in view, let us examine more closely the memory on which a large portion of a person's life-story is inscribed.

(3.232) Episodic and Discursive Memory

If self-awareness were confined to the specious present, it would be far too brief to accommodate an individual life-story. In terms of relative proportions, far more of a person's life-story is contained in memory than in specious present and conscious anticipation combined. In effect, by far the major portion of an individual's life-story is contained within the memory of the individual involved.

Memory itself takes various forms, not all of which contribute to self-awareness. Consider the memory involved in *remembering how* to do something. I remember how to use a draftsman's pen and how to drive a car with a manual shift. But I have forgotten how to tie a bowtie, and still can't remember after repeated attempts. Although such skills require basic intelligence, they are not primarily mental in nature. Tying a bowtie and

using a draftsman's pen are manual skills, and using a manual shift is a matter of bodily habit. This disqualifies them from being forms of self-awareness.

Other things I remember how to do include playing bridge and calculating a square root by algorithm. In contrast with the previous bodily skills, these clearly are mental skills with distinct cognitive dimensions. Unlike the memory of self-awareness, however, these skills are not primarily intentional. I can exercise these skills without keeping my attention focused on the task at hand. I could play bridge (perhaps poorly) despite being preoccupied with a challenging day in the office. And I could apply the square-root algorithm by rote (perhaps haltingly) while listening to the radio.

Remembering how to do something, accordingly, is not inherently intentional. The memory of self-awareness thus differs from remembering how in two respects. It is not a matter of doing things, on one hand, and it is inherently intentional on the other. An example is my current memory of a pleasant walk home last night, which amounts to my attention currently being directed toward that enjoyable occasion. Another example is remembering that I had oatmeal for breakfast this morning, which amounts to my attention being directed toward that particular fact. Because of their respective characters, to which we now turn, the first memory will be termed "episodic" and the second "discursive."

(3.2321) Episodic Memory and Remembered Event

Episodic memory is memory of events or episodes that have been directly experienced in the past. Examples from my own experience, which I know directly, include the memory of waking up to find snow on my bed as a seven-year old, that of skiing for the first time

at age 26, in addition to that of having a pleasant walk home last night. Other people, I have every reason to think, have similar memories of events in their own lives. People often remember past events they had experienced with each other. My wife and I both have vivid memories of our teenager son dancing in the snow scene of a Joffrey Nutcracker ballet. The episode in question was public, and we experienced it with other people, but our respective memories are inevitably private. No two people participate in the same self-awareness, so no two people share identically the same memories.

Episodic memory is a mental state in which the subject is aware of past events. This memory is intentional in that the subject's awareness is directed toward the event being remembered. As I remember the first time I went skiing, my memory is focused on that particular event. The event I remember and my memory itself are two separate occurrences. One is (was) public, the other private; and perforce they occur at different times. The intentionality of the memory is what brings them together. In a manner of speaking, the intentionality of the memory "extends through" chronological time to render that specific memory a recollection of that specific event.

The memory state and the event remembered participate jointly in a distinctive two-term relation. One obvious feature of this relation is the temporal lapse between the two terms. The episode remembered occurs first and the state of remembering it occurs later. Another obvious feature is the unidirectional character of the intentionality that produces the relation. An episodic memory is directed toward its associated object, but not vice versa.

A more elusive feature of this relation has to do with the mind's initial awareness of its object-term. The episode remembered must once have been present within the

awareness of the subject remembering it. This means that at some previous time that episode must have been presented within the subject's specious present. First comes its presentation within then-current awareness, followed by its presence in episodic memory. The episode's presence, in a manner of speaking, is transferred from immediate perceptual experience to the episodic memory of the subject involved. In some sense or another, this transfer must be implemented in parts of the subjects' brain given over to memory; but this is not our present concern.

A corollary of this particular feature is that the episode remembered by a given subject is directly present within the subject's episodic memory itself. Directly present initially within the perceptual awareness of the subject, it retains that immediate presence as current perception lapses into remembered past. The episode in question remains directly present in the sense that no further factor intervenes as memory takes over from perceptual awareness. The episode-to-be-remembered is directly present within the specious present playing host to its initial perception. It remains directly present as object of short-term memory immediately following that specious present. And it retains its direct presence as short-term memory becomes long-term. This is not to say that the mind remains actively aware of the object after its initial moment of presence fades, which seldom happens. The point rather is that when the object appears subsequently in the awareness of memory, no third factor has been added to the two-term relation. More will be said on this topic presently, when we set about comparing episodic with discursive memory.

A further feature of episodic memory is what might be called its "inherent inerrancy." More precisely put, this kind of memory cannot be evaluated in terms of

correctness or incorrectness. Beliefs can be true or false, guesses can be right or wrong, and impressions can be accurate or erroneous. But there is no such thing as an episodic memory that falls short of the mark. Only episodes that actually happen can be episodically remembered, which means that this kind of memory cannot go wrong.

One of course might *think* one remembers something, or might *claim* to remember something, that in fact did not happen, in which case the thought or claim would be erroneous. One might also use expressions like “As I remember, such-and-such happened,” or “My vague memory is that so-and-so.” But these are only ways of saying that one *seems* to remember, all the while realizing that the seeming memory would not be actual if the events said to be remembered had not actually taken place. The upshot is that episodic memory is limited to events that actually occurred, and that once were manifest within the subject’s perceptual awareness.

The limitation of episodic memory to events once experienced by the subject has ramifications for what it can contribute to an individual life-story. My own life-story includes the facts that my great-grandfather was a Presbyterian missionary in India, that my grandfather ran a dry goods store in Morrill, Nebraska, that my father and mother met in Morrill where she was a grade school teacher, and that I was born about a year before the market crash that triggered the Great Depression. I remember all these facts and consider them integral parts of my own life-story. Since I never experienced any of them personally, however, none are retained in my episodic memory. Another kind of memory must be at work to incorporate these facts into my personal life-story.

(3.2322) Discursive Memory and its Propositional Objects

This other kind will be referred to as discursive memory, for reasons soon to be apparent. Other memories of the same sort include those of my grandfather having been born in India, of his having attended college for a year in Davenport, Iowa, and of the dry goods store he built having been the first brick store in the small town of Morrill, Nebraska (population less than 1000). I first knew of these facts by having read about them in newspaper accounts and family records. Another bit of information, which came from conversations with family members, is that my grandfather lost his business because of a sluggish cash flow. It seems that he imprudently set up credit accounts for friends and neighbors that all too frequently were not paid off.

These memories of my grandfather were all acquired though the medium of language. I learned about his year in college by reading about it in a History of Western Nebraska found on the Internet. And my father was the source of detailed information about his father's lack of business acumen. Since my grandfather died less than a year after I was born, everything I remember about him was communicated in speech or in writing. Since speech and writing are both forms of discourse, this is one reason for characterizing memories of this sort as discursive.

Another reason has to do with the subsequent deployment of these memories. To see what this amounts to, compare my discursive memory of my grandfather having died in 1929 with the episodic memory I share with my wife of having eaten wild raspberries in Norway. Various sensuous images on my part are associated with that latter event, including the extraordinary size of the raspberries and their delicious taste. No such images are associated with my memories of my grandfather, insofar as those memories

are not based on direct experience. The point of the comparison is to highlight the vivid imagery I retain of the raspberry encounter.

A further point in this regard is that imagery nonetheless is not required for episodic memory. I have episodic memories from my college days in Grinnell, for example, with which no images are associated. Among them are memories of long runs along country roads, of late-night rehearsals of *Love's Labour's Lost* (I played Lord Biron), and of receiving honorable mention in a poetry contest judged by Robert Frost. All these memories derive from direct experience of the events involved, but no imagery survived with the memories. (I probably experienced a feeling of awe in meeting Robert Frost, but do not remember feeling it.) If images were essential to episodic memory, I would not be able to remember these events.

As already noted, discursive memory also occurs without involvement of imagery. More specifically, discursive memory contains no sensuous images like those of the large and succulent raspberries I encountered in Norway. There is another sort of mental imagery, however, that goes under the general name of "representation." Instead of pertaining to the senses, like the flavor of the raspberries, this second sort of imagery pertains to the intellect. And representations are essential to discursive memory.

In the case of my grandfather's death at age 64 (young for the family), I first learned of its date (April 9, 1929) from an obituary in a local paper. The printed words of the obituary served as a representation of that state of affairs (SOA). For a brief moment afterwards, I retained a mental image of the newspaper account. Like the original in print, this mental image served briefly as a representation of the SOA in question. Within moments, however, this explicit image faded, and the function of representation was

taken over by neuronal codes in my cerebral cortex. Details of how this happens are not well understood (a provisional account is offered in chapter 8 of *Belief and Knowledge*). That it happens, nonetheless, seems beyond reasonable doubt. Only if something like this is involved will my memory be directed specifically toward my grandfather's death, rather than toward other circumstances or toward nothing at all.

Other illustrations of the role representations play in discursive memory are provided by memories of my grandfather's store. I have a picture of the first brick store in Morrill, Nebraska, with an inscription so describing it and indicating my grandfather's ownership. Along with its label, the picture is a representation of the SOA of his owning the first brick store in town. But the picture came to my attention after I learned of his ownership, and accordingly was not essential as such to my remembering that fact. I first learned of that fact from my father, whose words set up the memory that persisted afterward. In the initial moments of memory, my father's words represented the SOA in question. A few moments later (before I saw the picture), the role of representing that SOA was taken over by relevant circuitry in my cerebral cortex. From that point forward, the SOA of my grandfather's having owned the store has been represented in terms of neuronal coding rather than of natural language.

Neuronal representation of some sort is essential for this kind of memory. Whatever the details, such representation is necessary to sustain a connection between the subject's state of memory and the circumstances remembered. The indispensable role of the representation is to connect the memory with the SOA that stands as its object. It is common among philosophers to refer to the neuronal coding system in which such representations are formulated as "the language of thought" (see Jerry Fodor's volume so

named). The key role played by this language in discursive memory is the second reason behind the descriptive title of the latter.

Let us summarize the intentional features of discursive memory. In a typical case, the mental state of discursive memory is connected to the object remembered by a cortical representation of that object. This connection is intentional rather than physical. The intentionality of the connection is provided by the representation itself, insofar as representations are intentional by nature. As a picture of my grandfather stands for (*represents*) that particular person, so representations generally stand for the things they represent. With respect to discursive memory, the neuronal representation in a given case stands for the SOA toward which the memory is directed. The role of the representation is to direct the memory toward its particular object.

Discursive memory, accordingly, is a relation involving three distinct terms. One is the subject's state of awareness, which we may refer to for short as the memory state. Another is the event or SOA remembered. And the third is the representation that directs the subject's awareness toward that particular SOA. This third is the mediating term that brings the other two together. Placing the mediating term in the middle, let us think of them as follows. Discursive memory consists of (1) a memory state that is directed by (2) the associated representation toward (3) the event or SOA remembered.

In its three-term structure, discursive memory differs substantially from the simpler two-term layout of episodic memory. Obviously enough, the intermediate term (2) prevents the object of memory (3) from being directly present to the subject's memory state (1). It is the direct presence of object to subject, we recall, that results in episodic memory's inerrancy. Since episodic memory cannot occur without an object,

there is no room for a genuine memory of that sort to go wrong. The involvement of intermediate representation (2), however, has consequences beyond precluding a direct presence of object to subject. In particular, the role of the intermediate representation is such as to make discursive memory susceptible to error.

Error occurs when an intermediate representation (2) directs the subject's attention to a SOA that in fact is not the case. A personal example has to do with the publication date of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*. For years I remembered the publication date as 1776, associating it mnemonically with the date of the Declaration of Independence. The memory of course was incorrect, but it was a memory nonetheless. All it takes to constitute a discursive memory is a subject and the right kind of representation, namely a representation directing the subject's attention to a past SOA. If the SOA actually took place, the memory is veridical. Otherwise it is erroneous. In my case regarding the date of Kant's *Critique*, the erroneous memory was eventually replaced by a correct memory of the work's being published in 1781.

Representations stand in for what they represent. And it is quite ordinary for representations to stand in for things that never exist. In the realm of art, there are pictures and statues of mythical creatures. In the realm of logic, there are designations of nonexistent objects (e.g., the phrase "positive integer less than one"). And in the realm of mental states, there are internal representations galore of SOA that never happened (as in wishing your team had won the championship) or that have not happened yet (as in hoping the sky will clear before sunset). Discursive memory belongs to this latter category. Integral to my false memory of Kant's *Critique* being written in 1776 was an

internal representation of a SOA that never took place. Although it stood for something that never existed, however, it was a representation of that thing nonetheless.

There are many mental states in which a representation of a nonexistent SOA can figure without the state in question counting as erroneous. Wishing your team had won the championship is a wish for something that did not happen, but it is not a false wish for that reason. While wishes may or may not be realised, they are neither true nor false. Similarly, preferring something that never occurs is not false preference, and dreading something that never happens is not false dread. With discursive memory, however, remembering something that never happened amounts to a false memory. At one time I erroneously remembered 1776 as the publication date of Kant's *Critique*. I later came to realize that this memory was false.

In contrast with 'wishing', 'preferring', and 'dreading', 'remembering' is what philosophers (following Gilbert Ryle in *The Concept of Mind*) call an "achievement verb." My memory that my grandfather died in 1929 provides a simple illustration. A condition of this memory's truth is that my grandfather in fact died during that year. My memory is directed toward the SOA of my grandfather having died in 1929. And the truth of the memory is conditional upon that SOA actually being the case. In claiming (to myself or others) that I remember my grandfather having died in 1929, my intent is to designate a SOA that actually occurred. And my intent is achieved only if that SOA in fact was the case. The relevant sense of 'achieve' here is not that my remembering that SOA achieves (results in) its being the case, which of course it does not. The point rather is that my intent in using the term 'remember' is achieved (realized) only if what I remember is an actual SOA.

Other achievement verbs include ‘recognizing’ and ‘realizing’. If I were to report having recognized one of my wife’s drawings in an exhibit, my intent would be to pickout that drawing as one she did. Achievement of that intent would depend upon its actually being the case that the drawing is hers. And if I were to admit having realized I had made a error, my intent in that admission would be achieved only if I in fact had committed the error. With verbs such as ‘wishing’ and ‘dreading’, by contrast, achievement does not figure among conditions of proper use. In wishing that your team had won the championship, tthere is no intent on your part to designate an actual SOA. To the contrary, your wish is directed toward a SOA that expressly is not the case. Since one does not dread something that has already happened, moreover, dreading the past onset of exam period would not involve directing one’s attention toward an existing SOA. In neither case is an intent involved that is conditional for its achievement on how things stand in the world. Accordingly, ‘wishing’ and ‘dreading’ are not achievement verbs.

It is interesting for our puposes to observe one way in which ‘remembering’ differs from ‘recognizing’ and ‘realizing’ as achievement verbs. In the case of recognizing my wife’s drawing in an art exhibit, recognition has the same quality of inerrancy noted previously in connection with episodic memory. If the drawing is not my wife’s I cannot recognize it as such in the first place. If recognition occurs at all, it cannot occur incorrectly. Similarly, one cannot realize an error that has not been made. In effect, there is no such thing as either false recognition or false realization. False discursive memory, on the other hand, is fairly common, as when I falsely remembered 1776 as the publication date of Kant’s *Critique*.

Let us attempt to circumscribe the conditions that makes false discursive memory possible. The structure of discursive memory includes (1) a subject's memory state, (2) a representation, and (3) a SOA toward which the subject's memory is directed by the representation. As may be recalled from previous discussion, a proposition comprises a representation of a SOA accompanied by an indication of whether that SOA is or is not the case. A proposition is true if the SOA it represents actually has the status indicated in the proposition; otherwise it is false. The intermediate representation involved in discursive memory is one factor that renders a given memory either true or false.

The other factor contributing to the truth-value of the memory is the orientation toward achievement implicated in the subject's intentional stance. In my memory that my grandfather died in 1929, two kinds of intention are involved. So far we have treated them separately, but now it is time to bring them together. One is the intentionality of my memory state that consists in its being directed toward its corresponding object. In its mediating role, representation directs my attention toward the SOA of my grandfather's death in 1929. Second is the intentionality of my intending (aiming) that my memory be directed toward an actual SOA. This second intention is achieved just in case the SOA toward which my memory is directed in fact exists. Described otherwise, this second intention is to affirm the existence of an actual SOA.

In upshot, my discursive memory (a) represents a particular SOA in a manner indicating that (b) the concerned SOA in fact is the case. The memory is true just in case the SOA has the status it is represented as having. My memory that my grandfather died on 1929 is true because in fact he died during that year. My memory that Kant's *Critique* was published in 1776 is false because in fact it was published at some other time.

Appropriately generalized, these observations explain how it is that discursive memory can be either true or false.

The proposition incorporated in a given discursive memory may be thought of as that memory's propositional object. And discursive memory itself might alternatively be referred to as propositional memory.

(3.2323) Empirical Studies of Memory

Other treatments of memory can be found in the literature of psychology and of cognitive science. One is that of so-called "autobiographical memory," which has attracted considerable research interest among contemporary psychologists. As a survey of the results indicates, the label 'autobiographical' refers to features of remembered content rather than to a third kind of memory on a par with episodic and discursive memory.

An interesting set of findings from this research has to do with perspectives from which autobiographical memories are addressed. On one hand is the "field perspective," which presents a remembered episode as it was originally experienced by the subject. A personal example is my memory of eating wild raspberries without being aware of myself as subject of the experience. On the other hand is the "observer perspective" in which one recalls oneself in the situation where the experience took place. In effect, one's personal presence in that situation is recalled along with the episodic content. An illustration is the memory I enjoy of my waiting reflectively in the Bergin airport a few days after the raspberry experience.

One finding involving this distinction between perspectives relates to the further distinction between short-term and long-term memory. Recent memories tend to be

recalled in the field perspective, whereas the observer perspective tends to take over as memory age increases. This makes intuitive sense in light of the fact that the distinction between field and observer perspectives applies only in the context of episodic memory. The finding can be restated as saying that the prominence of the observer perspective tends to increase as short-term yields to long-term memory. This finding is consonant with a separate finding in cognitive science to the effect that the two perspectives in question are associated with neuronal activity in different parts of the prefrontal cortex.

Another finding is that events with high emotional content are likely to be recalled in the observer perspective. Put otherwise, people tend to remember the occasion of their being subjected to emotionally charged experiences rather than reliving those experiences directly in the field perspective. Examples cited in the literature have to do with stress as well as with feelings like anguish and pain. In line with these examples, I find that memories of professional talks I have given are usually presented in the observer perspective. This is tantamount to recalling those performances from the viewpoint of the audience, instead of revisiting any stress I might have felt in giving the talks.

A further area of psychological research is often referred to as “narrative memory.” Like autobiographical memory, narrative memory is concerned primarily with patterns in the processing of memory contents. Having to do primarily with content rather than mode of presentation, neither autobiographical nor narrative memories are distinct genres themselves. Unlike autobiographical memories, however, narrative memories can be presented in either episodic or discursive form. In effect, the distinction between narrative and autobiographical memory comes into play only when episodic memory is involved.

Narrative memory is of particular interest, as we shall see, because of the role it plays in weaving the contents of episodic and discursive memory together. Narrative memory has been characterized (by J.A. Singer and P. Salovey in *The Remembered Self*) as an “affectively charged reconstruction of past events” that shapes our “understanding of past experiences” and amplifies the importance of current events that resemble events remembered from the past. One thing this characterization tells us is that narrative memory is not merely recollection of past events, but also involves reconstruction that serves various purposes. One purpose mentioned by the authors is that of enabling the subject to make sense of past experiences. Narrative memory serves this purpose by fitting past experiences into previously established patterns. Another means toward this end is relating past experiences to present experiences of similar nature. Both of these means involve a reworking of past experiences by narrative memory.

In effect, narrative memory relates past experiences to present experiences in patterns that make both easier to comprehend. A complementary characterization comes from the article on Memory in the online Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (updated 2010). The “internal plasticity of [human] memory,” this article suggests, clearly differentiates it from the “‘memories’ of current digital computers.” While it is important for computer memories to remain unaltered for extended periods of time, human memories “do not naturally sit still in cold storage.” In contrast with the retrieval of discrete stored symbols, as in computer memory, human memory is “the filling in of a pattern” on the basis of inputs distributed through time. Human memory is “constructive not reproductive.”

Narrative memory takes its name from the patterns into which past experiences are integrated to make them intelligible. While these patterns obviously vary from time to time and person to person, their overall structure is that of a story. In the words of J.A. Singer and P.S. Blagov (“The Integrative Function of Narrative Processing”), individuals compose an “evolving autobiographical narrative that links together past, present, and future aspects of the self, while providing a sense of purpose to thoughts and behaviors.” A major function of these narratives, the authors go on to say, is to impart a self-identity that enables us to understand and to articulate “who we are as individuals in a given epoch and society.”

Further details aside, empirical studies of narrative memory tell us first (1) that memory in this application is constructive rather than merely reproductive. In its merely reproductive mode, memory provides access to events once experienced in isolation. In a constructive mode, on the other hand, memory organizes past events into patterns that they may not have exhibited when first experienced. Among other effects, this plasticity of constructive memory accounts for well-known facts like different eyewitnesses giving different reports of events they had experienced jointly.

As far as the character of these patterns is concerned, empirical studies tell us further (2) that narrative memory organizes past events into the form of a story. As in a story, events in the subject’s life are recalled in sequences that relate them coherently to each other. Individual sequences are arranged in temporal order, often such that earlier events culminate in events that come later. Pieced together, these sequences exhibit a pattern of “beginning, middle, and end” overall, that make narrative memory a fitting vehicle for the life-story of the person involved.

Given this overall structure, we also learn (3) that the narrative memory of a given person is unique to the individual concerned. As the authors cited above point out, narrative memory imparts a self-identity that enables us to understand “who we are as individuals.” The uniqueness of the individual is the basis of memory’s contribution to that person’s self-identity. The individual person is the same as the subject endowed with the particular narrative memory in question.

With regard to the autobiographical aspects of such memory, we learn finally (4) that awareness of self-identity is accompanied by “a sense of purpose” permeating our thoughts and actions. The purposes in question can be either short-term (e.g., aiming to finish one’s yardwork before dinner) or long-term (e.g., planning for a career in medicine). Under auspicious circumstances, purposes of the latter sort can impart an overall meaning to the lives of people who entertain them. These empirical results are in accord with our preceding analyses of episodic and discursive memory.

(3.233) The Joining of Episodic and Discursive Memories

We return now to the question of how episodic and discursive memory are brought together in the course of formulating an individual’s life-story. To bring the question into focus, recall that episodic memories originate in the subject’s immediate experience. Even as they recede from their origin with the passage of time, these memories remain directly related to things and events once presented in the subject’s specious present.

Discursive memories, on the other hand, are representations of past events conveyed to the subject by communication with other people. Situations thus communicated were never experienced by the subject directly, but rather were disclosed

to the subject indirectly by means of language. Memories of these two basic sorts are acquired by quite different means, and are retained by the subject in quite different forms. It is not immediately clear how episodic memories and discursive memories can be integrated within the subject's self-awareness.

The question at hand, we should carefully note, is how episodic and discursive memories are joined in shaping a life-story, not how they are brought together in writing an autobiography. The answer in the case of an autobiography is easy. In writing an autobiography (or delivering autobiographical remarks orally, etc.), one describes events from one's past as one happens to remember them, without regard for type of memory involved. Episodic memories are expressed in discursive form, and discursive memories retain their discursive character. No matter the character of the memories initially, all are rendered in public language for other people to read (hear, etc.).

For reasons already examined, however, a life-story is not an autobiographical account. A brief review of relevant differences might be useful. As previously noted, an autobiography is presented in a public medium, usually in writing or perhaps electronically. A life-story, on the other hands, is presented privately within the subject's memory-augmented self-awareness. We have already noted the way in which narrative memory contributes to this awareness.

Along with this difference in medium goes a difference in manner of inception. An autobiography results from a deliberate project on the part of the author to make facts of his or her life accessible to other people. An autobiography, that is to say, is deliberately constructed artifact. A life-story, on the other hand, particularly in its early stages, arises instinctively without deliberation on the part of the subject. Only in its

middle and later stages does one contribute consciously to the development of one's personal life-story.

To these previously noted differences another should now be added. In contrast with autobiographies, which are discursive through and through, life-series involve both episodic and discursive memory. In the part of my life-story that involves raspberries in Norway, for example, an episodic memory (i) of my tasting the raspberries is joined to a discursive memory (ii) of that tasting taking place a short distance from the original site of Wittgenstein's hut. Our present task is to account for the combination of these two types of memory in the formulation of an individual life-story. What is the nature of the combination? How do the two types influence each other when combined? And what brings the combination about in the first place?

An account of their combination is needed because the two kinds of memory have different structures, making it initially unclear how they can fit together. Episodic memory is a two-term relation between (1) memory state and (2) object remembered. Both terms must be in place for an episodic memory to exist. There is no such thing as an episodic memory that misses its mark. Episodic memory, that is to say, is by nature veridical. For a memory of a particular episode to exist entails that the remembered episode once existed as well.

It is relevant to recall in this connection that episodic memories are not dated in chronological time. To remember the occurrence of a particular episode is not to remember the time of its occurrence. Remembering the time at which a given episode occurred requires the involvement of discursive memory. And discursive memory that a

certain episode occurred at a certain time obviously might turn out to be incorrect. The relevance of this observation will become evident presently.

In contrast with the two-term structure of episodic memory, discursive memory is a three-term relation connecting (1) memory state with (3) object remembered by way of an (2) intermediate representation. The intermediate term represents its purported object, whether or not that object actually exists. Actual existence of the object thus is not required for discursive memory to take place. If the object represented does not exist, the memory is nonveridical; but a nonveridical discursive memory is a genuine memory nonetheless. The contrasting structures of episodic and discursive memory have already been discussed in detail.

A further difference between them, not previously discussed, is that episodic memories can yield discursive memories, but not vice versa. The former is exemplified in the case of my raspberry-tasting experience. My initial memory of the experience (in moments immediately following) was entirely episodic. This episodic memory persisted for an indefinite period afterward. But after recalling that memory numerous times, I developed a discursive memory of the same experience. I came to remember not only that the experience had occurred, but also that it had occurred at a particular place and time. The episodic memory eventually subsided as the discursive version took over. But for a while the two memories coexisted.

The raspberry-tasting event took place within a few hundred yards of the original site of Wittgenstein's cottage. The cottage had been moved to Bergin a decade or so previously, so I never saw it in its original setting. A consequence was that I have no episodic memory of the cottage in this particular place. I have a discursive memory of its

once being located there, but this discursive memory cannot be converted into an episodic memory of that particular situation. Similarly, with reference to other examples previously discussed, my discursive memory of my grandfather attending college in Iowa cannot be converted into an episodic memory of that occurrence, nor can my discursive memory of his death in 1929 be converted into an episodic memory of that event. In general, although episodic memories can generate discursive memories, episodic memories cannot be generated by discursive memories in turn.

The general dynamics of the interaction between episodic and discursive memories can be understood in terms of their respective structures. Episodic memory is a relation between a memory state and its corresponding event or SOA. Insofar as no further factor intervenes between them, the SOA is directly present to the memory state involved. If for some reason a representation of the concerned SOA should be set up in the subject's cerebral cortex, the result would be a discursive memory with its typical three-term structure. One reason this might happen is the gain in durability provided by the three-term structure of discursive memory over its episodic counterpart. Another is the assistance this might provide in the generation of a personal life-story, of which discursive memories are a major component.

The respective structures of discursive and episodic memory also help explain why the former cannot convert into the latter. In discursive memory the intermediate representation links the memory state and its object together. If this link is removed, nothing remains to associate the resulting state of mind with the SOA that previously served as its object. In episodic memory proper, the association is set up by the direct presence of its episodic object to the memory state initially, a presence that continues as

that episode recedes in time. In a manner of speaking, the direct presence of episode to mental state continues as time moves forward. But the direct presence cannot be initiated subsequently and extended backwards in chronological time. The effect of eliminating the middle term of discursive memory would be to dismantle the memory itself. This at least is one reason why discursive memory cannot be converted into an episodic counterpart.

A personal life-story resides within the memory-augmented self-awareness of the individual involved, primarily within that person's discursive memory. Let us review the features of discursive memory that qualify it for that role. One is that discursive memory is relatively durable. Its durability is due in part to its three-term structure, keyed to the representations that endow it with propositional content. This enables a discursive memory to be reinforced by written records and by communication with other people. By virtue of this propositional content, moreover, discursive memories have logical force. They can entail, or exclude, or be consistent with each other. This lends stability to established memories in the face of disruptions from variable current experience.

Probably the most important feature of discursive memory, however, is its ability to provide coherence to a life-story developing through time. As previously noted, episodic memory is devoid of temporal reference. My immediate recall of tasting wild raspberries contains no indication of when that experience took place. Discursive means are required to locate such an episode in time. In the formulation of an individual life-story, the requisite means are provided by discursive memory itself. Discursive memory helps render a life-story coherent by ordering distinct episodes of the story in temporal sequence. In the case of developing life-stories, temporal sequence is necessary for

overall coherence. But inasmuch as sequencing can be random (as in a random sequence of numbers), temporal sequence is not sufficient by itself to render a life-story coherent.

Discursive memory by itself, that is to say, is not sufficient for that purpose. What is required in addition are the provisions of narrative memory in particular, as disclosed by the empirical studies discussed previously. Let us revisit the topic of narrative memory, with an eye toward how it shapes the contents of a person's discursive memory into a life-story unique to the individual concerned.

Narrative memory is an amalgam of discursive and episodic memory in which discursive memory dominates. Like other genres of narration, narrative memory is cast within a general format of beginning, middle, and end. In net effect, its formulation is similar to that of a work of nonfictional history. Early in the process of formulation, the historian selects certain facts to be included in the work and discards others. Arranging the chosen facts in narrative sequence comes at a subsequent stage of the process. As formulation of the work continues, of course, additional facts will be chosen to enhance the narration, and others will be eliminated to keep the sequence coherent.

In similar manner, formulation of a life-story in narrative memory involves distinguishing between items to be included and others to be excluded. These items will be drawn primarily from discursive memory, but episodic memories might be included as well. For the most part, these episodic memories will be relatively recent, and will tend to fade as they become more distant. As the process of formulation continues, memories included at a given stage will be gathered together in narrative sequence. The sequence adopted at a given stage will prevail as long as more recent memories can be

accommodated within it. When accommodation fails, the previous sequence will be adjusted. This adaptive process continues as long as the life-story remains current.

Both (i) the selection of memories to be included in a life-story, and (ii) the adaptation of narrative sequences to accommodate fresh memories, are examples of the constructive capacities of narrative memory noted previously. A substantial difference between these processes and those involved in the formulation of a historical account, of course, is that the latter are processes deliberately undertaken by a human author, whereas those involved in the formulation of an individual's life-story occur unconsciously within that person's prefrontal cortex. Although the physiology of these cortical processes is only partially understood, we know enough about their effects on narrative memory to understand their contribution to the life-stories of particular subjects.

The constructive dynamic of narrative memory gathers otherwise isolated memory sequences into a general format of beginning, middle, and end. This dynamic is unconscious, such that only its effects become evident in the subject's self-awareness. Once the narrative format has been established, however, conscious alterations occur as a matter of course. Some of these are reactive in character, as when one spontaneously relinquishes a memory of placing one's checkbook in a drawer upon finding it sitting on one's desk. But many others involve previously set purposes, as when one heads to the store to buy food for dinner. Purposes of this sort fit into the general format by way of providing ends for goal-directed behavior.

Viewed from this perspective, one's life takes on the aspect of a sequence of occasions on which available means are applied for the achievement of various ends. By and large, it seems, these ends are set by the needs of passing circumstances. One heads

for the grocery store because one needs food for dinner. One decides to put the trash out early because it is about to rain. Or one hastens to finish the job while it is still light enough to see. These are transitory goals that arise under transitory conditions, none of which contributes much to the meaning of one's life overall.

There are other goals in life, however, that affect the course of one's entire life-story. One might set out to become the richest person in history. Or one might set sights on the highest office in one's native country. Alternatively, one might resolve to spend one's life in serving others. Or one might dedicate one's life to solitude and prayer. Goals of this sort set the trajectory of one's life-story. Depending on the diligence and commitment with which one pursues them, they also can infuse one's life with meaning.

Such goals might spring from several sources. If one's goal is to amass a great deal of wealth, that goal probably is a result of social conditioning. But if one's goal is to spend one's life in serving others, that goal most likely has religious origins. This goal might be set in place by merging of one's life-story with an appropriate religious narrative. As part of the portrayal of a Christian narrative that follows, we shall explore the manner in which such a merger might come about.

(4) Religious Narrative

The overarching theme of this essay, once again, is that religious belief on the part of a given individual is the merging of that individual's life-story with a religious narrative. Religious belief is tied to participation in a religious community. The community provides the context in which the merger takes place, and the context as well in which the

consequences of the merger are played out. Because of this, an individual's religious belief is essentially bound up with other people.

A religious community is a group of coreligionists with common attitudes, convictions, and practices. Membership in such a community extends through time, including past members, present members, and members in the future. The community itself remains current as long as it has living members. And the religion represented by the community remains active, in turn, as long as there are active communities to give it witness.

In a typical case, the identity of a religious community is tied in with the religious narrative shared by its members. The narrative provides a storyline in the context of which the common attitudes, convictions, and practices of the membership can be commonly exercised. This storyline is more than a sequence of specific stories about specific characters and specific episodes in the community's religious tradition (e.g., the story of Abraham and Isaac, or of Christ's nativity). It is quite distinct as well from a chronology of specific events cited in the religion's sacred texts (e.g., the paternities of *Genesis*, or the exodus from Egypt). In one of its roles, more generally, a religious narrative is a master plan for participation in a religious community.

A religious narrative provides guidelines for individual members of the community to follow. There are guidelines regarding acceptable attitudes, regarding appropriate convictions, and regarding characteristic religious practices. Taken together, these guidelines add up to a recipe for a certain way of life. A religious narrative, in brief, delineates a way of life to be enacted by individuals participating in it.

This way of life is more than just a lifestyle, like that of a politician or celebrity, and more than a professional regimen, like that of a lawyer or accountant. To be sure, it resembles a professional regimen in dictating what one does with one's time, and resembles a lifestyle in governing how one does it. More importantly, however, this way of life incorporates the goals a person works toward as life progresses. The practice of medicine provides a useful analogy. Beyond his or her daily routine, a medical doctor might be motivated by the goal of making money, and choose a specialty with easy hours that commands high fees. Alternatively, he or she might be motivated by a desire to help people in need, and choose a practice in a rural community or inner city. Although both involve the practice of medicine, these ways of life are as different as night and day.

The way of life inculcated by a religious narrative incorporates ends and goals in a similar fashion. Like other religions, Christianity has goals of an otherworldly character. According to the Westminster Catechism, "the chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy him forever." But it has ends of an inherently mundane character as well. One is to live at peace with all men so far as humanly possible (*Romans* 12:18). Another is to love your neighbor as yourself (*Matthew* 22:39). More achievable during a mundane human life, perhaps, are normative goals keyed to Christian virtues. One should endeavor to shape one's life according to the virtues of prudence, temperance, and justice, for example. And one should seek to avoid the deadly vices of pride, greed, and envy.

In the discussion that follows, we shall explore the nature of the Christian narrative in much greater detail. And we shall look further at what merging one's individual life-story with this narrative amounts to. Our approach will be to pass back and forth between these topics, relying on elaborations of one to move our discussion of the

other forward. We begin with a more careful look than before at what it is for an individual's life-story to be merged with a religious narrative.

(4.1) Merging of Life-Story and Religious Narrative Revisited

It was observed previously that individuals can import ends and goals from religious narratives into their personal lives. This can happen without a person's life-story actually being merged with the religious narrative in question. A non-Christian, for instance, could be inspired by the Christian virtues of justice and charity to the point of adopting them into his or her own life. This is typical of the secular humanist in particular. In other respects, however, that person's life-story might remain untouched by Christianity. In other respects, that is to say, there is no connection between the Christian narrative and that person's life-story.

Generally speaking, two stories are merged when they are joined together. Stories could be joined together by juxtaposition, as the story of the Passover in the OT is juxtaposed with that of the flight from Egypt. They could also be joined by interspersing snippets from one within the other, as snippets of the interplay between God and Satan are interspersed within the longer story of Job's temptation. Clearly enough, however, the merging of a life-story with a religious narrative is a matter neither of juxtaposition nor of interspersing snippets.

A more promising characterization is that two stories are merged when the occurrence of an action (something done) or event (something happening) in one frequently becomes a factor in the other as well. Such an interaction can be illustrated by the merging of life-stories that typically accompanies a successful marriage. When my

wife spends a week in Europe at a conference, that event as it figures in her life-story has a counterpart in my life-story as well. The time involved is a period during which I have to cope with her absence and take care of her responsibilities around the house. When I invite a colleague home for dinner, on the other hand, this event will have repercussions for my wife as well as for myself. She might remember it as an occasion on which someone praised her excellent cooking, and hence as one to be relished at other times when cooking is a burden. The interaction in question is more than the affairs of one person affecting those of another. It rather is an interaction between the respective life-stories of the persons involved. It is a matter of a distinctive component of one life-story occurring in correspondence with a distinctive component of the other.

Turn now from the merging of individual life-stories to the merging of an individual life-story with a religious narrative. In some respects, the two forms of merger are similar. A person's life-story is merged with a religious narrative when events in one are capable of triggering corresponding events in the other. But there are substantial differences as well.

The primary difference is that only one of the two stories is inscribed within the self-awareness of an individual person. Only one is private, whereas the other is shared. The religious narrative is shared in that it can be discussed and recorded in common language. People can read about it and talk about it together. It is shared also in that an indefinite number of different people can relate to it in a similar manner. Many people can relate to a given religious narrative by merging it with their individual life-stories.

Since religious narratives are shared with others, whereas individual life-stories are essentially private, any interaction between them is an interaction between public and

private domains. From the perspective of the life-story, merger with a religious narrative is an extension of the private into the public. From that of the religious narrative, on the other hand, merger is an extension of the public into the private. In neither case is the extension a matter of what previously was private becoming public, or of what previously was public becoming private. Self-awareness itself remains private, and religious narrative itself remains common. The interaction between them, rather, is a matter of certain aspects of the life-story producing effects that are manifested publicly, and of certain aspects of the religious narrative producing effects that are manifested privately.

Among effects of the religious narrative upon the individual life-story is the transferal of religious ends and purposes to a vantage point from which they can influence the behavior of the individual concerned. A person might engage in almsgiving, for example, as a result of the religious virtue of charity becoming a motivating factor in the conduct of his or her personal life. Among effects of an individual life-story upon a religious narrative, on the other hand, might be some communal activity inspired by the individual's religious commitment. A simple example is attending a worship service with like-minded believers. In the particular case of the Christian narrative, there are stages in the developing narrative at which individual participation is especially relevant. This is discussed in detail later.

A further difference between merging individual life-stories and merging a life-story with a religious narrative has to do with an asymmetry in the latter. A religious narrative can have a major impact on an individual life-story, whereas impacts in the other direction tend to be less consequential. Exceptions occur when events in the lives of certain individuals give rise to observances and practices within religious communities

at large. An example is the series of apparitions of the Virgin Mary to St. Bernadette at Lourdes, now a destiny for Christian pilgrims from all parts of the world.

Yet another difference between the two types of merger has to do with reasons for merging in the first place. Although a merger of life-stories typically occurs when two people marry, for example, the merger itself will not be the reason for the union. So also with mergers of life-stories among parents and children, close friends, business partners, and so forth. In most such cases, the merger of life-stories would be an incidental byproduct of other arrangements, and might even go unnoticed by the parties involved.

When people join a religious community, on the other hand, the act of joining is deliberate, and the resulting merger of stories often is overtly acknowledged. It is not unusual for someone to join for some generic reason such as “participating in the life of the Church.” There are also people who join religious groups for explicitly personal reasons like “setting one’s life in order” or “becoming a better person.” However described, these are cases in which a person joins a religious community for the specific effect its narrative will have upon his or her personal life-story.

(4.2) The Christian Narrative

The foregoing remark that religious narratives can be recorded in public language requires qualification. If taken to suggest that narratives of the major world religions are readily available in written form, that remark would be incorrect. The Bible is not a written version of the Christian narrative, any more than the Koran is a written version of the narrative of Islam. The Bible is one source from which the Christian narrative is drawn. But it seems safe to say that the narrative in question has never been adequately

expressed in writing. The remark in question is correct in suggesting that the Christian narrative is based on material that is publicly available in writing, but wrong in suggesting that the narrative itself is easily available in written form.

There are reasons why this narrative is not available in written form. The main reason, perhaps, is that there is no such thing as *the* (one and only) Christian narrative. Whatever form a version of the narrative might take, moreover, it must be expressly formulated before any document is at hand to merit the title. And different people under different circumstances would formulate such a document in different ways.

For purposes of the present essay, it is obviously necessary to have a specifically formulated version of the Christian narrative at hand. The version that follows has been formulated in a way that other interested people hopefully may find acceptable. Whether or not a given reader finds it acceptable, he or she should understand that the version figuring in the following discussion is not intended to be *the* (one and only) Christian narrative. It is just the version that has been formulated for purposes of the present essay.

(4.21) The Narrative's Key Components

Like other narratives, the Christian narrative has a beginning, a middle, and a (projected) end. The beginning of this narrative (Component A) includes Adam's (humankind's) original sin, and subsequent attempts by the Jewish people to gain redemption under an agreement with God (the Old Covenant) based on the Ten Commandments. The middle stretch of the narrative (Component B) comprises humankind's redemption from Adam's sin by Christ's death on the cross and the groundwork Christ laid for the New Covenant. The final component (C) of the narrative consists of the inauguration of the New

Covenant with Christ's resurrection and the journey of individual Christians toward the projected end of eternal life.

The initial stage of the story is recounted in the first three chapters of *Genesis*. God created Adam out of dust and made a garden for him to live in. The Garden of Eden contained many fruit-bearing trees, including the Tree of Everlasting Life and the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. God forbade Adam to eat from the latter. Next God took a rib from Adam and created Eve as his helper. The serpent, another of God's creatures, tempted Eve to eat from the forbidden tree, saying it would make her like the gods in knowing good and evil. Eve ate the forbidden fruit and gave it to Adam to eat as well. Thereupon their eyes were opened and they knew that they were naked. When God discovered they had eaten from the forbidden tree, he meted out punishment to all parties concerned. The punishment of Adam and Eve included expulsion from the garden. To prevent them from reentering and eating from the Tree of Everlasting Life, God sealed off access to the garden with a guard of Seraphim. According to the Christian narrative, access was regained only with the death of Jesus Christ on the cross.

Component (A) of the narrative continues with the establishment of the Old Covenant. This covenant was a contract between God and Moses, a 24th generation descendent of Adam through Abraham and Jacob, drawn up after the Jews had been delivered from captivity in Egypt. Moses' commitment under the Old Covenant, undertaken in behalf of the Jewish people, was to obey God's commandments, in particular those delivered to him on Mount Sinai. In return, God promised to take the Israelites as his chosen people and to be an enemy to their enemies.

Between the time of Moses and the concluding records of the OT, the Israelites failed repeatedly to keep their part of the bargain. God reciprocated with various forms of punishment, often threatening his people with total annihilation. Despite an elaborate system of blood offerings to appease God's anger, the people persisted in their inability to do the Lord's bidding. By the end of the OT record, it was clear that the agreement of the Old Covenant was not adequate to redeem the people from Adam's sin. A new contract was needed to work mankind's salvation. To prepare for this new contract, the old arrangement had to be brought to an end. From the Christian perspective at least, the Old Covenant was brought to an end by the blood offering of Christ, God's only begotten Son. The New Covenant came into effect with his resurrection.

The featured event of Component (B) is Christ's death on the cross. Christ's death played a multifaceted role in God's plans for humankind. First and foremost, Christ's death absolved humanity from the blanket sin of Adam. In a manner of speaking, Christ's death reopened the gates of Paradise, providing renewed access to the Tree of Everlasting Life. For the individual human being, however, the fruits of this tree were not available automatically, but had to be earned by a journey along a difficult path. To provide assistance along this path, God entered into a New Covenant with his people, in which Christ's death again played an essential part.

Before the New Covenant could be established, as noted previously, the Old Covenant had to be brought to an end. In addition to reopening the gates of Eden, Christ's death also terminated God's interaction with humankind under the Old Covenant. Before the New Covenant could be established, moreover, the feasibility of its primary goal had to be demonstrated. The primary goal of the New Covenant was life after death for those

who persevere along the path. To show the feasibility of this goal, Christ himself arose from the grave. A third major role for Christ's death in God's plan, accordingly, was that of prelude to his resurrection.

The New Covenant is a context in which individual human beings can pursue a path enabling them to participate in eternal life. It is a context in which human individuals can participate in Christ's death as well. The means for doing this were provided by Christ on the occasion of his last meal with his disciples. To partake of the Lord's Supper is to participate in the Lord's death as a prelude to participating in his resurrection.

Component (C) of the Christian narrative begins with Christ's resurrection. During the 40 days between his resurrection and his ascension, Christ appeared several times to his committed followers, shoring up their confidence for the tasks ahead. One task was to provide leadership for communities of Jewish converts that already were beginning to form in his name. Another was to spread his message among the Gentiles, as well as among other Jews who had not known him personally. Particularly daunting was the persecution they could count on from unrepentant Jewish officials, who had remained enemies of Jesus through his final days.

For the most part, however, the final segment of the Christian narrative features the journey of countless individuals along the path defined by Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. Enabled by the New Covenant between God and his people, and supported by a community of fellow believers, each individual pursues this journey as a personal adventure. While outcomes of course vary, each outcome adds a new episode to the

overall narrative. This is why the Christian narrative is always in process, with only a projected and not an actual ending.

Interestingly enough, biblical portrayals of Christ's way come mainly from the letters of the Apostle Paul, who never knew Jesus in his human form. In *Romans* 10:9, for instance, we find Paul saying "if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, and believe with your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved" (*ean homologēsēs en tō stomati sou kurion 'Iēsoun kai pisteusēs en tē kardia sou hoti ho theos auton ēgeiren ek nekrōn, sōthēsē*). Emphasis on faith as the key to salvation comes in *Ephesians* 2:8, with the words: "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that is not your own doing, it is the gift of God" (*tē gar chariti este sesōsmenoi dia pisteōs kai touto ouk ex humōn, theou to dōron*). The importance of God's gift is emphasized again in *Romans* 6:23, where Paul says that whereas the wages of sin is death, "the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (*to de charisma tou theou zōē aiōnios en Christō 'Iēsou tō kuriō ēmōn*). Much the same conclusion, reworded, is found at *Romans* 12:5: "so we who are many are one body in Christ" (*houtōs hoi polloi hen sōma esmen en Christō*). As also affirmed by *Ephesians* 2:8, eternal life is a gift of God that is enabled by the gift of faith.

One of the few portrayals of Christ's way in the gospels proper is the well-known verse of *John* 3:16, where the apostle proclaims that "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him may not perish but have everlasting life" (*ēgapēsen ho theos ton kosmon, hōste ton huion ton monogenē edōken, hina pas ho pisteuōn eis auton mē apolētai all' echē zōēn aiōnion*). In purportedly his own words, moreover, we hear Jesus himself saying in *John* 14:6 "I am the way, the

truth, and the life” (*Egō eimi hē hodos kai hē alētheia kai hē zōē*). To follow the way is to believe in Christ and in his resurrection from the dead. In sum, salvation of the individual embarked on the way comes with faith in Jesus and in his resurrection.

We turn now to the exegetical task of interpreting Biblical passages underlying these three components.

(4.22) Component (A): The Garden of Eden Story and its Sequel

As thoughtful Christians often realize, there are hermeneutical problems with the Christian narrative when taken at face value. One has to do with the palpably nonliteral status of the Eden story, and with its effect on the part of the overall narrative dealing with Jesus’ life and death. In the narrative overall, Jesus’ death brings about redemption from Adam’s original sin. This means that the salvific burden of Jesus’ death rests on what happened in the Garden of Eden. For reasons touched on previously, however, the biblical account of Adam’s Fall quite clearly is a cultural myth. Taken at face value, the biblical account portrays events that never actually happened. The question then arises of how the agony of the crucifixion can be understood as a fitting and commensurate response to events that never happened. The question has an answer, but it must be pieced together carefully.

To characterize the OT account of Adam’s Fall as a cultural myth is not to say that the account is false. A myth in the relevant sense is neither true nor false. More to the point, to characterize the account of the Fall as a myth is to say that it lacks genuine historical status. Both works of history and cultural myths are accounts of things past, but only genuine works of history can be relied on as reports of events that actually occurred.

Let us review reasons previously discussed why the OT account of Adam's Fall is not a work of history.

Accounts of past events do not automatically become works of history when they are put in writing. To receive written accounts of past events as works of history, we must hold them to several basic requirements. One is that we must know the identity of their author or authors. Only if we know who the author was can we determine whether he or she was qualified (e.g., by circumstances of time and place) to speak authoritatively about the events in question. Scholars and other interested parties debate the authorship of *Genesis*, and the matter is likely to remain controversial. The traditional view attributes authorship to Moses around 1,300 BC, whereas recent scholarship tends to favor multiple authors several centuries later. Based on the approximate timeline provided in *Genesis*, Moses was born about 2,500 years after Adam and Eve (his birth is the topic of *Exodus*, chapter 2). So if Moses was the author, his sources must have been oral traditions that had been evolving for many centuries. And as already noted, oral traditions do not become history merely by being written down. To the contrary, oral traditions tend to vary in detail as time progresses. The consequence is that the author of the first three chapters of *Genesis*, whoever he may have been, was in no position to speak authoritatively about the events there recorded.

Another requirement is that the author of a historical work must identify his or her sources. Secondhand reports might count among legitimate sources as long as the author identifies them as such. But if sources are not identified, there is no way of knowing whether they are legitimate. Regardless of who committed the Eden account to writing, there is no indication in the text of the author's sources.

A further requirement is that the events recounted in a work of history must constitute genuine SOAs. What this amounts to has been discussed at length previously. In brief review, a SOA is an aspect of the world as it is or might be. SOAs are designated by linguistic descriptions that are commonly understood by people who have occasion to communicate about them. A SOA is genuine just in case most competent speakers of the language in which it is designated would be able to recognize as such the circumstances that constitute its actual occurrence. The upshot is that SOAs recorded in a work of history must be such that competent readers of that work agree in their understanding of what it is for those SOAs to be the case. That is to say, they must agree on what talk about those SOAs means.

There are numerous events in the Garden of Eden story, however, for which this requirement appears not to be met. What does it mean for a human being to be created out of dust? What does it mean for a tree to exist whose fruit imparts knowledge of good and evil? What does it mean for a serpent to persuade a woman to eat from the tree? And so forth for other episodes in the Garden of Eden story. We are familiar with these happenings from many readings and many hearings. But most of us, surely, when we are honest with ourselves, cannot claim to understand what they really mean.

We do not understand what they mean if taken literally. But accounts of this sort admit figurative meaning as well as literal meaning. If we set aside attempts to read the Garden of Eden story literally, and turn attention to its figurative meaning instead, it may well turn out that this figurative meaning of the account contributes all that is needed to render that account intelligible. Discerning this figurative meaning is a matter of interpretation, to which we now turn.

(4.221) Interpretation of the Garden of Eden Sequence

After the heavens and the earth were finished, God created Adam from the dust of the earth (*tēs gēs*, Septuagint 2:7). Then God planted a garden in Eden, containing every tree with fruit good to eat. In the middle of the garden were two special trees, the Tree of Life and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. God told Adam he could eat from all trees in the garden except the latter. If Adam eats from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, God warned, he will surely die.

Then God created the beasts of the field and the birds of the air, in hopes of finding a suitable helper (*boēthon kat' auton*, 2:18) for Adam. At God's behest, Adam gave lasting names to all the birds and beasts. God realized that none of the kinds yet created was suitable to be Adam's helper (*boēthos*, 2:20). So God took one of Adam's ribs and created a woman from it. Adam gave her the name 'woman' (Hebrew *'iš-šāh*, Greek *gunē*, 2:23). This name persisted until after they had eaten the fruit, when Adam changed her name to 'Eve' (Hebrew *Haw-wāh*, meaning living; hence *Zōē*, 'Life', at Septuagint 3:20). The name *Euan*, 'Eve', first appears in the Septuagint at 4:1.

The serpent was most subtle (*phronimōtatos*, 3:1) among beasts of the field. Addressing the woman, the serpent asked whether God actually prohibited their eating (plural *phagēte*, 3:1) from any tree in the garden. The woman responded that God had prohibited only their eating (plural *phagesthe*, 3:3) from the tree in the middle of the garden, adding that they would die (plural *apothanēte*, 3:3) if they even touched it (plural *hapsēsthe*, 3:3). The serpent then told the woman that they would not die, and that God knows that if they eat it their eyes will be opened and that, "knowing good and evil"

(*ginōskontes kalon kai ponēron*, 3:5), “they will be like God” (*esesthe hōs theoi*, 3:5). We should note that the serpent tells the woman something God had not told Adam, namely that eating from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil would elevate them to the status of gods.

The story proceeds apace from that point onward. The woman and her husband approached the tree together. She ate first, and then fed the fruit to her husband. When their eyes were open, they saw that they were naked, and promptly covered their nakedness with fig leaves. They heard God walking in the garden and hid from him. God called to Adam, asking where he was. Adam responded, telling God that he had hid because he was naked. God then asked whether Adam’s knowledge of his nakedness was due to his having eaten from the forbidden tree. Adam blamed the woman for giving him the fruit, and she defended herself by saying the serpent had deceived her.

God then dealt out their respective punishments. The serpent henceforth would slither on its belly, would eat dirt, and would be in enmity with the woman through successive generations. Her progeny will bruise its head, and its progeny will bruise their heel. The woman is further penalized in that she will endure greatly magnified pain in childbirth, and that although she will “turn back against [her] husband” (*pros ton andra sou hē apostrophē*, 3:16), he nonetheless will dominate (*kurieusei*, 3:16) her. Their union, that is to say, will be engulfed in conflict. Adam’s penalty, in turn, is that the earth will be multiply cursed (*epikataratos*, 3:17) because of him, and that he will eat from it with toil and pain until he returns to the earth from which he was taken. “For you are dust,” God said, “and to dust you will return” (*hoti gē ei kai eis gēn apeleusē*, 3:19).

After imposing these penalties, God made skin garments for Adam and his wife and expelled them from the garden. The expulsion is accompanied by a short speech by God that takes the form of an unfinished soliloquy. It begins as an explanation of why Adam is being expelled: “Behold, Adam has become like one of us in knowing good and evil” (*idou Adam gegonen hōs heis ex hēmōn tou ginōskein kalon kai ponēron*, 3:22). A point of interest here is use of the plural ‘us’ (*hēmōn*). (Is this the “royal we,” or is the speech addressed to other deities?) Of comparable interest is the fact that no further mention is made of Adam’s wife until she is ready to conceive Cain (4:1). In God’s soliloquy, it is Adam who ate the apple and Adam who must be expelled from the garden.

The remainder of God’s final speech on this occasion is even more intriguing. As if continuing his explanation of why Adam must be expelled, God considers the possibility: “lest ever [Adam] reach out his hand, and take and eat from the tree of life, and live forever...” (*mēpote ekteinē tēn cheira kai labē tou xulou tēs zōēs kai phagē kai zēsetai eis ton aiōna*, 3:22). This musing on God’s part drifts off unfinished. Perhaps the possibility of Adam living forever is more than God himself can entertain with equanimity.

The story of Adam’s Fall ends with his expulsion from the garden, and the posting of a guard of Seraphim to prevent his returning. By way of afterword, it might be added (courtesy of Liddell and Scott, 1883) that the Septuagint’s word for the Garden of Eden is *paradeisos*, from an Oriental word referring to the parks of Persian kings and nobles.

(4.2211) Centrality of the Tree to the Story

The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil was located at the center of the Garden of Eden (*Genesis* 2:9). It also is central to the Garden of Eden story. God's only command to Adam after placing him in the garden was that he must not eat from the "Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil" (*xulon tou [eidenai?] gnōston kalou kai ponērou*, 2:9). Eve's first and most active participation in the story was her being duped by the serpent into eating from that tree. And the two proto-humans were expelled from the garden because they had eaten the forbidden fruit. If there is one theme that binds the story together, it concerns the way humanity deals with the knowledge of good and evil.

The great conundrum here is why knowing good and evil is such a bad thing that God should command humankind to avoid it. To be sure, knowing good and evil would make Adam and Eve "like gods" (*hōs theoi*, 3:5). But being godlike (e.g., in benevolence) is not invariably a bad thing. Knowing the difference between good and evil, moreover, seems necessary for moral choice. If one does good without knowing it is good, or if one avoids evil without knowing it is evil, then what one does or avoids would be morally indifferent (i.e., amoral). In the interest of fostering moral behavior on the part of his people, it seems that God should have encouraged them to gain knowledge of good and evil instead of prohibiting it.

We need to read carefully between the lines to get past this conundrum. As far as textual matters are concerned, it is noteworthy that the word used for knowledge in the Septuagint is *gnōstos*, from the verb *gignōskō* (to distinguish or discern; see 2:9,17, 3:5,22). In the original Hebrew, the corresponding verb is *yada* (*had-da-'at*). The term *yada* occurs hundreds of times in the Hebrew OT, with over 30 occurrences in *Genesis*

alone. Although it is commonly translated ‘know’ in English, *yada* can convey a broad range of subtly diverse meanings. It can mean *to discern, to discriminate, and to distinguish*, and more specifically *to ascertain by seeing*. (This may account for the seemingly redundant *eidenai gnōston* at Septuagint 2:9.) It can also mean *to experience, to perceive, to recognize, and to be acquainted with*. A pair of central meanings is *to comprehend* and *to understand*. It can also mean *to acknowledge* and *to know about*, and occasionally *to know how*. A strikingly different set of meanings pertains to sexual intercourse (including man with woman, woman with man, and man with man). Let us refer to *yada* in this sense as the “carnal sense” of the term.

The first use of *yada* in the carnal sense occurs at 4:1, where Adam knew Eve and begat Cain. This comes only three verses after God’s reference to knowing good and evil at 3:22. The close proximity of these occurrences in the text suggests that it might be appropriate to read them with overlapping connotations. If so, the overlap would not involve carnality as such, since there is nothing physical about knowing good and evil. It more likely would have to do with *fruitfulness* or *making a difference*. Adam’s knowledge of Eve made “all the difference in the world” for the human race. This suggests that we should be looking for a sense in which Adam’s knowing good and evil would make a comparable difference.

Such a sense is close at hand. At 3:5, the serpent told the woman that knowing good and evil would make her and Adam like God. God confirmed this result at 3:22, observing that Adam had already become godlike in knowing good and evil. In comparison with his previous state as a creature made of dust, Adam’s becoming godlike amounted to an enormous difference in status. Setting the distinctly ungodlike feeling of

wounded pride aside as inapplicable, we ask what reason God might have had for commanding Adam to avoid steps that would result in his becoming godlike.

God knows (*ēdei*, 3:5) that someone who eats the forbidden fruit will know (*ginōskontes*, 3.5) good and evil as a result. God also knows, presumably, that anyone who recognizes good and evil, and who understands the difference between them, will want to put that knowledge to good use. Putting that knowledge to good use involves making practical decisions about good things to be done and bad things to be avoided. God already had assigned Adam responsibility for “working in the garden and watching over it” (*en tō paradeisō ergazesthai auton kai phulassein*, 2:15). Having come to know good and evil, Adam would want to take on new responsibilities. He would want to assume responsibility for deciding what is good and bad in the management of God’s new creation. For Adam to manage the garden according to his own assessment of what is good and bad is for him to promote himself to godlike status.

Before the Fall, humanity fit into God’s master plan for the management of Eden. Mankind would work the garden and exercise stewardship over it. After the Fall, mankind substituted its own plan for the management of God’s creation, based on its own perception of good and evil. The sad fact is that humankind’s assessment of good and evil is generally faulty, with the consequence that the world is poorly served by human management. Another consequence, it turns out, is that humankind’s management of the world tends to work contrary to human interests as well. As God might well have foreseen, the interests neither of the world nor of humanity itself would be well served under human management. According to the present interpretation, this is why God commanded Adam to avoid the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.

(4.2212) The Nature of Original Sin

God commanded Adam not to eat from the tree because knowing good and evil would lead him to meddle adversely in the management of the created world. Adam's act of eating the forbidden fruit provided the context for the onset of what has come to be known as "original sin." In *Romans* 5:12, St. Paul notes that "sin came into the world through one man" (*di' henos anthrōpou hē hamartia eis ton kosmon eisēlthen*), and goes on to name Adam as that man. A key question for present purposes is what was it about eating the fruit that constituted Adam's primal sin.

One possible answer is that Adam's act of eating the fruit itself constituted original sin. This answer must be ruled out from the beginning. Adam's sin was something that could be passed on to his descendants. In *Romans* 5:19, Paul observes that it was "by one man's disobedience [that] the many were made sinners" (*dia tēs parakoēs tou henos anthrōpou amartōloi katestathēsan hoi polloi*). The sin of Adam, this passage tells us, must be a misdeed in which his many descendants could participate. And the act of eating the fruit as such was confined to Adam and Eve themselves. The sin of Adam's descendants could not have been a matter simply of their eating the forbidden fruit.

Adam's eating the fruit, nonetheless, was the occasion on which his contagious sin was committed. Given that the sin was not Adam's act of eating the fruit itself, there must have been something about the occasion that made this act sinful. One possibility is indicated in *Romans* 5:19 above. God forbid Adam from eating the fruit, with the consequence that Adam's eating it was an act of disobedience (*parakoēs*). According to this option, the original sin was Adam's disobedience in eating the fruit.

A problem with this option comes with trying to understand how Adam's sin could be passed on to his descendents. For one thing, there is nothing in the story thus far about God issuing commands for Adam's descendents to obey. Adam had no descendents until after he had been ejected from the Garden of Eden. This leaves it unclear how Adam's disobedience as such could be passed on to his successors. Quite apart from relevant commands and who issues them, moreover, it is hard to imagine how Adam's successors could be guilty of disobedience before they were even born. Under this option, in short, it remains unclear how Adam's descendents could participate in his original transgression.

It is amply clear, to be sure, that certain *consequences* of Adam's sin (fall from grace, loss of eternal life) could be passed on through successive generations. What remains opaque is the meaning of *Romans* 5:19 in its apparent claim that Adam's many descendents could be made sinners themselves by the disobedience of a single man. To inherit the consequences of Adam's sin is not the same as participating in that sin as such.

The option currently under consideration, once again, is that Adam sinned in the act of disobeying God. Considerations above show that Adam's act of disobedience itself could not have been passed on to his descendents. One thing Adam presumably could have passed on to his descendents, however, is an inherent *tendency* toward disobedience. A modified version of the current option can be formulated that focuses on sinful tendency rather than sinful action. According to this modified version, God created Adam with an inherent tendency to disobey authority. This tendency was part of human nature, and hence shared by Adam's descendents as well. The temptation to which Adam was subjected in Eden was a test to see whether he could avoid acting on that tendency. Adam

failed the test by eating the forbidden fruit. Adam's sin, that is to say, was his failure to overcome that tendency. This sin was reenacted by Adam's descendants when in due course they likewise failed to overcome their inherited tendency toward disobedience. It is in this quite intelligible sense, the modified version holds, that Adam's sin was repeated by his descendants.

There are several passages in the OT that fit in well with this modified version. Speaking to Moses in *Exodus* 32:8-9, God pointed out that the people he had led out of Egypt had turned away from his command, and referred to them as a stiff-necked (Hebrew *qā-šēh- 'ō-rep*) people. Much the same message is conveyed at *Deuteronomy* 9:6-7 where God, speaking this time to the Israelites generally, observes that they have rebelled against him because they are a stiff-necked (*qā-šēh- 'ō-rep*, Septuagint *sklērotrachēlos*) people. Similar references to stiff-necked refusal to obey God's commands are found at *Exodus* 33:3, *Jeremiah* 17:23, and elsewhere. In line with the modified version of the option at hand, occasions like these of the Israelites resisting God's commands count as re-enactments of Adam's original sin.

A quite different understanding of Adam's sin focuses on human pride. The serpent seduced the woman by telling her that eating the forbidden fruit would make her and her husband like gods. Adam and Eve were expelled from the garden because God foresaw that their newly acquired knowledge of good and evil would lead them to assume responsibility for managing his newly created earth. When we ask why the first humans would want to become like gods, an obvious answer is that they were motivated by pride. Equally obvious is that pride must have been a factor in Adam's wanting to take charge of the earth out of which he had been created. The woman's pride was the source of her

disobedience, and God realized that Adam's pride would result in his attempt to dominate the earth.

According to this alternative understanding of original sin, in brief, an insurgent pride was part of human nature from the beginning. The availability to the first humans of a means to become godlike (eating the forbidden fruit) was a test of their ability to set pride aside, and to accept the humble state into which they had been created. Adam failed the test by taking advantage of those means to obtain godlike powers, which led to his expulsion from the Garden of Eden. The original sin was to embark on a course set by ambition and pride, eschewing the role he had been assigned in God's new creation. Adam's sin is reenacted on the part of his descendents whenever they too engage in acts of hubristic ambition and pride.

This understanding of original sin aligns nicely with the familiar maxim in *Proverbs* 16:18, namely "Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall" (*pro suntribēs hēgeitai hubris pro de ptōmatos kakophrosunē*). The condensed version "Pride goes before a fall" could be read as an adage applying to the happenings in the Garden of Eden. (This passage should not be read as a description of Adam's sin as a "fall"; there is no such description in the OT.) Essentially the same dictum is repeated at *Proverbs* 18:12, which advises that "Before destruction a man's heart is haughty" (*pro suntribēs hupsoutai kapdia andros*). The dire effects of pride and hubris are emphasized in *Proverbs* 16:5, with its warning "Everyone who is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord" (*akathartos para theō pas hupsēlokardios*).

God's disapproval of the proud of heart is directly stated in the NT passages *James* 4:6 and *I Peter* 5:5. Word-for-word identical, these passages read: "God opposes

the proud, but gives grace to the humble” (*Ho theos huperēphanois antitassetai, tapeinois de didōsin charin*). The same message is contained in Mary’s song of praise known as the Magnificat (*Luke 1:46-55*). This is the song that Mary, pregnant with Jesus, entoned in the presence of Elizabeth, pregnant with John the Baptist. Mary praises God who has “scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts” (*dieskorpisen huperēphanous dianoia kardias autōn, 1:51*) and who has “exalted the humble” (*hupsōsen tapeinous, 1:52*).

We are left with two viable interpretations of Adam’s original sin. According to the first, Adam sinned in yielding to his natural tendency toward disobedience. According to the second, his sin consisted in allowing his prideful nature to dominate his thoughts and behavior. These interpretations are viable insofar as both make sense of NT passages about Adam’s sin being passed on to his descendants.

As will be seen in due course, however, the first interpretation provides better insight into God’s interaction with his chosen people in the OT. The second, in turn, is more useful in understanding the interaction in the NT between God and the followers of Christ. Put otherwise, the first interpretation is a better guide to the interaction between God and the Israelites under the Old Covenant, whereas the second is a better guide to the interaction between God and Christ’s followers under the New Covenant.

Taken together, moreover, the two interpretations help elucidate the sense in which the Lord “in speaking of a new covenant ... has made the first one obsolete” (*en tō legein Kainēn pepalaiōken tēn prōtēn, Hebrews 8:13*). In preparation for a study of this transition, we need to look more carefully at the Old Covenant.

(4.222) The Old Covenant

In the context of the Christian narrative overall, Jesus' crucifixion redeemed humanity from Adam's original sin. This certainly was not the understanding of the scribes and Pharisees who plotted Jesus' execution. In the context of the OT, there is no connection between Jesus' death and the primal sin committed in the Garden of Eden. As far as I can tell, with the possible exception of *Psalms* 51:5, there is no mention of original sin in the entire OT. There are references here and there to Israel as a nation in need of salvation (e.g., *Jeremiah* 23:6, *Amos* 9:11), along with mention of one or another "messiah" (Hebrew *māšîḥ*, anointed one) sent by God to save Israel (e.g., *2 Samuel* 23:1, *Isaiah* 43:1, *Psalms* 20:6). But in the eyes of the scribes and Pharisees, Jesus emphatically did not rank among these messiahs. For them, Jesus was little more than an upstart rabbi who was justly executed for healing on the Sabbath.

From an OT perspective, the events in Jesus' earthly life took place under the covenant established between God and the people of Israel at Mount Sinai. This covenant was negotiated with Moses as intermediary (*Exodus* 19:3-5), and ratified at Moses' command by burnt offerings and a sacrifice of oxen (*Exodus* 24:5). The covenant constituted an agreement on the part of the people to keep the Ten Commandments dictated to Moses by God on the Mount (*Exodus* 34:27-28). Acceptance of the agreement by the people was signified by their words "All that the Lord has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient" (*panta hosa elalēsen kurios poiēsomen kai akousometha, Exodus* 24:7). The intent of the agreement, as Moses tells the people in *Deuteronomy* 29:13, is that by it God "may establish you as his people" (*hina stēsē se autō eis laon*) and that he "may be your God" (*autos estai sou theos*).

Various other covenants with God are cited elsewhere in the OT. Some are agreements between God and individual people that extend explicitly to their descendents. Examples include the covenant with Abram at *Genesis* 15:18 and that with Phinehas at *Numbers* 25:11-13. Others, made also with specific individuals, have a more general coverage. The covenant with Noah at *Genesis* 9:11-12, for instance, covers “every living creature ... for all future generations” (*pasēs psuchēs zōsēs ... eis geneas aiōnious*). And King Josiah, at *2 Kings* 23:3, made a covenant with the Lord that was joined by “all the people” (*pas ho laos*). The predominant covenant in the OT, nonetheless, is the one mediated by Moses at Sinai between God and the Israelites. This is the Old Covenant that remained in force until the end of Jesus’ earthly life.

Paramount among God’s injunctions under the Old Covenant were the Ten Commandments. The stone tablets containing these commandments were placed in an ark, built according to God’s detailed instructions (*Exodus* 25:10-22), which accordingly was designated “the ark of the covenant” (*tēn kibōton tēs diathēkēs*, *Joshua* 3:6). An alternative designation was “ark of testimony” (*tēs kibōtou tou marturiou*, *Exodus* 25:22), signifying the people’s express agreement to obey the Lord. The ark not only symbolized the Israelites’ agreement with God, but also served to their military advantage. It supposedly was instrumental in stopping the flow of the river Jordan on Joshua’s march to Jericho (*Joshua* 4:15-18). And when Joshua’s army carried the ark for seven days around the city walls, a great shout from the army was enough to bring the walls tumbling down (*Joshua* 6:4-5, 20). After the walls had fallen, Joshua’s army killed every living thing in the city, men, women, and children included (*Joshua* 6:21). The only

people spared were the prostitute Rahab and her family, due to her having sheltered some spies sent earlier to scout out the city; *Joshua* 6:25).

(4.2221) Violence under the Old Covenant

As the OT makes abundantly clear, the Israelites were a warlike people. Among dozens of violent episodes in the OT, like that in *Joshua* cited above, there are several in the book of *Numbers* that illustrate the Israelites' readiness to kill other people. Allegedly with God's help, Israel destroyed the Canaanites and their cities (21:1-3). Again with God's help, the Israelites did battle with the Amorites, destroying King Og and all his people until none survived (21:33-35). Even more ruthless was Moses' revenge on the Midianites recorded in *Numbers* 31:1-18. At the commandment of the Lord, the Israelites killed every male of Midian and took all woman and children captive. After the battle, Moses was angry that the women had been spared. He then ordered his men to kill all male children and all women who were no longer virgin. As a gesture of magnanimity, Moses allowed his soldiers to keep the virgins alive for themselves (31:18).

Even more appalling from a NT perspective is the extent to which Israel's God is given to violence himself. Some of the most familiar episodes in the OT involve violence inflicted by God on Israel's enemies. Best known, perhaps, is what occurred on the occasion of the Passover as recounted in *Exodus* chapter 12. During the night after the captive Israelites had sprinkled sacrificial blood on their lintels, the Lord passed through to kill all firstborn of the Egyptians, offspring of both man and beast included. By morning there was not a house in which none had perished (12:30), except of course the houses with blood on their lintels.

Then in *Exodus* 14:21-29, we read of God enabling Moses to part the Red Sea. After the escaping Israelites had passed through, the wall of water closed again upon the following Egyptian army. The returning waters engulfed the Egyptian chariots and horsemen, with the result that neither man nor beast survived (14:28). At a later stage in the Israelites' flight from Egypt, Moses tells his people that he is too old to accompany them further, but that the Lord God himself will go before them and will destroy the nations that stand in their way (*Deuteronomy* 31:3). A case in point is God's destruction of the Anakim when the Israelites crossed the river Jordan (*Deuteronomy* 9:1-3). In the process of delivering Israel to the "promised land," God apparently killed hundreds of thousands of people.

No less dismaying from a NT perspective are the numerous occasions when God inflicts untimely death on his people themselves. The first instance recorded in the OT is the great flood of *Genesis* books 6 and 7. Although the outcome was favorable for Noah and other occupants of the ark, all other living things were wiped from the face of the earth. As specified in *Genesis* 7:21, this included birds, livestock, beasts, insects, and "all humankind" (*pas anthrōpos*). Later in *Genesis* comes the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. While Lot and his daughters were spared by the intervention of two guardian angels, the Lord rained down fire and brimstone that destroyed the cities and all their inhabitants (19:25).

This pattern of violence against his people continued after the enactment of their covenant with God at Mount Sinai. Along with 250 other prominent priests, Korah publicly challenged the authority under the covenant of Moses and Aaron (*Numbers* 16:1-14). Appearing in his glory before the entire congregation (16:19), the Lord spoke

through Moses instructing the people to depart from the dissidents. The Lord then caused the earth to open up under Korah and his 250 associates, destroying them by fire while still underground (16:31-35). On the next day, when the congregation complained about the fate of the dissidents, the Lord again appeared in glory (16:42) and brought a plague upon the people. By the time the plague was over, an additional 14,700 people had died (16:49).

There are several occasions as well when God threatens his people with death in order to frighten them into obedience. In *Leviticus*, chapter 26, after reminding the Israelites that he is the Lord God who brought them out of Egypt (26:13), he warns them that if they fail to keep his commandments (26:14), he will loose wild beasts upon them and rob them of their children (26:22). If they break their covenant with him (26:15), he will avenge the breach by delivering them into the hands of their enemy (26:25). If that doesn't work, he will lay their cities waste and make them eat the flesh of their sons and daughters (26:29-31). Other references to cannibalism imposed by the Lord appear in *Jeremiah* 19:9 and *Zechariah* 11:9.

A threat directly relevant to the case of Jesus centuries later is issued at *Jeremiah* 17:27. If Judah ignores the Lord and fails to keep the Sabbath holy, he will devour the temple of Jerusalem with unquenchable fire. Jeremiah conveys a similar threat to the people of Topheth in *Jeremiah*, chapters 19 and 20. Because this stiff-necked people have refused to hear his words (19:15), God will deliver them to the Babylonians to be slain by the sword (20:4). In addition to several other threats of violence against Judah issued in *Jeremiah*, the book of *Zephaniah* conveys the Lord's blanket threat to wipe man and

beast from the face of the earth (1:2-3), followed by an even more dire warning that the earth itself will be destroyed by the fire of the Lord's jealousy (3:8).

Despite repeated threats of divine retribution, the Israelites persisted in their disobedience of God's commandments. Expressing frustration through the prophet Jeremiah, God complains that the people of Judah have all transgressed against him, and that he has struck down their children in vain (*Jeremiah 2:29-30*). Speaking in the Lord's behalf, Jeremiah repeats this complaint in verse 5:3. "You have struck them" (*emastigōsas autous*), he says to the Lord, but they felt no anguish; you have consumed them, but "they have refused to repent" (*ouk ēthelēsan epistraphēnai*). The people of Israel have a stubborn and rebellious heart, which has turned them away from fear of the Lord (*Jeremiah 5:23-24*). "Cursed be the man," the Lord says, "who does not heed the words of the covenant made with their fathers when they were brought out of the land of Egypt" (*epikataratos ho anthrōpos hos ouk akousetai tōn logōn tēs diathēkēs tautēs hēs eneteilamēn tois patrasin humōn en hēmera hē anēgagon autous ek gēs Aiguptou*, 11:3-4). Hear my voice, says the Lord, and do all I command you, so that again "you shall be my people, and I will be your God" (*esesthe moi eis laon kai egō esomai humin eis theon*, 11:4). The Lord continues, nonetheless, by saying that for those of Israel and Judah who have broken his covenant, he will bring "disaster on these people that they cannot escape" (*epi ton laon touton kaka ex hōn ou dunēsontai exelthein ex autōn*, 11:11).

(4.2222) Blood Sacrifice

After safely crossing the Red Sea, Moses and his people sang a song praising God, referring to him as "a man of war" (Hebrew *ʾiš mil-hā-māh*, *Exodus 15:3*). The same

expression is used to describe God at *Isaiah* 42:13. And in *Psalms* 24:8, the King of Glory is described as “strong ... and mighty in battle” (*‘iz-zūz ... gib-bō-wr mil-hā-māh*). The Lord God with whom the Israelites will soon enter into covenant is a mighty warrior, ready to inflict violence on those who resist his commands.

Violence also marks the sacrifices offered by the Israelites to their warrior God. Although some offerings consisted of fruit and grain (*Genesis* 4:3, *Leviticus* 2:12-16), most called for the slaughter of specially prepared animals. The first (unburnt) flesh offering mentioned in the OT was that of Abel, the keeper of sheep (*Genesis* 4:2-4), which the Lord preferred to the fruit offering of the ground-tiller Cain (4:5). This snub from the Lord made Cain angry (4:6), so he took Abel out into the field and killed him (4:8). The first recorded offering of burnt flesh was that made by Noah immediately after disembarking from the ark. As part of his instructions for lading the ark, God had told Noah to include seven pairs of clean animals (*hab-bā-hê-māh hat-tā-hō-w-rāh*, *Genesis* 7:2). When God smelled the pleasing aroma produced by burning these animals, he vowed never to destroy the living population of the land again (*Genesis* 8:21).

Probably the best-known sacrifice in the OT is that associated with the previously mentioned Passover. A detailed description of this sacrifice is given in *Exodus* 12:3-13. Speaking for the Lord, Moses and Aaron conveyed instructions for the sacrifice to the entire congregation of Israel (over one million people, according to *Exodus* 12:37). Every man shall secure a lamb for his household, joining with his nearest neighbor if his household is too small. The lamb must be an unblemished one-year old male, either sheep or goat. All sacrificial lambs are to be killed at sundown of the 14th day of the then current month. Immediately after the killing, blood from the victim is to be spread on the

door of the house. Then the flesh shall be roasted (not boiled, 12:9) and eaten in haste (12:11), along with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. It is to be eaten with fastened belt, sandals on feet, and staff in hand. Any flesh that remains uneaten shall be burned before daybreak. During that night, the Israelites are told, the Lord will strike down the firstborn of all Egyptian households, but will pass over houses with blood on the door, leaving their occupants unharmed. This blow to the Egyptians persuaded Pharaoh to release the Israelites after 430 years of captivity (12:40).

After the escape from Egypt and the enactment of the covenant at Sinai, the Lord provided Moses with general instructions for conducting sacrifices. Burnt offerings of unblemished male animals (sheep, goats, and bullocks) begin with the penitent (person making the offering) killing the animal at the entrance to the tabernacle. The priest then drains the blood, throws it against the sides of the altar, and cuts the carcass into pieces. After washing the legs and entrails in water, the priest burns the entire remains in a fire he has built on the altar. The result, the Lord says, is an aroma he will find pleasing (*Leviticus* 1:9,13). When a bird is offered in sacrifice, the priest wrings off its head and drains its blood on the side of the altar. After casting the crop aside, he rips the wings apart, without severing them completely, and burns the mutilated body on the altar. The result again is an aroma the Lord will find pleasing (1:17). If grain offerings are properly prepared and burnt (according to instructions in 2:1-11), they too will produce a pleasing odor to the Lord (2:2,9). There are numerous other references in *Leviticus* (3:16, 4:31, 8:21, 17:6, et al.) to the pleasure God gets from smelling the sacrifices offered to him. Although this may be a figurative way of expressing God's satisfaction with the sacrifice,

the sacrificial practices that God finds satisfying amount to what many cultures today would consider unabashed cruelty to animals.

Details of sacrificial practices vary with the purpose served by the offering. So-called “peace offerings” serve to praise God for his goodness or to thank him for help in hour of need. Animals sacrificed in peace offerings might be either male or female (3:6), and the burnt parts must be eaten either on the day of the sacrifice or on the day following (7:15-16). Sin offerings for unintentional transgressions vary with social role. In the case of a priest, the sacrificial animal must be a bull, some of its blood must be smeared on the horns of the altar, and its kidneys and liver must be burned on the altar along with its fat (4:3-10). Other part of the slaughtered animal (skin, legs, head, entrails, etc.), however, must be burned on an ash heap outside the encampment (4:11-12). A bull also must be sacrificed to atone for an unintentional but acknowledged sin of the people generally (4:13-14). Apart from a more complicated ritual dealing with the blood (sprinkling it seven times before the veil of the Lord, 4:17), sacrifices for the people at large follow the same general pattern as those for individual priests (4:21).

For unintentional sins of individuals other than priests, the sacrificial format is similar to that of peace offerings (4:26). The main difference has to do with type of animal to be sacrificed. For leaders of the people, the animal specified is a male goat without blemish (4:23). For ordinary people, a female goat or a female lamb without blemish is the specified victim (4:28,32). A female victim is also required for guilt offerings (5:6). Guilt offerings serve to expiate a miscellany of transgressions, like touching an unclean carcass or swearing a rash oath (5:2-4). If the person involved cannot afford an animal, a pair of turtledoves or pigeons might serve as well (5:7). In this case,

the priest shall wring the bird's head from its neck without severing it completely (5:8). If birds also are too expensive, the person shall bring two liters of fine flour, without oil or frankincense, and the priest will know what to do with it.

(4.2223) Christ's Death as Culmination of the Old Covenant

Although the sacrificial directives in *Leviticus* probably reached written form around the end of the 6th century, the directives themselves had been evolving since the time of Moses. Sacrifices of atonement became increasingly complicated, and rules regarding punishable offenses became increasingly legalistic. By a century or two before Christ, the sacrificial system of the Jews had become so arcane that specially trained experts were needed to keep it running. These experts, of course, were the scribes and Pharisees, the legalists who conspired to have Jesus put to death for profaning the Sabbath.

It is instructive to review the circumstances of Jesus' death from the perspective of the scribes and Pharisees. Although Christians generally think of Jesus as the Messiah foretold in ancient texts, from the standpoint of Jewish theology this identification of Jesus as the Messiah of the OT is deeply problematic. One problem is that the Jewish Messiah was expected to be a powerful military and political leader. In that role, he would redeem the Jewish people and bring them back to the promised land of Canaan (*Genesis* 12:5-7). This is predicted in *Jeremiah* 30:3, along with other OT passages. In the process of restoring Canaan, the Messiah would establish a world government with authority over Jewish and non-Jewish people alike (*Isaiah* 42:1-6).

Not only would the Messiah bring Jerusalem into political prominence, he also would establish Judaism as a dominant religion. He would rebuild the temple (*Amos*

9:11), and enforce Jewish law throughout the land (*Jeremiah* 33:15). The Messiah anticipated by the Jews, in brief, was one who would establish Jewish hegemony both politically and religiously. In the eyes of the scribes and Pharisees, the Jesus who would enter Jerusalem on a donkey (*Mark* 11:7-11, *John* 12:14) clearly was not the leader they were waiting for. Viewed in the context of ancient Jewish law, Jesus was little more than a renegade rabbi who profaned the Sabbath, a sin calling for death as punishment (*Exodus* 31:14, *Numbers* 5:32-35). From the perspective of the scribes and Pharisees, in short, Jesus' death was just punishment for the egregious crime of healing people on the Jewish day of rest.

Within the context of the OT, moreover, there is no particular connection between Jesus' death and the misdeeds committed in the Garden of Eden. Beyond their shared humanity, Jesus bears no significant relation to Adam, and his death has no bearing on Adam's original sin. There may indeed be some vaguely intimated connection between the agonistic relation of God to his people under the Old Covenant and the reading of the Garden of Eden story that identifies Adam's sin as one of disobedience. The OT God gives orders that the stiff-necked Israelites often disobey, and they are harshly punished for their willful unruliness. It is in line with this pattern of disobedience, to be sure, that Jesus willfully disregards God's commandment to rest on the Sabbath, and is harshly punished for that transgression. In the context of the Old Covenant, however, Jesus' death is his own misfortune, and in no respect good fortune for the rest of humanity.

In sharp contrast with the symbolic distance between Adam and Jesus under the Old Covenant, the New Covenant is premised on a fundamental connection between Adam's original sin and Jesus' agonizing death of the cross. The essential connection is

that Jesus' death serves as expiation for the sin committed in the Garden of Eden. From the perspective of the New Covenant, original sin is the endemic human pride that prompted Adam and Eve to eat the fruit that would make them godlike. Under the dispensation of the New Covenant, this sin of this prideful aspiration is countered by the paradigmatically humble death of Christ on the cross.

By way of transition from the Old to the New Covenant, moreover, Jesus' death comes to be viewed as a perfect sacrifice in an established OT format. In the OT practice of blood sacrifice, sins are expiated by the ritual killing of unblemished victims at the altar. From the perspective of the New Covenant, the expiation of Adam's sin is accomplished by the sacrifice of an "unblemished and spotless lamb" (*amnou amōmou kai aspilou*, 1 Peter 1:19) on an altar in the shape of a cross. The author of *Hebrews* may have had something like this in mind when he wrote: "We [Christians] have an altar from which those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat" (*echomen thusiastērion ex hou phagein ouk echousin exousian hoi tē skēnē latreuontes*, 13:10). Just as the bodies of victims yielding "blood in sin offerings" (*to haima peri hamartias*, 13:11) are burnt outside the camp (*exō tēs parembolēs*, 13:11), the author goes on to say, so Jesus suffered outside the gate (*exō tēs pulēs*, 13:12) in order to expiate the sins of the people "through his own blood" (*tou idiou haimatos*, 13:12).

From the perspective of the New Covenant, Jesus' death expiates Adam's original sin. And Jesus' death obviously is a major feature of the Christian narrative overall. As noted previously, this poses a problem of coherence for the Christian narrative itself. The story of Adam's initial sin in *Genesis* is a cultural myth, which means that the events it recounts lack historical status. Jesus' death on the cross, on the other hand, is a brute fact

of history. The problem is that of understanding how the salvific import of Jesus's death can depend on events that never happened. We are now in a position to deal with that problem directly.

The solution comes with bringing together the respective views of the Old and the New Covenants regarding circumstances pertaining to Jesus' death. Following the lead of Moses at Mount Sinai, the Old Covenant provided various formats for conducting blood sacrifices for the expiation of sins. By bringing an appropriate format of this sort to bear, early Christians of the NT were able to relate Jesus' death to the sacrificial practices of the ancient Hebrews. The contribution of the Old Covenant to the solution was to provide a sacrificial format within which an occasion of capital punishment (as perceived by the scribes and Pharisees) can be transformed into an occasion of redemptive sacrifice.

Within the context of the NT, the sacrifice of Jesus as a lamb without blemish came to serve as expiation of Adam's sin in the Garden of Eden. Thus we read in *Romans* 5:19 that as "the many were made sinners by one man's [Adam's, 5:14] disobedience" (*dia tēs parakoēs tou henos anthrōpou hamartōloi katestathēsan hoi polloi*), so "by one man's [Christ's, 5:15] obedience shall the many be made righteous" (*dia tēs hupakoēs tou henos dikaiōi katastathēsontai hoi polloi*). And in *1 Corinthians* 15:21 we read, to the same effect, that as "by a man came death" (*epeidē ... di' anthrōpou thanatos*), so also "by a man came resurrection of the dead" (*[epeidē] di' anthrōpou anastasis nekrōn*). *1 Corinthians* 15:45 adds that, as written (in *Genesis* 2:7), "The first man Adam became a living soul" (*Egeneto ho prōtos anthrōpos 'Adam eis psuchēn zōsan*); and "the last Adam became a life-giving spirit" (*[egeneto] ho eschatos 'Adam eis pneuma zōpoioun*).

The connection between the original sin of the first Adam and its redemption by the last Adam's horrific death on the cross is a defining mark of the Christian narrative. But as emphasized time and again, the Christian narrative is not a historical account. It includes events that count as historical facts, to be sure, such as the birth and death of Christ and his hostile encounters with the scribes and Pharisees. Yet it includes events as well that obviously lack historical status, such as Adam's eating from the forbidden tree and Christ's temptation by the Devil on the pinnacle of the temple. The fact that such events are not historical, however, does not disturb the key roles they play in the narrative. For the Christian narrative itself is not a work of history, which makes the historical status of events within it a matter of no special importance.

In the storyline of the Christian narrative, to say it again, Christ's death provided expiation for Adam's sin of eating from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Whether or not a person actually named Adam ate from an actual tree in an actual garden does not bear on the role played by that event in the Christian story. The problem raised above is how the salvific burden of Jesus' crucifixion can depend on events that never happened. Its solution is that the problem itself stems from a misunderstanding of the narrative in which the relevant events occur. Since the Christian narrative is not a work of history, its storyline is not affected by the historical status of events recounted within it.

In the context of the Christian narrative overall, the Old Covenant comes to an end with the death of Jesus on the cross. The sacrifice of Jesus on the cross redeems humankind from the prideful sin of Adam in the Garden of Eden. The New Covenant then begins with the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. This new contract with the Lord is based on love instead of obedience, and provides a path whereby individual

Christians might gain eternal life. We turn next to the second major component of the Christian narrative, dealing with the life of Christ and its role in the preparation of the New Covenant.

(4.23) Component (B): Christ's Life as Preparation for the New Covenant

As proclaimed by the Council of Chalcedon (451 AD), Christ is fully God and fully man. Scriptural backing is available for both natures. In *John* 10:30, Jesus provokes attempts to stone him with the words "I and the Father are one" (*egō kai ho patēr hen esmen*). The sense of "fully" God is added in *Colossians* 2:9, with the affirmation that in Christ "the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily" (*katoikei pan to plērōma tēs theotētos sōmatikōs*). The sense of his being "fully man," in turn, is made explicit at *Hebrews* 2:17, which says that Christ "had to be made like his brothers in every respect" (*ōpheilen kata panta tois adelphois homoiōthēnai*).

Although the Christ of the NT is fully God, there presumably are many things he does in which his divine nature is not directly involved. Examples are eating and drinking, trimming his beard, and removing his sandals after a long day on the road. And although Christ is fully man, he occasionally does things without his human nature being directly involved. There are various cases, for example, in which he performs miracles "from a distance," meaning that his human body was not a contributing factor. One such is described in *John* 4:46-53. A royal official approaches and asks Jesus to heal his dying son. Jesus said to the official "Go, your son will live" (*Poreuou, ho huios sou zē*, 4:50). Upon returning home the next day, the official was met by his servants who told him that his son had begun to recover the very hour that Jesus had told him "your son will live."

More common by far are cases in which Jesus' divine nature and his human nature are involved conjointly. One notable example occurs at the beginning of his public life. Immediately after his baptism, Jesus went into the desert and fasted for forty days and forty nights. Perceiving that he was hungry (a condition of his human body), the devil challenged him to turn rocks into loaves of bread (a test of his divine nature). According to *Matthew* 4:4, Jesus responded by quoting *Deuteronomy* 8:3 to the effect that man does not live by bread alone. An example from the end of his public life is recounted at *Luke* 23:40-43. With Jesus' (human) body hanging on the cross, the repentent criminal asks Jesus to remember him "when you come into your kingdom" (*hotan elthēs eis tēn basileian sou*, 23:42). Jesus' (divine) rejoinder to the criminal is that they will be together "in paradise" (*en tō paradeisō*, 23:43) before the day is over.

In brief, there are things that Jesus does, or things that happen to him, that involve (i) his human nature alone, (ii) his divine nature alone, and (iii) his human and divine natures together. Category (iii) is the main source of events that fit into the Christian narrative. Events in category (ii) also contribute, but are relatively few in number. Inasmuch as they pertain to Jesus' human nature alone, on the other hand, events in category (i) are largely extraneous to the Christian narrative as such.

(4.231) Jesus' Life Before Baptism

Not only are events of category (i) extraneous to the Christian narrative, but very little is said about them in the NT. Although there are snippets in other gospels, the scant information we have about Jesus' life before his baptism comes mostly from the second chapter of *Luke*. We read there that he was born in Bethlehem (2:4-7), and that he was

circumcised eight days later (2:21). After another 33 days (the time for Mary's purification, 2:22; cf. *Leviticus* 12:4), Jesus was brought to the temple in Jerusalem, where he came into the presence of Simeon (2:25-35) and Anna (2:36-38). Rather than responding to the infant as merely a human baby, Anna and Simeon recognized him as the redeemer of Jerusalem and the light of the Gentiles. This disqualifies their response from category (i). After Mary's business had been completed, Jesus' parents brought him back to Nazareth (2:39), where he "grew and waxed strong, filled with wisdom" (*ēuxanen kai ekrataiouto plēroumenon sophia*, 2:40) for the next dozen years.

When Jesus was 12 years old, he went back to Jerusalem with Mary and Joseph to attend the Feast of the Passover (2:41-42). Without telling his parents, he remained in Jerusalem while they headed back to Nazareth with a group of relatives and acquaintances. Becoming aware of his absence that evening, Mary and Joseph returned to Jerusalem and spent three days looking until they found him conversing with the teachers in the temple (2:44-47). Mary scolded him for causing his parents anxiety. And Jesus scolded his parents back, asking: "Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be about my Father's business?" (*Ti hoti ezēteite me; ouk ēdeite hoti en tois tou patros mou dei einai me;*. 2:49). He then returned with his parents to Nazareth, where he remained "obedient to them" (*hupotassomenos autois*, 2:51) until his baptism around the age of 30 (*Luke* 3:23). This basically is all the NT tells us about Jesus' day-by-day existence for the first 30 years of his life.

(4.232) Why a New Covenant was Required

There is reference to a new covenant in the OT, explicitly contrasting it with the older covenant made at Mount Sinai. The reference is in the book of *Jeremiah*, attributed to the Hebrew prophet known for his discontent. Jeremiah quotes the Lord as saying that the days are coming when he will negotiate a “new contract” (*diathēkēn kainēn*, 31:31) with the houses of Israel and Judah, which will be unlike that made with their fathers when he “brought them out of the land of Egypt” (*exagagein autous ek gēs Aiguptou*, 31:32). This latter was a contract they repeatedly broke, despite his acting as husband to them. But when the time comes, says the Lord, he will put his laws within them and “write them on their hearts” (*epi kardias autōn grapsō autous*, 31:33). At that time he will forgive “their inequities” (*tais adikiais autōn*, 31:34) and “remember their sins no more” (*tōn hamartiōn autōn ou mē mnēsthō eti*, 31:34).

These passages from *Jeremiah* are directly quoted at *Hebrews* 8:8-12, accompanied by some pointed commentary. If the first covenant “had been faultless” (*ēn amemptos*, 8:7), says the author, “there would have been no occasion to look for a second” (*ouk an deuterias ezēteito topos*, 8:7). The author goes on to observe that the Lord, “in speaking of a New” (*en tō legein Kainēn*, 8:13) Covenant, “makes the first one obsolete” (*pepalaiōken tēn prōtēn*, 8:13). This new covenant is linked to the death of Jesus in *Hebrews* 9:15, where the author affirms that a death has occurred that redeems those who are called from the “transgressions committed under the first covenant” (*tē prōtē diathēkē parabaseōn ... labōsin*).

Let us examine the differences between the two covenants more carefully, to gain a better understanding of why the first needed replacing. The old agreement was between

God and the Israelites. The new agreement extends to Gentiles (*ethnoi*, non-Jews) as well. Thus Paul tells the Ephesians that he has been given the grace “to preach to the Gentiles the inscrutable riches of Christ” (*tois ethnesin euangelisasthai to anexichniaston ploutos tou Christou, Ephesians 3:8*). A related difference is that the Old Covenant was between God and a specifically designated *group* of people (the Israelites), whereas the New Covenant engages people individually. Among other passages, this is explicit in *John 5:24* where Jesus says that someone “who hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life” (*ho ton logon mou akouōn kai pisteuōn tō pempanti me echei zōēn aiōnion*).

Differences of another sort concern the key role of Christ in the New Covenant. In *Hebrews 9:15*, Christ is described as “the mediator of a new covenant” (*diathēkēs kainēs mesitēs*). Through this covenant, “those who are called may receive the promise of eternal inheritance” (*tēn epangelian labōsin hoi keklēmēnoi tēs aiōniou klēronomias*), inasmuch as Christ’s death “redeems them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant” (*apolutrōsin tōn epi tē prōtē diathēkē parabaseōn*).

An explanation of why such transgressions were committed is put forward in *2 Corinthians 3:13-14*. Apparently recalling Moses’ encounter with the Lord God at Mount Sinai (*Exodus 34:33-35*), Paul refers to the veil Moses put over his face so that “the children of Israel might not gaze intently on the end of what was being abolished” (*mē atenisai tous huiouōs ’Israēl eis to telos tou katargoumenou, 2 Corinthians 3:13*). A consequence for the Israelites was that “their minds were hardened” (*epōrōthē ta noēmata autōn, 3:14*). This hardening, Paul says, continues “to the present day” (*tēs sēmeron hēmeras, 3:14*), so that whenever the Israelites read the words of Moses “a veil lies over

their hearts” (*kalumma epi tēn kardian autōn keitai*, 3:15). The veil is removed, he says, only “when one turns to the Lord [Jesus]” (*hēnika de ean epistrepsē pros kurion*, 3:16).

From the viewpoint of the NT, we see thus far, the Old Covenant was deficient in these several respects. It was an agreement between God and the Israelites collectively, excluding both other ethnic groups and people of any group as individuals. Lacking Christ, it held no promise of eternal life, but instead provided occasion for transgression. Indeed, its provisions were such that the Israelites inherited a mental blindness tracing back to the time of Moses. Transgressions due to blindness under the Old Covenant could not have been avoided, given that the blindness Paul talks about could be removed only by following Christ.

Another deep-seated flaw of the Old Covenant, from a NT perspective at least, was the pattern of conflict it seemed to perpetuate between God and his chosen people. This pattern consisted of God issuing commands, the Israelites disobeying, and God punishing them for their disobedience. One example is found in chapter 17 of *2 Kings*. The Lord warned Israel and Judah to “keep my commandments” (*phulaxate tas entolas mou*, 17:13); the Israelites “would not listen but hardened their backs (*ouk ēkousan kai esklērunan ton nōton autōn*, 17:14); and the angry Lord in retaliation “wiped them from his sight” (*apestēsen autous apo tou prosōpou autou*, 17:18) with only the tribe of Judah (*phulē Iouda*, 17:18) surviving. Other explicit examples, previously mentioned, are found at *Jeremiah 2:29-30* and *Jeremiah 19:15*.

This pattern of “command, disobedience, and punishment” fits nicely with the first understanding of original sin laid out previously. According to this understanding, Adam’s sin was a matter of giving in to the natural human tendency toward disobedience.

God commanded Adam not to eat from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Adam disobeyed by eating from the tree. And God punished Adam by expelling him from the Garden of Eden. Given the frequency with which it is repeated throughout the OT, this pattern of “command, disobedience, and punishment” seems to be part and parcel of the Old Covenant. God continues to insist on his commandments, the Israelites continue to disobey, and God remains ready to treat them harshly for their disobedience. Christ’s followers in the NT have ample reason to enter into an agreement with God focused on love rather than command and obedience.

(4.2321) Benevolent Characteristics of the OT God

Within the context of the Old Covenant, the Lord God issues commands for his people to follow and violently punishes their disobedience. To say the least, this proclivity toward violent punishment does not bespeak a benevolent God. Nonetheless, the OT God possesses a number of features that are benevolent as well. According to several OT passages, he is even known as “abounding in steadfast love.” Before moving on to the God equated with Love in the NT, let us examine what the OT has to say about the Lord God’s benevolent characteristics.

A convenient inventory of God’s benevolent characteristics is provided by God himself in *Exodus* 34:6. While speaking to Moses, the Lord describes himself as “merciful and compassionate” (*oiktirmōn kai eleēmōn*), “slow to anger” (*makrothumos*), “abounding in steadfast love” (*polueleos*), and “agreeable to truth” (*alēthinos*). With one or another omission, the same beneficent properties are attributed to God in numerous other OT passages. The properties mentioned most often in combination are being (1)

merciful, (2) compassionate, (3) slow to anger, and (4) abounding in steadfast love. This combination constitutes what appears to be a standard checklist of features the Israelites were accustomed to assign to their God.

Thus in *Nehemiah* 9, the author blesses God's "glorious name" (*onoma doxēs*, 9:5), referring to him as "compassionate and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love" (*eleēmōn kai oiktirmōn makrothumos kai polueleos*, 9:17). Exactly the same words, in the same order, are repeated at *Joel* 2:13, in anticipation of the Lord's return to Zion. And Jonah utters the same words at verse 4:2 of his namesake book, again in the same order, as part of his plea that he would rather die than see God relent in his fierce anger toward Nineveh. The same words also reoccur, in slightly changed order, in *Psalms* 145:8, as part of David's song of praise to the Lord. Other passages featuring other subsets of the terms at *Exodus* 34:6 include *Numbers* 14:18, *Psalms* 108:4, and *Lamentations* 3:22.

Interested parties sometimes cite these passages as evidence that God in the OT is a God of love, comparable in this respect to the loving God of the NT. The key Greek term in this regard is *polueleos*, translated "abounding in steadfast love" in the passages above, and more often elsewhere simply "steadfast love." This translation follows that of the Cloverdale Bible in 1535, and seems to have persisted by custom in lack of a better choice. The Hebrew term translated *polueleos* in the Septuagint, however, is *hesed*. And discussion of the matter by Hebrew scholars suggests that a more accurate Hebrew-to-English translation of *hesed* in this context is "covenant loyalty." By way of illustration, recall that God's listing of his own benevolent characteristics at *Exodus* 34:6 is part of the process of establishing a covenant (based on the Ten Commandments) between himself

and Israel (see *Exodus* 34:10,27-28). In this particular context, the term *he-sed* is used to express God's commitment to remain loyal to that covenant.

There are other passages in the OT that tie what the Septuagint calls *polueleos* (or simply *eleos*) to the keeping of covenants. *Deuteronomy* 7:9 refers to the faithful God who maintains covenant (*hab-bə-rît, diathēkēn*) and covenant loyalty (*wə-ha-he-sed, eleos*) with those who "love him and keep his commandments" (*tois agapōsin auton kai tois phulassousin tas entolas autou*). This promise of loyalty is reinforced at *Deuteronomy* 7:12, with its assurance to the Israelites that the Lord their God will keep with them the covenant (*hab-bə-rît, diathēkēn*) and the covenant loyalty (*ha-he-sed, eleos*) that he swore to their fathers. Another case in point is the prayer in *Daniel* 9:4, which refers to the great and awesome God who keeps covenant (*hab-bə-rît, diathēkēn*) and covenant loyalty (*wə-ha-he-sed, eleos*) with "those who love him and keep his commandments" (*tois agapōsin se kai tois phulassousin tas entolas sou*). In each of these cases, the sense is that the Lord makes agreements (covenants) with his people and that he remains faithful (loyal) to these agreements. To read a sense of love (as in the customary "steadfast love") into God's mode of participation in these agreements seems not only gratuitous but actually misleading.

To be sure, there is a role that love might play in these agreements, namely the people's love of God. All three passage cited above (*Deuteronomy* 7:9 and 7:12, *Daniel* 9:4) specify that God enters into covenants with "those who love him and keep his commandments." *Deuteronomy* 5:9 also says that covenant loyalty on God's part is due to those who love him and keep his commandments, although the relevant covenant is not mentioned in the passage itself. The same may be said of *Exodus* 20:6, the passage

immediately preceding Moses' recitation of the Ten Commandments. Here Moses quotes God as saying that he responds with covenant loyalty (*eleos*) to those who love him and keep his commandments. The terms of the covenant in all these cases call for love of God on the part of the people and enduring loyalty on God's part in return. In no case is the covenant one of reciprocal love between God and his people.

Parties who seek texts showing that the God of the OT is a loving God would do better to focus on passages that actually say as much. There are two such passages in *Deuteronomy* book 7, where God is preparing the Israelites for deliverance from Egypt. Speaking in his own behalf, the Lord tells them of the love (*to agapan*, 7:8) he has for them in keeping with the oath he swore to their fathers. Then at 7:13 he says he will continue to love (*agapēsei*) them and bless them and cause them to multiply. Later in *Deuteronomy* the Lord says again that he has loved (*ēgapēsen*, 23:5) them and protected them from the curse of Balaam. The term *agapaō* in the Septuagint version of these passages, of course, is the term used in the NT to designate man's love for God and God's love for man. We return to this topic presently.

Other references to God's *agapē* for the Israelites occur throughout the OT. *1 Kings* 10:9 affirms that "the Lord loved Israel forever" (*to agapan kurion ton Israēl stēsai eis ton aiōna*). In *Hosea* 3:1, we find the Lord saying of himself "the Lord loves the children of Israel" (*agapa ho Theos tous huious Israēl*), comparing that love to a man's love for a woman despite her being an adulteress. And in *Malachi* 1:2, the Lord is quoted as saying to Israel "I have loved you" (*ēgapēsa humas*), prompting the skeptical response "how have you loved us [?]" (*en tini ēgapēsas hēmas*). Additional passages describing

the Lord's relation to Israel in terms of *agape* include *Deuteronomy* 23:5, *2 Chronicles* 9:8, *Isaiah* 43:4, 48:14, and 63:9, *Jeremiah* 31:3, *Hosea* 9:15, and *Zephaniah* 3:17.

These dozen or so passages notwithstanding, God's relation to Israel is dominated by the familiar pattern of "command, disobedience, and punishment." As far as testimony in the OT is concerned, the love God feels for Israel is some kind of "tough love" at best. It is a love compatible with severely punishing his people, or even threatening them with destruction. To be sure, the threat of punishment for disobedience continues to the end of the story. In the very last two verses of the Septuagint (excluding the *Maccabees*), the Lord of hosts heralds a renewed presence of the prophet Elijah "before the great and awesome day of the Lord's coming" (*prin elthein hēmeran kuriou tēn megalēn kai epiphanē, Malachi* 4:5). And when Elijah comes, the Lord says, he will reconcile the hearts of fathers and children to each other, "lest I come and smite the land utterly" (*mē elthō kai pataxō tēn gēn ardēn, 4:6*).

If Adam's original sin was one of disobedience, that sin was not redeemed within the time spanned by the Old Covenant. In the view of the Lord, as *Malachi* 4:5-6 indicates, the people of Israel were no less prone to disobedience in the later days of the Old Covenant than they were at its beginning on Mount Sinai. From a psychological perspective, this is not surprising. Disobedience is not effectively countered by issuing additional commands that are likely to be disobeyed.

(4.233) Love in the New Covenant

The NT is about love from start to finish. Every single book has something to say on the topic. A few passages, however, stand out as especially evocative and revealing.

Paramount among these are *Romans* 13:8-10 and *I Corinthians* 13:1-3,14-7,13. The first of these makes an explicit connection between love and the Ten Commandments of the OT. Let us begin by tracing out this connection.

Having advised the Roman recipients of his letter to pay everything owed to civil authorities, Paul turns to the enduring debt they owe each other. “Those who love another” (*ho ... agapōn ton heteron,*), he says, have already “fulfilled the law” (*nomon peplērōken, Romans* 13:8). For the commandments “You shall not commit adultery; You shall not murder; You shall not steal; You shall not covet” (*Ou moicheuseis, Ou phoneuseis, Ou klepseis, Ou epithumēseis*), along with the other commandments, “are summed up in this word: You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (*en tō logō toutō anakephalaioutai [en tō] Agapēseis ton plēsion sou hōs seauton, 13:9*). Since acting out of love “does no harm to one’s neighbor (*tō plēsion kakon ouk ergazetai*), “love is the fulfilling of the law” (*plērōma oun nomou hē agapē, 13:10*).

This mandate is repeated verbatim in *Galatians* 5:14. “For the whole law is fulfilled in one word” (*ho gar pas nomos en heni logō peplērōtai*), the passage says, namely “You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (*Agapēseis ton plēsion sou hōs seauton*). It is noteworthy that the same mandate, in the same words, is conveyed by the Lord through Moses in *Leviticus* 19:18 of the OT. Grouping poor people and day laborers under the general category of neighbors, the Lord instructs those listening: “you shall love your neighbor as yourself” (*agapēseis ton plēsion sou hōs seauton*). But nothing much is made of the precept in the OT.

The injunction to love one’s neighbor as oneself, of course, is what *Matthew* 22:39 refers to as the second [great] commandment, and expresses in identically the same

Greek terms. “First and greatest” (*hē megalē kai prōtē, Matthew 22:38*), however, is: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind” (*Agapēseis kurion ton theon sou en holē tē kardia sou kai en holē tē psuchē sou kai en holē tē dianoia sou, 22:37*). The two great commandments are also paired in *Mark 12:33* and *Luke 10:27*, but with differences in terminology as follow. In *Luke 10:27* “with all your strength” (*en hōlē tē ischui sou*) is added to the ways one should love God; and in *Mark 12:33* “with all your heart” is retained, “with all your soul” is dropped, “with all your strength” is added, and “with all your understanding” (*ex hōlēs tēs suneseōs*) replaces “with all your mind.”

Interestingly enough, a version of the first great commandment also appears in the OT, albeit phrased somewhat differently from versions in the NT above. In preparing God’s people for the land of milk and honey, Moses conveys a message God had entrusted to him. “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one” (*akoue Israēl kurios ho theos hēmōn kurios heis estin, Deuteronomy 6:4*). And “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might” (*agapēseis kurion ton theon sou ex hōlēs tēs kardias sou kai ex hōlēs tēs psuchēs sou kai ex hōlēs tēs dunameōs sou, 6:5*).

Of the six ways of loving God mentioned in these four versions (*Matthew 22:38, Mark 12:33, Luke 10:27, Deuteronomy 6:5*), only “with all one’s heart” is mentioned in each. Given the prevailing notion in Biblical times that the heart is the seat of love (as *Romans 5:5* and *I Peter 1:22* suggest), this seems unsurprising.

Along with most other NT passages just examined, *Romans 13: 8-10* treats love as a Christian duty that stands by itself. The several above-mentioned passages from *I*

Corinthians, chapter 13, on the other hand, deal with love's benefits instead. However parsed, the 13 verses of chapter 13 probably count among the most familiar verse of the NT. If "I have not love" (*agapēn de mē echō*, 13:1), Paul says, even though I speak in the tongues of both men and angels, I become a noisy gong or a clanging symbol. If "I have not love," he says again, even though I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and even though I have all the faith needed to move mountains, "I am nothing" (*outhen eimi*, 13:2). And if "I have not love," even though I give away all my possessions, and hand over my body to be burned, "I gain nothing" (*ouden ōpheloumai*, 13:3).

Speaking in tongues is a gift of the Holy Spirit (*Acts* 2:4). Nothing is impossible for those with faith to move mountains (*Matthew* 17:20). And giving all one has to the poor is a way of gaining treasure in heaven (*Mark* 10:21, *Luke* 18:22). But these spiritual benefits are of no avail, Paul advises, in the absence of love on the part of the recipient.

The spiritual importance of love is illuminated in the next set of passages. Verses 13:4-7 of *I Corinthians* list 15 attributes of love, which it will be helpful to specify by number. The first two are positive, the next eight negative (privative). Love is (1) patient (*makrothumei*, 13:4) and (2) kind (*chrēsteuetai*). Love also is (3) not jealous (*ou zēloi*, (4) not boastful (*ou perpereuetai*), (5) not puffed up (*ou phusioutai*), (6) not rude (*ouk aschēmonei*, 13:5), (7) not self-seeking (*ou zētei ta heautēs*), (8) not irritable (*ou paroxunetai*), (9) not resentful (doesn't count grievances, *ou logizetai to kakon*), and (10) not gladdened by unrighteousness (*ou chairei epi tē adikia*, 13:6).

The list continues with a return to positive features. Love (11) rejoices in truth (*sugchairei de tē alētheia*), (12) endures all things (*panta stegei*, 13:7), (13) trusts all

things (*panta pisteuei*), (14) finds hope in all things (*panta elpizei*), and (15) abides the presence of all things (*panta hupomenei*). These five additional features can be interpreted as modes of responding to things that happen in one's surroundings. Love (11) always rejoices in the presence of truth. Love (12) puts up with whatever might happen. Love (13) trustfully accepts whatever events it might encounter. Love (14) remains hopeful come what may. Regardless of vicissitudes, furthermore, love (15) remains unperturbed. Thus interpreted, none of these five features necessarily involves attitudes loving people take toward one another.

The first ten features, on the other hand, seem most naturally understood as attitudes or stances one maintains toward other people. They are attitudes taken toward one's "neighbors," so to speak. A loving person (1) shows patience toward those who are weak or faint-hearted (see also *1 Thessalonians* 5:14). A loving person (2) always treats a stranger kindly (also *Ephesians* 4:32). A loving person is not (3) jealous of another's good fortune (also *James* 3:16), nor (4) boastful of his or her own accomplishments (also *2 Timothy* 3:2). And so on for the remaining ways a loving person might relate to other people. In each case, the relation involves an intentional attitude taken toward, or deliberately withheld from, the others in question. The attitude is intentional in that it is directed toward those other people specifically. In cases (1) and (2), the intentionality is direct and straightforward. In the remaining eight, the people in question are intended as potential objects from whom the negative relations are withheld.

These relations initiated by love are beneficial, as described previously, because of their intentional focus. In each case, the loving person is the subject of attention directed away from the subject itself. In the absence of love, there are many cases in

which the subject's attention is directed inward toward itself instead. One such is the case of pride. A proud person is someone given to high self-evaluation. Pride amounts to an exaggerated sense of self-worth and self-importance. Although on occasion one can be proud of something other than oneself (e.g., a friend's accomplishments), which is not always injurious, pernicious pride is equivalent to self-esteem and self-admiration. As these equivalent descriptions illustrate, pernicious pride involves one's attention being turned inward toward oneself.

Pernicious pride is disparaged in Mary's Magnificat, with the words "[the Lord] has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts" (*dieskorpisen huperēphanous dianoia kardias autōn, Luke 1:51*). The Lord's stand on the matter is further emphasized in *James 4:6* and *1 Peter 5:5*, with the identically phrased statements "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble" (*Ho theos huperēphanois antitassetai, tapeinois de didōsin charin*). Much the same message is conveyed in *Matthew 23:12*, with the words "whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted" (*hostis de hupsōsei heauton tapeinōthēsetai kai hostis tapeinōsei heauton hupsōthēsetai*). With minor differences in phrasing, the same message is repeated in *Luke 18:14*.

As a consequence of its intentional nature, human attention cannot be directed inward and outward at the same time. While under the sway of pride, a person's attention is directed inward, which prevents its being directed outward in a relation of love. While participating in a relation of love, on the other hand, a person's attention is directed outward, which prevents it from indulging in self-admiration and self-esteem. This is the manner in which the love of *1 Corinthians 13:4-6* counters the pride of *James 4:6* and *1*

Peter 5:5. Given the identification of God with love (*1 John 4:8*), this is the way that God is said in Mary's Magnificat to scatter "the proud in the thoughts of their hearts."

Along with *James 4:6* and *1 Peter 5:5*, Mary's Magnificat was cited in the previous discussion of the nature of original sin. One plausible interpretation of Adam's transgression focuses on disobedience, which makes it particularly relevant to the plight of the Jewish people under the Old Covenant. In sharp contrast, the other available interpretation focuses on pride. According to this second interpretation, pride has been part of human nature since its beginning. Adam sinned in taking advantage of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil in hope of gaining godlike powers that would enable him to dominate the world that God created. Adam's descendents repeat that sin when they allow pride to take control of their own behavior.

Under the New Covenant, love is the antidote that nullifies the sin of pride. Love counters pride by redirecting a person's attention from inward to outward. By loving God and by loving one's neighbor, the Christian regains access to the Tree of Eternal Life.

(4.2331) *Agapē* and *Philia* in the NT

The term *agapē* and cognate terms (*agapaō*, *agapētos*) appear over 300 times in the NT. According to Liddell and Scott (1883), the noun *agapē* was coined for use in the Septuagint and carried over by NT authors. It is not frequently found outside of a biblical context. The terms *phileō* and *philia*, by contrast, are standard in classical Greek, but are used less than two dozen times by NT authors. *Eros*, the other familiar Greek term for love, is not used in the NT.

In their NT context, *agape* and *philia* are sometimes used in ways that make them appear synonymous. Both bespeak esteem and affection. The main difference between them seems to be that *agape*, but not *philia*, is unconditional. Affection that is *philia* can dissipate with change in circumstances. *Philia* one has for a friend might even vanish if the friend proves unworthy. Love that is *agapē*, however, is never vanquished. Even if the beloved tries to resist it, *agapē* love is not deterred. Its only desire is for the good of the *agapētos* (beloved person). This is why the love of *1 Corinthians* 13:4-6 is effective in countering the sin of pride. No matter what pulls in the inward direction, the attention of the lover is unceasingly focused outward on the beloved object.

The insuperably outward thrust of *agapē* is a factor in the formulation of the First Great Commandment. To say it once again (this time translating *Luke* 10:27) “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind” (*Agapēseis kurion ton theon sou ex holēs [tēs] kardias sou kai en holē tē psuchē sou kai en holē tē ischui sou kai en holē tē dianoia sou*). The term is also significant in the force it imparts to the Second Great Commandment: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (*Agapēseis ton plēsion sou hōs seauton, Galatians* 5:14). Neither commandment could be expressed in terms of *philia* without substantially changing the force of its mandate.

As just noted, nonetheless, there are prominent passages in which the two terms appear to be used synonymously. One case concerns the several references in *John* to “the disciple Jesus loved” (*ton mathētēn hon ēgapa ho 'Iēsous*, 21:20). The verb *ēgapa* is used with the same reference in *John* 13:23, 19:26, and 21:7 as well. In *John* 20:2, however, the verb *philia* is used instead (*ton ... mathētēn hon ephilei ho 'Iēsous*).

Another case pertains to Jesus' love of Lazarus. Speaking to Jesus at *John* 11:3, Mary and Martha refer to their brother as the "one he loves" (*hon phileis*). But only two verses later we find the remark that "Jesus loved Lazarus" (*ēgapa de ho 'Iēsous ... ton Lazaron*) and his sisters.

The most intriguing case of apparent synonymy, however, occurs in the dialogue between Jesus and Peter recorded in *John* 21:15-23. By way of context, a number of Jesus' disciples (7 by count) had been fishing all night near the shore of the sea of Tiberias (Galilee), but had caught nothing. Jesus appeared on the shore and asked about their catch. Although this was the third time Jesus had appeared to a group of disciples after his resurrection, at first they did not recognize him. Jesus told them to cast their net on the right side of the boat. They did so and found more fish in their net than they could bring aboard. Then the disciple Jesus loved called out to Peter "It is the Lord!" (*Ho kurios estin*, 21:7). Peter jumped overboard and swam to shore, while the rest pulled the net filled with large fish (153 in all) to shore behind the boat. Once all the disciples were on shore, they ate the breakfast of bread and fish that Jesus had prepared for them.

After breakfast, Jesus began grilling Peter. "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?" (*Simōn 'Iōannou, agapas me pleon toutōn;*, 21:15). Peter responded: "Yes Lord, you know that I love you" (*Nai kurie, su oidas hoti philō se*). Jesus replied: "Feed my lambs" (*Boske ta arnia mou*). Then in the next verse, "Simon, son of John, do you love (*agapas*) me?" with the response "you know that I love (*philō*) you," and the reply "Tend my sheep" (*Poimaine ta probata mou*). Again in the following verse, "Simon, son of John, do you love (*phileis*) me?" with the response "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you" (*Kurie, panta su oidas, su ginōskeis hoti philō se*),

and the reply “Feed my sheep” (*Boske ta probata mou*). Twice Jesus asks whether Peter loves him, using the term *agapē*, to which Peter responds in terms of *philia*. Then the third time Jesus rephrases the question in terms of *philia*, and Peter again responds with that term.

It is of course possible that the author of *John* used the two terms to convey the same meaning, in line with the previous cases concerning the disciple Jesus loved and Jesus’ love for Lazarus. It is conceivable as well that the author intended to depict Jesus as fishing for a declaration of (unconditional) *agapē* love and receiving a declaration of (contingent) *philia* love instead. This apparent shortfall on Peter’s part could be understood as the source of Jesus’ impatience a moment later, when Peter asked “what about this man?” (*houtos de ti*; 21:21) of the disciple Jesus loved, and Jesus responded curtly “what is that to you?” (*ti pros se*; 21:22).

It seems more likely, however, that Jesus’ impatience at this point ties in with his asking three times whether Peter loved him, rather than with the terminology of Peter’s answer. In the hours preceding Jesus’ arrest, Peter had joined the other disciples in avowing that he would never deny Jesus, even if it meant dying with him (*Matthew* 26:35, *Mark* 14:31). This was in response to Jesus’ disclosure that Peter would deny him three times before the rooster crowed at daybreak (*Matthew* 26:34, *Mark* 14:30, *Luke* 22:34). Later that night, while Peter was warming himself in the courtyard of Caiaphas, the high priest, he denied knowing Jesus three times in succession; and a rooster crowed immediately after the third denial (*Matthew* 26:69-75, *Mark* 14:66-72, *Luke* 22:54-61, *John* 18:15-18, 25-27). As might be surmised, the resurrected Jesus matched Peter’s three denials with three requests for assurance that Peter still loved him. After answering

affirmatively three times in a row, Peter turned to the disciple Jesus loved and said “What about this man?,” supposedly to ask whether the love of this other disciple would be tested as well. As noted previously, Jesus’ response was an impatient “What is that to you?”

No matter how this interchange between Peter and Jesus is interpreted, at any rate, it ends with Jesus’ peremptory demand “you follow me” (*su moi akolouthei*, 21:22). It should be noted in this regard that the injunction “follow me” (*akolouthei moi*, without the *su*) had been addressed to Peter a short time earlier (21:19) in a serene tone matching the thrice-repeated charge to feed Jesus’ sheep. But now at 21:22, after Peter’s impertinent question about Jesus’ plans for the disciple he loved, the command is more peremptory: “You! Follow me!”

(4.2332) The Father’s Love for the Son

Among the cases of apparent synonymy between *agapē* and *philia* examined above, there are several pertaining to Jesus’ love for other people and one pertaining to another person’s love for Jesus himself. In a category of its own is the Father’s love for the Son. Jesus is designated God’s “beloved son” (*ho huios agapētos*), or equivalent, at least six times in the NT. In each of these instances, the term *agapē* is employed. Yet in *John* 5:20 Jesus is quoted as saying that “the Father loves the Son” (*ho ... patēr philei ton huion*), employing the term *phileō* instead. The question of synonymy arises afresh when the Father’s love is concerned.

In the synoptic gospels, there are two specific situations in which Jesus is referred to as God’s beloved Son—his baptism and his transfiguration. Consider the relevant two

passages in *Matthew* by way of illustration. On the occasion of his baptism, Jesus saw the Spirit of God descending on him like a dove, and heard a voice from heaven saying “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased” (*Houtos estin ho huios mou ho agapētos, en hō eudokēsa*, 3:17). Identically the same remark is attributed to God on the occasion of his transfiguration (17:5). While Moses and Elijah were speaking with a radiant Jesus, in the presence of Peter, James, and John, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said to them “This is my beloved son, with whom I am well pleased.” In the account of *Matthew*, God speaks twice of Jesus in the third person (*houtos*) and expresses his love in identically the same (Greek) terms.

In *Mark*’s abbreviated version of the baptism, however, God’s words are addressed (in second person) to Jesus directly: “You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased” (*Su ei ho huios mou ho agapētos, en soi eudokēsa*, 1:11). The words God speaks in *Mark*’s version of the transfiguration, nonetheless, are identically the same (in third person) as those in *Matthew*: *Houtos estin ho huios mou ho agapētos* (9:7).

Regarding the baptism, *Luke* 3:22 duplicates *Mark* 1:11, using the same words in the second person. *Luke* 9:35, however, breaks the pattern in its report of the transfiguration. While returning to the third person, *Luke* 9:35 replaces “my beloved son” with “my chosen son” (*ho huios mou ho eklelegmenos*). This language recalls *Isaiah* 42:1, with its reference to the “chosen one” (*ho eklektos*) in whom the soul of the Lord delights.

There is one more reference to God’s words during the transfiguration at *2 Peter* 1:17. Reported by an author saying he heard them himself, God’s words on this occasion were: “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased” (*Ho huios mou ho agapētos mou houtos estin eis hon egō eudokēsa*). With insignificant terminological

changes, this is the same recital of God's words as found at *Matthew* 3:17 and 17:5, *Mark* 1:11 and 9:7, and *Luke* 3:22. In all, there are six places in the NT where God is represented as referring to Jesus as his beloved (*agapētos*) Son.

To be sure, there are other locutions in the NT that God is depicted as using in reference to Jesus, including "my chosen son" (*Luke* 9:35 above) and simply "my Son" (*Huios mou*, *Hebrews* 5:5, echoing *Psalms* 2:7). But "my beloved Son" (*ho huios agapētos*) occurs frequently enough to suggest that it had the status of a catchphrase among NT authors. As noted previously, on the other hand, Jesus speaks of the Father's love for the Son at *John* 5:20 in terms of *philia*. It is not clear whether this difference in terminology is more than coincidental. *John* 5:20 may be just another case in which the author uses the terms *agapē* and *philia* as synonyms.

(4.2333) A Network of Love in the NT

There is another system of love relations in the NT, however, in which the Father's love for the Son is almost surely a matter of *agapē* rather than *philia*. Key components of this system emerge at *John* 15:9-12. In the discourse preparing his disciples for his imminent betrayal, Jesus tells them: "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you" (*kathōs ēgapēsen me ho patēr, kagō humas ēgapēsa*, 15:9). Jesus goes on to say "Abide in my love" (*meinate en tē agape tē emē*, 15:9), which he explains as being a matter of keeping his commandments. Then at 15:12, still speaking to his disciples, Jesus articulates the specific commandment that they love (*agapate*) one another as he has loved (*ēgapēsa*) them.

Although the injunctions to love Jesus and to love one another are directed explicitly toward the disciples in these particular passages, they clearly were intended to apply to human individuals without regard for status or gender. Let us recognize this by understanding them as applying to human individuals generally. Three distinct relations of *agapē* thus are linked together in these passages: (1) God’s love of Jesus, (2) Jesus’ love of individual people, and (3) the love of individual people for each other. Among these relations, (2) is patterned after (1), and by Jesus’ command (3) is to be patterned after (2).

These relations are repeated and reciprocated in adjacent passages of *John*. At *John* 13:34, Jesus labels love for each other as a new commandment, and affirms that this love is to follow the lead of the love he has for his disciples. Then at 14:15, he brings the individual person’s love for him into the picture. Still speaking to his disciples, Jesus says “If you love me, you will keep my commandments” (*Ean agapate me, tas entolas tas emas tērēsete*). Putting *John* 14:15 and 15:9 together, we have Jesus’ de facto love for individual people and their mandated love for Jesus. Abstracting from difference in modality (de facto vs. mandated), we have a reciprocal relation of *agapē* between Jesus and his people.

There are other passages in *John* that indicate a reciprocal *agapē* relation between Jesus and God as well. *John* 3:35 joins 15:9 in affirming that God loves Jesus, saying in simple terms that “The Father loves the Son” (*ho patēr agapa ton huion*). In comparably simple terms, 14:31 quotes Jesus as saying “I love the Father” (*agapō ton patera*), a fact he says is attested by his doing what the Father’s commands. The Father loves the Son

and the Son loves the Father. In this case, the relation is de facto (rather than mandated) in both directions.

Yet another pair of reciprocal *agapē* relations is said to hold between God and human individuals. One follows from the mandate of the first great commandment, to the effect that an individual is to love God fully with heart, soul, and mind. The other is found in the midst of some very interesting and relevant passages in *1 John* 4:7-21. This set of passages overall has to do with the second great commandment, which enjoins human individuals to love one another. The passage of immediate relevance is 4:10, which says simply: “God loved us” (*autos [ho theos] ēgapēsen hēmas*). The immediately following passage adds: “if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another” (*ei houtōs ho theos ēgapēsen hēmas, kai hēmeis opheilomen allēlous agapan*). Combining the individual’s aforementioned love of God at *Luke* 10:27 with God’s love of the individual at *1 John* 4:11, we arrive at a third set of reciprocal *agapē* relations.

By way of summary, we have isolated three sets of reciprocal love relations: that between Jesus and the individual person, that between Jesus and God, and that between God and the individual person. Let us imagine them as represented by the sides of an equilateral triangle, with God at the peak angle, Jesus at the base angle to the right, and the individual person at the base angle to the left. From the left base angle, imagine a curved vector extending back to its origin. This vector symbolizes the force of the second great commandment, mandating that human individuals love each other. In its overall configuration, the triangle with its leftward vector represents the network of love relations in the NT. These are relations of *agapē* exclusively. As far as this network is concerned, the question of possible synonymy with *philia* no longer arises.

(4.2334) The Meaning of “God is Love”

Let us attend to the dynamics of love within this network. Love originates in the Father with his love for the Son. This is the sense of *John* 3:16, which reads: “For God so loved the world [humanity in general, as at *Matthew* 5:14], that he gave his only begotten Son” (*Houtōs gar ēgapēsen ho theos ton kosmon, hōste ton huion ton monogenē edōken*). Energized by the Father’s love that led to his begetting, the Son extends his love to individual people in turn. Accompanying this love is the Son’s injunction to human individuals that they love both God and one another after the fashion in which God loves him. Love engendered by the Father thus returns to the Father as individuals comply with the Son’s command.

A complementary account of love’s dynamics is found in chapter 4 of *1 John*. According to 4:7, “love is from God” (*hē agapē ek tou theou estin*). And God’s love for us was made manifest by the fact that he “sent his Son to be propitiation for our sins” (*apesteilen ton huion autou hilasmon peri tōn hamartiōn hēmōn*, 4:10). Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, the text continues, “God abides in him and he in God” (*hō theos en autō menei kai autos en tō theō*, 4:15). The text shifts to a parallel account of abiding love in 4:16. Since the Son’s paternity stems from God’s love, “whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him” (*ho menōn en tē agapē en tō theō menei kai ho theos en autō menei*). The possibility of abiding in God and in love simultaneously is enabled by the simple affirmation “God is love” (*Ho theos agapē estin*, 4:16).

The terse affirmation *ho theos agapē estin* also appears at *I John* 4:8. In this previous context, it is followed by the advice that “if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another” (*ei outōs ho theos ēgapēsen hēmas, kai ēmeis opheilomen allēlous agapan*, 4:11). And if we love one another, “God abides in us and his love is perfected in us” (*ho theos en hēmin menei kai hē agapē autou en hēmin teteleiōmenē estin*, 4:12). Even given its role of actuating other love relations in the network, God’s love is such that human love is needed to bring it to perfection.

The affirmation “God is love” is interesting both grammatically and theologically. It seems clear that the verb here is neither the ‘is’ of predication nor the ‘is’ of identity. Love is not a property of God, because ‘love’ here is not a descriptive adjective. And the relation between God and love is not one of identity, inasmuch as many things can be said of one but not properly said of the other (e.g., God, but not love, is a person; and love, but not God, is a form of esteem). The grammar of “God is love” is not like that of “time is money,” furthermore, because love here is not part of a metaphor. Another use of ‘is’ involves playing a role, as in “Laurence Olivier is Hamlet in tonight’s performance.” But the sense in which God is love does not involve God’s playing a role.

“God is love” is more closely analogous, it seems, to “Mercury is speed,” or “Athena is wisdom.” Mercury was the messenger of the Roman gods, pictured with winged helmet, winged shoes, and winged caduceus. As such, he both was speedy himself and came to serve as a symbol of speed. Mercury, then and now, personifies speed, which is the sense of the expression “Mercury is speed.” As a member of the ancient Greek pantheon, similarly, Athena was the goddess of wisdom. Wise herself, she

served (and still serves) as a symbol of wisdom as well. In this sense, Athena is wisdom personified, which is the meaning of the expression “Athena is wisdom.”

An analogy closer to home comes with the relation between the University of Notre Dame and its fabled president, Fr. Theodore Hesburgh. In the minds of many friends and alumni, Fr. Hesburgh was the personification of Notre Dame. The university’s advance to the top ranks of scholarly institutions contributed to the fame of its highly visible president, and his (world) record number of honorary degrees added to the renown of Notre Dame itself. Summed up by the expression “Fr. Hesburgh is Notre Dame,” the relation between president and university was such that their fortunes were inseparable. For anyone whose allegiance was at stake, to stand fast with one was tantamount to standing fast with the other as well.

This is the key, I submit, to the enigmatic remarks in *1 John* 4:16. The relevant remarks, to repeat, are “God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God” (*Ho theos agapē estin, kai ho menōn en tē agapē en tō theō menei*). The term translated “abide” here is *menō*. Other English renditions of the term in this context include “live,” “reside,” “dwell,” and “remain.” An alternative translation of *menō*, prominently listed in Liddell and Scott (1883), is “stand fast.” In contrast with the other renditions, “stand fast” carries a sense of commitment responding to the “ought” (*opheilomen*) in “we ought to love one another” at *1 John* 4:11. Let us revise the translation of 4:16 accordingly.

“Whoever stands fast in love stands fast in God.” This is so because “God is love,” meaning that God personifies love. In *1 John* 4:16, God’s love for us is said to make it mandatory that we love each other. Standing fast with love in this regard is tantamount to standing fast with God, inasmuch as God is love personified.

(4:234) The Lord's Supper

Christ's death brought the Old Covenant to a close. Christ's life contributed two components essential to the New Covenant. One is a way of life of life based on love of God and love of neighbor. The other is a means of sharing in Christ's redeeming death and hence of playing an active role in one's own personal salvation. This latter is commonly known as the Lord's Supper.

Christ's last supper with his disciples is treated in all four Gospels, the longest account being that in *John*. Curiously, however, there is nothing in *John* about what later came to be known as the Eucharist or Lord's Supper. Each of the Synoptic Gospels treats the institution of the Lord's Supper, but in each case the treatment is relatively brief. Its fullest treatment in the NT is found in *I Corinthians* chapter 11. In this letter, Paul not only quotes what Jesus said on that occasion, but also mentions how he (Paul) learned of those words and briefly remarks on their significance. Let us examine Paul's account, comparing it along the way with those of the three Gospels.

Paul's account begins at *I Corinthians* 11:23, which states by way of prelude: "For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you" (*Egō gar parelabon apo tou kuriou, ho kai paredōka humin*). The grammar of this phrase indicates that Paul had informed his audience previously about what he received from the Lord. The obvious sense of the phrase is that the source of this information was the Lord himself. Paul says, in effect, that he did not receive this information from other oral or written sources. In particular, he did not get the information from the Gospels, which probably were compiled after *I Corinthians* was written and most likely were not eyewitness reports.

Taking Paul's words at face value, we can justifiably read *I Corinthians* 11:23-26 as the closest we have to a direct report of what Jesus said and did when he instituted the Lord's Supper.

Paul's account continues with what he received from the Lord, namely: "that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and giving thanks broke it" (*hoti ho kurios 'Iēsous en tē nukti hē paredideto elaben arton kai eucharistēsas eklasen* 11:23-24). Then he said: "This is my body which is for you. Do this in memory of me" (*Touto mou estin to sōma to hyper humōn touto poieite eis tēn emēn anamnēsin*, 11:24). "After dinner [he took] the cup also in the same way" (*hōsautōs kai to potērion meta to deipnēsai*, 11:25), saying: "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me" (*Touto to potērion hē kainē diathēkē estin en tō emō haimati touto poieite, hosakis ean pinēte, eis tēn emēn anamnēsin*, 11:25). In a coda of sorts, Christ then declares: "For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes" (*Hosakis gar ean esthiēte ton arton touton kai to potērion pinēte, ton thanaton tou kuriou katangellete achri hou elthē*, 11:26).

According to 11:26, the purpose accomplished by eating the bread and drinking the cup is that of proclaiming the Lord's death. The term *katangellō* appears a few more than a dozen times elsewhere in the NT, and is commonly rendered "proclaim" as above. Other translations sometimes used are "show," "commemorate," and "preach." The general sense seems to be that partaking of the bread and cup is a way not only of remembering Christ but also of displaying special concern for his death on the cross. The timing of this commemoration is interesting and relevant. Any proclamation of the Lord's death obviously had to wait until he had died. But acts of commemoration, once begun,

are to continue indefinitely “until the Lord comes” (a reference presumably to the future coming of *John* 14:3 and 21:22).

An apparently quite different purpose is assigned to the Lord’s Supper in *Matthew* 26:26-28. The account in *Matthew* begins with Jesus blessing bread, breaking it, and giving it to the disciples. Then he said: “Take, eat, this is my body” (*Labete phagete, touto estin to sōma mou*, 26:26). Next he took a cup, returned thanks, and gave it to them, saying: “Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the [new] covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins” (*Piete ex autou pantes, touto gar estin to haima mou tēs diathēkēs [kainēs] to peri pollōn ekchunnomenon eis aphenin hamartiōn*, 26:27-28). There is nothing here about remembering Christ, or about proclaiming his death. According to this account, the purpose of the Lord’s Supper is the forgiveness of sins.

Unlike the accounts of *I Corinthians* and *Matthew*, the account of the Lord’s Supper in *Mark* says nothing about purpose. In other respects, this account is almost word-by-word identical to that in *Matthew*. While they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed it, broke it, and gave it to the disciples, saying: “Take, this is my body” (*Labete, touto estin to sōma mou*, *Mark* 14:22). Next he took a cup, returned thanks, gave it to them, whereupon they drank all of it. Then he said: “This is my blood of the [new] covenant, which is poured out for many” (*Touto estin to haima mou tēs diathēkēs [kainēs] to ekchunnomenon huper pollōn*, 14:24). After remarking in effect that he will not drink wine again on earth, Jesus left with his disciples for the Mount of Olives.

The brief account at *Luke* 22:17-20, in turn, cites remembrance as the purpose of the bread, but says nothing about the purpose of the cup. Another distinctive feature of

the account in *Luke* is its timing of the cup. As at *1 Corinthians* 11:25, the disciples' partaking of the cup occurred after dinner. The cup, nonetheless, is first to be mentioned. After confiding that he had desired to eat the Passover with them "before he suffered" (*pro tou me pathein*, 22:15), Jesus took a cup, returned thanks, and said to the disciples: "Take this and divide it among yourselves" (*Labete touto kai diamerisate eis heautous*, 22:17). (We as readers imagine the disciples each taking a portion of wine in his glass and leaving it untouched on the table until the meal is over.) Jesus then took bread, returned thanks, broke it, and gave it to them, saying: "This is my body which is given for you. Do this in memory of me" (*Touto estin to sōma mou to huper humōn didomenon touto poieite eis tēn emēn anamnēsin*, 22:19). "After dinner" (*meta to deipnēsai*, 22:20), Jesus then turned to the cup, saying: "This cup is the new covenant of my blood poured out for you" (*Touto [estin] to potērion hē kainē diathēkē en tō haimati mou to huper humōn ekchunnomenon*, 22:20). In the immediately following verse, Jesus changes the topic to his imminent betrayal.

As previously noted, there is nothing in the Gospel *John* about the Lord's Supper as such. There are several verses in *John* chapter 6, however, that allude to Jesus' flesh and blood as the food that brings eternal life. Chapter 6 begins with the feeding of the 5,000 with five barley loafs and two fish. The narrative soon shifts from "food that perishes" (*tēn brōsin tēn apollumenēn*, 6:27) to "the true bread from heaven" (*ton arton ek tou ouranou ton alēthinon*, 6:32). Jesus then identifies himself as that bread, saying: "I am the living bread that comes down from heaven" (*egō eimi ho artos ho zōn ho ek tou ouranou katabas*, 6:51). He continues, saying: "If anyone eats this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh" (*ean tis phagē*

ek toutou tou artou zēsei eis ton aiōna, kai ho artos de hon egō dōsō hē sarx mou estin huper tēs tou kosmou zōēs, 6:51).

Arguing among themselves, the Jews who were listening asked: “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?” (*Pōs dunatai houtos hēmin dounai tēn sarka [autou] phagein,;* 6:52). In the narrative of the Gospels, an answer to this question comes soon with the institution of the Lord’s Supper. But that event had not yet occurred, and does not enter into the story narrated in *John*.

Jesus’ immediate answer to this question in *John* leaves the Jews in the dark. Mentioning his blood for the first time in the interchange, Jesus said:”unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you” (*ean mē phagēte tēn sarka tou huiou tou anthrōpou kai piēte autou to haima, ouk echete zōēn en heautois,* 6:53). But “whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day” (*ho trōgōn mou tēn sarka kai pinōn mou to haima echei zōēn aiōnion, kagō anastēsō auton tē eschatē hēmera,* 6:54). This is because “whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me and I in him” (*ho trōgōn mou tēn sarka kai pinōn mou to haima en emoi menei kagō en autō,* 6:56). These words were so hard (*Sklēros,* 6:60) that many of Jesus’ disciples left him (although twelve remained, 6:67), and the Jews set about finding a way to kill him.

These passages in *John* add to the list of purposes claimed for the Lord’s Supper in the NT. In *1 Corinthians* 11:24,25, and *Luke* 22:19, partaking in the bread and cup is done to keep alive the memory of Jesus. A joint purpose, in *1 Corinthians* 11:26, is to proclaim the Lord’s death. The purpose announced at *Matthew* 26:28 is the forgiveness of sins. And although the Lord’s Supper is not directly mentioned in *John*, there is an

indirect indication at *John* 6:51, 54, that when the Lord's Supper is instituted its purpose will be to enable eternal life. These several purposes are compatible, to be sure. But it is noteworthy that the first and second century authors had different things to say about what participating in the Lord's Supper signifies.

Purpose aside, there is one thing all four accounts of Jesus' institution of the Lord's Supper have in common. All characterize the cup of wine with reference to the blood of the New Covenant. In *1 Corinthians* 11:25 and *Luke* 22:20, "the new covenant" (*hē kainē diathēkē*) is mentioned explicitly. Whereas in *Matthew* 26:28 and *Mark* 14:24, Jesus refers to "my blood of the covenant" (*to haima mou tēs diathēkēs*) without characterizing that covenant as new. Given the context, however, it is evident that the covenant in question is the same as that explicitly described as "new" in the other two passages.

In effect, all four accounts associate the cup of wine with the blood of the New Covenant. None of these accounts, however, mentions the New Covenant in connection with Christ's body and the bread. This difference is curious, and probably significant for our understanding of the New Covenant and of how the Lord's Supper figures within it.

A major clue to its significance is found in chapter 9 of *Hebrews*. In verse 9:15, Christ is identified as "mediator of a new covenant" (*diathēkēs kainēs mesitēs*, 9:15), since by his death "he redeems [those called] from transgressions committed under the first covenant" (*apolutrōsin tōn epi tē prōtē diathēkē parabaseōn*, 9:15). This redemption, the author notes, requires "purification with blood" (*en haimati ... katharizetai*, 9:22), inasmuch as "without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins" (*chōris haimatekchusias ou ginetai aphasis*, 9: 22). The author continues by quoting Moses as

saying to the people, in commemorating the original commandments with the blood of goats and calves, “This is the blood of the covenant that God enjoined regarding you” (*Touto [estin] to haima tēs diathēkēs hēs eneteilato pros humas ho theos, 9:20*). This undoubtedly is the same occasion as that noted in *Exodus* 24:8, on which Moses threw blood on the people and said: “Behold the blood of the covenant that the Lord has made with you” (*idou to haima tēs diathēkēs hēs dietheto kurios pros humas*). *Hebrews* 9:20 and *Exodus* 24:8 thus join *Matthew* 26:28 and *Mark* 14:24 in use of the expression “the blood of the covenant” (*to haima tēs diathēkēs*). A slightly reworded “blood of your covenant” (*haimati diathēkēs ... sou*) also occurs in *Zechariah* 9:11. Unlike *Matthew* 26:28 and *Mark* 14:24, of course, these passages in *Hebrews*, *Exodus*, and *Zechariah* all pertain to the Old Covenant between God and the Hebrews.

There are other passages in *Hebrews* that join those from *Matthew* and *Mark* in referring to the blood of the New Covenant. *Hebrews* 10:29 warns of the dire punishment deserved by someone who “has trampled underfoot the Son of God” (*ho ton huion tou theou katapatēsas*), and who “has regarded as common the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified” (*to haima tēs diathēkēs koinon hēgēsamenos, en hō hēgiasthē*). And then at *Hebrews* 13:20 there is benediction of sorts, invoking the God of peace to bring all good things to the audience of the letter “by the blood of the eternal covenant” (*en haimati diathēkēs aiōniou*). The New Covenant is considered eternal, presumably, for reasons given at *Hebrews* 9:25-26. Unlike the high priest of the Old Covenant, who offers blood sacrifices on a yearly basis, Christ “has come to abolish sin once and for all, up to the end of the ages, by the sacrifice of himself” (*hapax epi sunteleia tōn aiōnōn eis athetēsīn [tēs] hamartias dia tēs thusias autou pephanerōtai*). The New Covenant is

eternal in being an essential context of the Lord's Supper, which constitutes a participation in Christ's death that can be reenacted endlessly.

By way of summary, Christ himself is the blood sacrifice issuing in the New Covenant. Blood was drawn from his earthly body on the cross. That single sacrifice brought redemption to humankind once and for all. Unlike traditional blood sacrifices under the Old Covenant, this single sacrifice is not to be repeated. But the uniqueness of this sacrifice does not prevent Christ's followers from participating in it indefinitely many times after his earthly body has departed. To partake of the cup of the Lord's Supper, whenever enacted, is to participate in the blood sacrifice of the New Covenant.

(4.2341) Body Related to Bread and Blood to Wine in the Lord's Supper

We have been looking at passages from *1 Corinthians*, and from the gospels *Matthew*, *Mark*, and *Luke*, all depicting the institution of the Lord's Supper. In each of these four texts, Jesus says that the bread is (*estin*) his body. Anticipating his death in *John* 6:51, moreover, Jesus said that the bread he will give for the light of the world is (*estin*) his flesh. Jesus uses the same term *estin* to express the relation between the wine and his blood in *1 Corinthians*, *Matthew* and *Mark*, whereas in *Luke* the term is clearly operative but suppressed. The bread *is* his body, and the wine *is* his blood.

Theological controversies have raged for centuries about the meaning of "is my body" and "is my blood" in the context of the Lord's Supper. These controversies have been mainly concerned with the relation between the bread and the body, and that between the blood and the wine. Positions taken on the matter have divided along denominational lines. Many Protestant groups hold that the relation is symbolic, treating

the bread and wine as merely signs of Christ's body and blood. For these groups, accordingly, the body and blood are not "really present" in the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper. Other groups, including many Methodists and Presbyterians, subscribe to a real presence, but hold that the presence is spiritual rather than physical.

On the other end of the spectrum of positions is that of Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy, which subscribe to the doctrine of transubstantiation. This doctrine is based on the concept of substance (Greek *ousia*, Latin *substantia*) derived from classical Greek philosophy. Transubstantiation holds that the substance of bread and wine is wholly eliminated by the consecration of the elements, and is replaced by the substance of Christ's body and blood. In the (translated) words of the Council of Trent (1551), Christ's body and blood are "truly, really, and substantially contained" in the consecrated elements. The "mystery" of transubstantiation is how this change in substance can happen without any perceptual or chemical change in the bread and wine.

Transubstantiation evolved from the earlier theological view of consubstantiation, which was condemned as heretical by the Council of Trent. Consubstantiation is the view that the substance of bread and wine and the substance of Christ's flesh and blood are both present in the consecrated elements. Both transubstantiation and consubstantiation maintain a real presence, best described with an emphasis of some sort on the protean term "real" (*really* present).

In point of fact, none of these theological views can be established on the basis of scripture alone. The view of the bread and wine as symbolic receives support in *I Corinthians* 11:26, which portrays the Lord's Supper as a way of proclaiming the Lord's death. But there is nothing there to rule out other interpretations of the bread and wine

that assign them more than symbolic significance. And there is nothing at all in the NT to back up the doctrine of the real presence, a concept it would be hard for NT authors even to articulate. As scholars of the NT commonly acknowledge, Jesus was neither a theologian nor a metaphysician. If anyone among Jesus' contemporaries were to espouse views like transubstantiation or consubstantiation, that person probably would number among the scribes and Pharisees.

Viewed from a textual perspective, the problem with theological controversies like these is that they seem to be focused on artificial issues. The undeniable importance of the Lord's Supper in Christianity does not hinge on esoteric relations between Christ's physical presence and the bread and wine of the New Covenant. What is more important about the Lord's Supper is the relation it establishes between those who partake of it and the sacrifice of Christ as unblemished lamb. At this point, for our purposes, it seems suitable to set aside theological concerns about the relations of body to bread and of blood to wine, and to concentrate instead on the relation between the Lord's Supper and the blood sacrifice of Christ on the cross.

(4.2342) Sharing in Christ's Body and Blood

Descriptions of the institution of the Lord's Supper are found in *1 Corinthians*, and in the three gospels *Matthew*, *Mark*, and *Luke*. In each of these texts, we recall, Jesus introduces the bread and wine, identifies these elements as his body and blood, and gives the disciples instructions about what to do with them. In *1 Corinthians* 11:24, for instance, Jesus took bread, broke it, and identified it as his body, telling the disciples "Do this" (*touto poieite*) in memory of me. Then he took the cup, identified it as the New Covenant

in his blood, and told the disciples “Do this” (*touto poieite*), as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me. These instructions are reiterated verbatim in *Luke 22:19*, where Jesus took bread, broke it, and said “Do this” (*touto poieite*) in memory of me. When Jesus tells the disciples “Do this,” what specifically are they being told to do?

An obvious part of the answer, of course, is that they are being told to eat the bread and drink the cup. To be sure, they are told explicitly to eat and drink at *Matthew 26:26-27*. The context, however, is not an ordinary meal, but rather the institution of the Lord’s Supper. And in this context, eating the bread and drinking the cup have a significance that goes beyond the mere ingestion of nutrients. The “this” (*touto*) the disciples are told to “do” (*poieite*) engages that significance to its full extent. In effect, the disciples are being instructed to share in Christ’s sacrifice on the cross.

The Apostle Paul says as much in *I Corinthians*. This letter is addressed to people who, like Paul, were personally accustomed to celebrating the Lord’s Supper. In *I Corinthians 10:16*, Paul asks rhetorically whether the cup they bless as part of that celebration “is not a sharing in the blood of Christ?” (*ouchi koinōnia estin tou haimatos tou Christou;*). Moreover, “is not the bread we break a sharing in the body of Christ?” (*ton arton hon klōmen, ouchi koinōnia tou sōmatos tou Christou estin;*). The term *koinōnia* (sharing in) here is a standard Greek word that can also be translated “communing with” or “partaking in.”

However translated, *koinōnia* is a relation, as distinct from a thing that can be related to other things. When Paul speaks of the cup they bless (*to potērion ... ho eulogoumen, 10:16*) as a sharing in the blood of Christ, he is not describing the cup itself (nor the wine it contains) as a sharing. The sharing in question is a relation between

Christ's blood and the cup that has been blessed. By virtue of this relation, someone who partakes of the cup participates in Christ's blood on the cross as well. Similarly, the (consecrated) bread is so related to Christ's body on the cross that partaking of the bread amounts to participating in the body of the crucified Christ. In either respect, partaking of the Lord's Supper is tantamount to sharing in the body and blood of Christ on the cross.

In the same context, Paul calls attention to the "fleshly dealings" (*kata sarka*, 10:18) of the Israelites, and asks: "Are not those who eat the sacrifices participants in the altar?" (*ouch hoi esthiontes tas thusias koinōnoi tou thusiastēriou eisin*, 10:18). Among the many kinds of burnt sacrifices practised by the Israelites, as described in *Leviticus*, some were to be eaten by priests alone (*Leviticus 7:6*), while others were to be eaten by the person making the offering (*Leviticus 7:19, Deuteronomy 12:27*). Regardless of who eats the sacrificial victim, the person making the sacrifice partakes in (*koinōneō*) what is happening on the altar. Although Paul does not mention blood in this passage, much the same presumably could also be said of those involved in the distribution of the blood. While the victim's blood generally was spread on the altar, it sometimes was sprinkled on the people as well (*Exodus 24:8*). Paul's point in *1 Corinthians 10:18* is that sharing in Christ's body and blood on the cross, which is the effect of celebrating the Lord's Supper, is continuous with the Jewish practice of partaking in blood sacrifices on the traditional altar.

When Jesus instructed the disciples saying "do this in memory of me," the "this" in question was their sharing in his forthcoming death on the cross. This was an instruction the disciples could not obey on the occasion it was given, since on that occasion Jesus was still alive. The disciples were instructed to "do this" once there is an

actual sacrifice of flesh and blood in which they could share. The timing here is important. They could not share in Jesus' death before he died. And certainly there was no partaking of bread and wine during the hours he was in process of dying. His instruction "do this" was an injunction to share in a particular event once it had actually happened.

But once that event had happened, sharing in it could be repeated indefinitely. In the words of *1 Corinthians* 11:26, once again, "for as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death." For later Christians, eating the bread and drinking the cup amounted to sharing in a past event. But there is no chronological limit to the number of times such sharing can take place as time progresses from past to future.

(4.2343) Participating in a Past Event

What is it to share in an event that is already past? To share in something is to take part (participate) in it, and how can anyone take part in something that has already happened? The answer must have something to do with the nature of that happening. It also must have something to do with the relation of sharing.

There is another passage in the NT having to do with sharing flesh and blood that might help with an answer. It occurs at *Hebrews* 2:9, as part of a sequence purporting to explain why Jesus was "made lower than angels" (*angelous ēlattōmenon*) in becoming man. The reason, in brief, is that he had to "suffer death" (*pathēma tou thanatou*), "so that he might taste death for everyone" (*huper pantos geusētai thanatou*, 2:9).

Particularly interesting for present purposes is the way Jesus' becoming man is described. With reference to "the children" (*ta paidia*) God had given Jesus (an allusion to *Isaiah*

8:18), the author states: “since the children share in flesh and blood, he [Jesus] likewise partook of the same” (*epei oun ta paidia kekoinōnēken haimatos kai sarkos, kai autos paraplēsiōs meteschen tōn autōn*, 2:14). Slightly rephrased, becoming human here is described as a matter of coming to partake of (*meteschen*) flesh and blood.

There is a striking complementarity between these passages and *1 Corinthians* 10:16. According to *Hebrews* 2:14, Jesus shared in the flesh and blood of his “children,” whereby he became human like them. In *1 Corinthians* 10:16, his human followers (“children”) share in Jesus’ crucified body and blood by breaking the bread and drinking the cup, whereby (according to *John* 6:51) they gain eternal life. By sharing in the flesh and blood of his people, Jesus became mortal (“lower than angels,” *Hebrews* 2:9). Whereas by sharing in the flesh and blood of the crucified Jesus, his people are enabled to overcome mortality.

Apart from the contrasting effects of sharing flesh and blood in these passages, moreover, *Hebrews* 2:14 and *1 Corinthians* 10:16-17 are the only passages in the NT employing the two terms *koinōneō* and *metechō* with parallel meanings. In Koine Greek, the latter term (like the former, as previously noted) is commonly rendered “to partake of” or “to share in.” Of eight occurrences in the NT, however, these are the only two passages in which *metechō* bears that specific meaning. Given the separate authorship of the two missives, this parallel in terminology is probably coincidental. But it is thought provoking nonetheless.

Authorship aside, the sharing relation at *Hebrews* 2:14 provides a clue to the puzzle of how someone can take part in an event (Christ’s death) that has already happened. Christ became man by sharing in the flesh and blood of humanity. The flesh

and blood in which he shared are not constituents of particular human organisms. They are properties of human organisms in general. Since nonhuman organisms have flesh and blood as well, other properties also contribute to being human. Reference to Christ having come to share in flesh and blood is an abbreviated way of saying he came to share in all the attributes essential to making someone human.

For obvious reasons, the properties that make someone human are not qualified by location in space or time. Although human individuals partake of these properties at particular times and in particular places, the properties themselves are nonspatial and atemporal. Christ partook of these properties during the particular time of his human existence. Partaking in these properties, that is to say, generally is both time-specific and space-specific. But the properties themselves are not specific in either respect. In a manner of speaking typical of the NT, the properties shared by all human beings are eternal. The flesh and blood in which Christ shared as man are eternal, meaning that they are not qualified with respect to space and time.

The body and blood of Christ on the cross can be thought of as eternal in a similar sense. Christ's body was hung on the cross at a particular place and time. His body shed blood as part of that process, again in a particular place at a particular time. In the context of the New Covenant, however, the role played by his body and blood on the cross is not confined to that, or to any other, particular occasion. Neither, accordingly, are the body and blood that play that role. In their New Covenant role, the body and blood of Christ on the cross are neither space-specific nor time-specific. In that sense, the body and blood of Christ on the cross are eternal.

In the NT, the common term for *eternal* is the adjective *aiōnios*, and the common term for *eternity* is the noun *aiōn*. The noun in this context carries a number of related but quite distinct meanings. Three of the most frequently appearing meanings are (a) the temporal world (i.e, the aggregate of things in time), and (b) an era (an extended segment of time), and (c) infinity (an indefinitely long period of time). Thus we read (a) of “the cares of the world” (*hai merimnai tou aiōnos*) at *Mark* 4:19, (b) of “the present age” (*toutō tō aiōni*) at *Matthew* 12:32, and (c) of something that has not happened “since the world began” (*ek tou aiōnos*) at *John* 9:32. An interesting facet of eternity in sense (b) is that it can come to an end, as indicated explicitly by the wording at *Matthew* 24:3 and 28:20 (both *sunteleias tou aiōnos*). Another sense inversely related to eternity “since the world began” is that (d) of “eternity yet to come” (*mellontos aiōnos*) at *Hebrews* 6:5.

The possibility of eternities before and after the present age helps make sense of the not infrequent use of the noun *aiōn* in the plural. An example comes at *Philippians* 4:20, with Paul’s parting remark “To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen” (*tō de theō kai patri hēmōn hē doxa eis tous aiōnas tōn aiōnōn, amēn*). Identically the same expression (*eis tous aiōnas tōn aiōnōn*) appears close to a dozen times in *Revelation* (e.g., 1:18, 4:9, 5:13). Although the most common English rendition of this expression is “forever and ever,” some translators prefer the more literal “to the ages of the ages.” The former rendition reads like a superlative “forever,” whereas the latter suggests something like “ages increased by ages.” English aside, the Greek clearly invokes a multiplicity of eternities or ages.

NT use of the adjective *aiōnios*, on the other hand, tends to be more uniform.

This term occurs most commonly in the NT as part of the expression *zōēn aiōnion*, “eternal life.” Among roughly four-dozen occurrences, the greatest concentration is in the Gospel *John*. Of the many passages mentioning *zōēn aiōnion* in *John*, moreover, it should be noted that none says anything about time specifically. To be sure, there are two passages (6:40,54) in which Jesus connects eternal life with his “raising someone up” (*anastēsō auton*) “on the last day ([en] *tē eschatē hēmera*). Whereas “last day” might seem to have temporal connotations, however, the point of these two passages is that eternal life ensues after being raised up from the dead. There is no suggestion in these passages that eternal life as such has temporal features.

One of these two passages in *John* connects eternal life directly with Jesus’ flesh and blood. At *John* 6:54 we read: “Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life” (*ho trōgōn mou tēn sarka kai pinōn mou to haima echei zōēn aiōnion*). “For my flesh is true food” (*hē gar sarx mou alēthēs estin brōsis*), Jesus goes on to say, “and my blood is true drink” (*kai to haima mou alēthēs estin posis*, 6:55). This is followed by “Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him” (*ho trōgōn mou tēn sarka kai pinōn mou to haima en emoi menei kagō en autō*, 6:56). The sequence ends with Jesus’ promise “Whoever eats this bread will live forever” (*ho trōgōn touton ton arton zēsei eis ton aiōna*, 6:58).

It is amply clear that Jesus in these passages is not talking about the flesh and blood of his (then present) earthly body, as his disciples mistakenly assume in referring to these words as “a hard saying” (*Sklēros ... hō logos*, 6:60). He is not linking eternal life to the practice of cannibalism. He is linking eternal life to the bread and wine of the Lord’s Supper, which he is about to institute. And the bread and wine of the Lord’s

Supper, in turn, is linked to the flesh and blood of Jesus on the cross. Once the Lord's Supper has been instituted, eating the bread and drinking the cup are tantamount to sharing in the flesh and blood of the crucified Jesus.

After the Lord's Supper has been instituted, eating the bread and drinking the cup are human acts that take place in time. The blood sacrifice of Jesus in which these temporal acts participate, however, including the bodily ruptures and spilled blood implicated as parts of that sacrifice, is a ritual act without temporal limitations. And as an enabling component of the New Covenant, this ritual act lacks spatial and temporal specificity.

If this ritual act of Jesus were limited to a specific place and time, it would nullify the several promises he makes at *John* 6:54-58. At 6:54, Jesus promises that whoever eats his flesh and drinks his blood will have eternal life. At 6:56, he promises that whoever eats his flesh and drinks his blood will abide in him. Similar promises of eternal rewards, also expressed in terms of the generic "whoever eats" (*ho trōgōn*), are made at 6:57 and 6:58. Jesus' language clearly indicates that such rewards are to be available generally. They are available regardless of person involved ("whoever"), and regardless of where or when that person eats and drinks. The flesh and blood implicated in Jesus' sacrifice on the cross, accordingly, are not confined to any particular place or time.

The Lord's Supper was instituted as a means for Jesus' followers to take part in his death on the cross. In reflecting above on what this entails, we encountered the question how one can take part in something that has already happened. As far as it pertains to the Lord's Supper, an answer to this question is now at hand.

Jesus' ritual sacrifice on the cross is neither space-specific nor time-specific. Such is the case also with the flesh and blood implicated in this sacrifice. To this extent, the flesh and blood in which someone partakes in the context of the Lord's Supper is like the flesh and blood in which Jesus partook in becoming human. Both sets of features are eternal in the sense of not being confined to a specific time or a specific place. By eating bread and drinking wine in the manner prescribed when Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper, one shares in the eternal presence of his death on the cross.

This ties in directly with the reference at *Hebrews* 13:20 to "the blood of the eternal covenant" (*haimati diathēkēs aiōniou*). In our previous discussion of this matter, an explanation was offered of the sense in which the covenant is eternal, but nothing was said in this regard about the blood itself. We now have a sense at hand in which the blood is eternal in its own right. In the context of the New Covenant, the Lord's Supper enables Christ's followers to share in his ritual sacrifice in a timeless manner. In the context of the eternal covenant, the eternal blood provides an avenue toward eternal life for the person sharing in it, regardless of when that sharing takes place.

(4.2344) Parsing "This is my Blood" and "This is my Body"

It should be noted that this conception of Christ's sacrificial flesh and blood as spatially and temporally unbounded is not without precedent. It is entailed by the theological doctrines both of transubstantiation and of consubstantiation. As mentioned previously, the former holds that the substances of bread and wine are eliminated by consecration, and are replaced by the substances of Christ's body and blood. The latter holds that the substances of the bread and wine persist after consecration, and thus coexist with the

substances of body and blood. In both cases, Christ's body and blood are thought to be present whenever bread and wine are consecrated. Since occasions on which bread and wine can be consecrated are spatially and temporally unlimited, it follows from these doctrines that Christ's body and blood must be spatially and temporally unlimited as well.

In this regard, however, it should also be noted that the conception of Christ's body and blood as being spatially and temporally unlimited does not depend upon either of these theological doctrines. Both doctrines were explicitly excluded from the considerations that led to this conception above. Without bringing these doctrines back into play, we now can see how this conception of Christ's flesh and blood opens up an alternative way of thinking about the relation of bread and wine to flesh and blood that is theologically less obscure.

Let us return for a yet more careful look at the description of the Lord's Supper in *I Corinthians* 11:23-25. On the night he was betrayed, the Lord Jesus took bread, gave thanks, broke it, and said to his disciples: "This is my body which is for you. Do this in memory of me" (*Touto mou estin to sōma to huper humōn` touto poieite eis tēn emēn anamnesis*, 11:24). Both sentences here begin (in Greek) with the demonstrative pronoun *touto* ("this"). But the term 'this' has entirely different references in these two occurrences. Our previous discussion of the phrase "do this" (*touto poieite*) led to the conclusion that the disciples were being instructed to share in Jesus' sacrifice on the cross by way of eating the bread at hand. The "this," in effect, is an action they are told to engage in—hence "*do* this." In the assertion "This is my body," however, the reference of 'this' obviously is not an action. What the pronoun refers to clearly is the bread that Jesus

broke. When Jesus said “This is my body,” he was affirming a certain relation between his body and the bread. So it is also with his remarks regarding blood and wine.

After dinner, Jesus took the cup and spoke in the same way, saying: “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me” (*Touto to potērion hē kainē diathēkē estin en tō emō haimati touto poieite, hosakis ean pinēte, eis tēn emēn anamnēsin*, 11:25). As with the bread, the instruction “do this” (*touto poieite*) means that the disciples should share in his sacrifice on the cross by drinking the cup held out to them. In this case, as with the bread, “this” refers to an action they are instructed to perform. As far as the other “this” is concerned, however, while it obviously refers to a cup of wine, what it says of that cup is less straightforward. Unlike the bread and his body, Jesus does not say simply that the wine is his blood. He says instead that the wine “is the new covenant in my blood.”

Identically the same terminology (with *estin* suppressed) is found in the corresponding account at *Luke 22:20*. The accounts at *Matthew 26:28* and *Mark 14:24*, however, read “is my blood of the covenant” (*estin to haima mou tēs diathēkēs*) instead. It is not clear immediately what either expression means, or whether they should be taken to mean the same. Is the wine to be identified as the New Covenant with a focus on Jesus’ blood? Or is it to be identified as his blood in its New Covenant role? Combining their approximate senses, we may read both passages as meaning essentially that the cup of wine is Jesus’ blood as it figures in the context of the New Covenant. In this context, as argued previously, Jesus’ blood figures primarily as part of an eternal sacrifice in which his followers can share without spatial or temporal limitation.

So what is to be made of the affirmation in these passages that the wine is (*estin*) Jesus' blood in the context of the New Covenant? For one thing, it may be assumed that this relation between wine and blood holds only for wine that has been properly consecrated (blessed, *eulogēsen*, as at *1 Corinthians* 10:16). We may also assume that provisions for consecrating both wine and bread have been introduced (by Paul's time of writing) as part of the New Covenant. These provisions would correspond to Jesus' blessing of the bread in *Matthew* 26:26, *Mark* 14:22, and *Luke* 24:30). For another thing, this affirmation should be distinguished from the claim that the (consecrated) wine is Jesus' blood tout court and regardless of context. Some such claim seems implicated by the doctrine of the "real presence," which holds that consecration brings about an essential change in the wine's metaphysical substance. The wine "really is" blood, according to this doctrine, without regard for particular contexts in which it might be encountered. If a nonbeliever inadvertently were served consecrated wine in a restaurant, for instance, that person would encounter Jesus' blood knowing nothing of its identity. As we shall see, there is a sense in which the wine and blood are essentially related, but this relation does not involve a speculative change in substance that converts wine into blood.

However interpreted, the affirmation that the wine is (*estin*) Jesus' blood is an assertion of identity. And like any identity assertion, it requires a context in which the reference of its terms can be fixed. If there are exceptions to this general rule regarding context, they would come with statements to the effect that a given thing is identical with itself (e.g., "the White House is the White House"). But the affirmation in question is not a statement of self-identity. No cup of wine is self-identical with Christ's blood.

The importance of context for identity-assertions can be illustrated with a few examples. Even “the White House is the White House,” to count as a statement of self-identity, requires a context establishing that the term ‘White House’ has the same reference in both occurrences. The importance of context is more important with statements employing different referring expressions, like “the 44th president of the U.S. is Barack Obama.” Necessary context in this example includes recent U.S. history, along with official documents recording Obama’s reelection in 2012. In other cases, such as “Venus is the Morning Star,” the needed context is more specialized in character. To make sense of this statement, information is required about the naming of heavenly bodies, in addition to some general account about how a planet (Venus) came to be referred to as a star.

Consider next the statement “Ezio Pinza is Boris Godunov,” which by itself makes little sense as an assertion of identity. Ezio Pinza was a celebrated Italian opera singer and Boris Godunov was tsar of Russia from 1598 to 1605. Obviously they were different people; and a statement identifying them in most contexts would be taken as gibberish. But it so happened that Ezio Pinza once sang the role of Boris Godunov with the Metropolitan Opera in Mussorgsky’s opera by that name. In response to the question “Who is Boris tonight?” on the day of the performance, the right answer would be “Ezio Pinza is Boris Godunov.” Given that specific context, a statement identifying Ezio Pinza as Boris Godunov not only would make sense but would be factually true.

For a similar example not involving persons, consider a distinctively shaped rock placed on a surface marked into 64 equally sized squares. Without further context, a statement identifying the rock as white king would be too indeterminate to make sense.

The surface might serve as a checkerboard rather than a chess board; and if the latter, the rock might serve as a queen or rook instead. With other pieces on the board, however, and with the context more fully spelled out, the statement “this rock is the white king” would be both intelligible and provisionally correct. It would be correct provided that a game ensues in which that rock actually plays the part of the white king.

With these analogies in mind, let us return to Jesus’ language identifying the cup of wine with his blood. In *1 Corinthians* 11:25 and *Luke* 22:20, Jesus identifies the wine as the new covenant of his blood. In *Matthew* 26:28 and *Mark* 14:24, he identifies it as his blood of the covenant. By way of synchronizing these passages, we interpreted them as saying in each case that the wine is his blood as it figures in the eternal sacrifice of the New Covenant. The New Covenant is the context in which the wine in the cup comes to be the blood of Jesus’ eternal sacrifice on the cross.

The New Covenant, however, was not inaugurated merely to establish an identity relation between wine and blood. At least in part, it was established to enable his followers to share in Jesus’ blood on the cross. In the New Covenant, the wine serves as the means enabling that sharing to take place. It is by drinking the cup that participants in the Lord’s Supper take part in the eternal blood sacrifice on the cross. To drink the cup is tantamount to sharing in the blood of that sacrifice. By virtue of this sharing relation, the cup of wine someone drinks while participating in the Lord’s Supper is (*estin*) the blood of Christ on the cross.

There are several passages in the Gospels where Jesus refers to his forthcoming crucifixion as a cup he has to drink himself. At *Matthew* 20:22, for example, Jesus asks his disciples whether they “are able to drink the cup that I am to drink” (*dunasthe piein to*

potērion ho egō mellō pinein). Essentially the same question (with a minor grammatical change) is posed at *Mark* 10:38. An answer comes at *Mark* 10:39, when Jesus tells them: “The cup that I drink you will drink” (*To potērion ho egō pinō piesthe*). Other passages in which Jesus refers to his forthcoming crucifixion as a cup he has to drink include *Matthew* 26:39,42, *Mark* 14:36, and *John* 18:11. When the disciples drink the cup of the Lord’s Supper, they share the cup that Jesus drank, namely that of his shedding blood on the cross. As Paul asks rhetorically at *I Cointhians* 10:16, with regard to the consecrated cup, “is it not a participation in the blood of Christ?” (*ouchi koinōnia tou sōmatos tou Christou estin;*).

An analogy might add intuitive plausibility to the identity of (a) the wine of the Lord’s Supper and (b) the blood of Christ on the cross. The sense in which wine is blood is like the sense in which water is life. In considering the latter, recall the interaction of Jesus with the Samaritan woman at the well. Jesus tells her that if she had asked him for a drink, rather than vice versa, he would have given her “living water” (*hudōr zōn*, *John* 4:10) such that she “would never thirst again” (*ou mē dipsēsei eis ton aiōna*, 4:14). There is further reference to such water at *John* 7:38, where Jesus proclaims that “living water” (*hudatos zōntos*) will flow from within those who believe in him. With regard to living water of this spiritual sort, water is life in a sense that goes beyond metaphor.

Water is life in a physical sense as well. In the context of the earth’s biosphere, water is an indispensable means to life. Without water, living creatures would soon die. So water is life as far as living organisms in the biosphere are concerned. Apart from this context, however, water and life are not connected (Mars, for example, has water but no

life). Accordingly, water is not life in an unqualified sense. Water is life only in a context where life is already present.

In the context of the New Covenant, similarly, wine is the designated means of sharing in Jesus' blood sacrifice on the cross. Before the institution of the Lord's Supper, no such means were available. Since drinking the cup is essential to sharing in Jesus' eternal blood, there is a nonmetaphorical sense in which the wine of the cup is the blood that was shed in Jesus' sacrifice. Apart from the context of the New Covenant, however, Jesus' death on the cross would have no redemptive force, and the wine of the Lord's Supper would have no redeeming effect. Apart from the New Covenant, accordingly, there is no connection to be made between blood and wine. It follows that even consecrated wine is not blood in an unqualified sense. If consecrated wine were consumed in a context where provisions of the New Covenant do not apply (e.g., a public restaurant), it would not serve as a means of participation in Christ's eternal sacrifice.

Recall the example of mistreating consecrated wine in this manner mentioned in *Hebrews* 10:29, where the author warns against "regarding as ordinary the blood of the covenant by which one is sanctified" (*to haima tēs diathēkēs koinon hēgēsamenos, en hō hēgiasthē*). Another example is "showing contempt for the church of God" (*tēs ekklēsias tou theou kataphroneite, 1 Corinthians* 11:22) by getting drunk during a putative Lord's Supper (*kuriakon diepnon, 11:20*). In *1 Corinthians* 11:27, Paul cautions anyone "who eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner" (*hos an esthīē ton arton ē pinē to potērion tou kuriou anaxiōs*). Such a person "shall be accountable [for transgressions] regarding the body and the blood of the Lord" (*enochos estai tou sōmatos kai tou haimatos tou kuriou, 11:27*). To avoid this, Paul says, one ought to scrutinize

(*dokimazetō*) oneself and “eat the bread and drink the cup accordingly” (*houtōs ek tou artou esthietō kai ek tou potēriou pinetō*, 11:28).

As with the wine and blood, the bread is the means by which someone partaking of the Lord’s Supper shares in the sacrifice of Jesus’ body on the cross. In each of the synoptic Gospels, Jesus took bread, broke it, and said: “this is my body” (*touto estin to sōma mou*, *Matthew* 26:26, *Mark* 14:22; *Luke* 22:19 with capital tau). Once consecrated, the bread eaten by the participant in the Lord’s Supper is the body hanging on the cross of Christ’s eternal sacrifice. The identity of bread and body is brought about according to the provisions of the New Covenant. In the context of the New Covenant, eating the consecrated bread is tantamount to sharing in the timeless sacrifice of Christ’s body on the cross.

(4.235) When the New Covenant Began

The Old Covenant began on Mount Sinai before the people entered the Promised Land. From the Christian perspective, it ended with the sacrifice of the unblemished Lamb on the cross. Taking into account sacrifices performed while it was in effect, the Old Covenant was marked by temporally specific events from beginning to end. The New Covenant, on the other hand, had a beginning in time, but lacks a specific end. It is temporally unbounded after it begins. Strange as it may seem, however, there is nothing in the NT that indicates exactly when in time it actually began.

The question of when the New Covenant began is important for the Christian narrative, inasmuch as it concerns the point in time when participants in the Lord’s Supper are first enabled to share in Christ’s crucifixion. An alternative version of the

question, accordingly, is when the Lord's Supper became effective as a means of sharing in Christ's eternal body and blood. Possible answers include: (i) during Jesus' last meal with his disciples, (ii) when Jesus died on the cross, (iii) between his bodily death and his resurrection, (iv) when he rose from the dead, and (v) after he ascended into heaven.

Regarding (i), we should note that the question when the Lord's Supper became effective is distinct from the question when it was instituted or ratified. Compare the case of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, giving women the right to vote, which was ratified on April 18, 1920, but did not go into effect until 8 days later. Similarly, the protocols of the Lord's Supper were instituted during Jesus' last meal with his disciples. But since these protocols were intended as means enabling the disciples to share in Jesus' death, and since he was still alive when he issued them, these protocols could not take effect until sometime after they were instituted.

This matter of timing has interesting consequences for understanding the force of Jesus' words when he introduced the protocol of the Lord's Supper. In the version at *1 Corinthians* 11:23-26, when Jesus broke bread and said "this is my body," he was not identifying the bread in his hand with his body reclining at the table. To read his words this way would be to repeat the mistake of the Jews at *John* 6:52, who were outraged at the thought of Jesus wanting people to aim for eternal life by taking a bite out of his body. Likewise, when Jesus took the cup and said "this cup is the new covenant in my blood," he was not identifying the wine in the cup with the blood then flowing in his veins. That would be too preposterous for the disciples, or anyone else, to take seriously.

In his words to his disciples during their last meal together, Jesus was not purporting to exercise protocols of the Lord's Supper that had yet to take effect. And he

was not identifying the bread and wine with the body and blood of the person who broke the bread and held the cup. What he did with the bread and wine, and the words he spoke while doing it, did not result in the bread and wine becoming anything other than what they actually were at the time. What he did with the bread and wine instead was to demonstrate to his disciples how they were to enact the Lord's Supper after his death.

In brief, Jesus' words and actions during his last meal with his disciples did not themselves constitute an enactment of the Lord's Supper. Although the Lord's Supper was instituted on that occasion, it had yet to take effect. Until Jesus had actually died on the cross, neither he nor anyone else could exercise the protocols that were to enable participants in the Lord's Supper to share in his crucifixion. Nothing in the NT provides a clue about when these protocols were first exercised. But the first enactment of the Lord's Supper must have come sometime after Jesus died.

With regard to the question when the Lord's Supper became effective as a means for sharing in Christ's eternal flesh and blood, possibility (ii) is that this happened at the moment he died on the cross. This possibility must be rejected for the following reason. From time of death through time of burial, only the actual body and blood of Jesus were present on the site of crucifixion. Enactment of the Lord's Supper, however, effects a sharing in his eternal body and blood, and these elements achieve eternal status only when Christ himself reenters eternity with his resurrection.

This reasoning disqualifies possibility (iii) as well, which is that the Lord's Supper became effective sometime between Christ's death and his resurrection. Since the Lord's Supper is a sharing of Christ's eternal body and blood, and since this eternal body and blood were not available for sharing before the resurrection, the third possibility also

must be rejected. Although possibilities (ii) and (iii) are disqualified by the same considerations, however, there are aspects of (iii) that invite discussion on their own.

If the Old Covenant ended with the crucifixion, and the New Covenant went into effect only with the resurrection or later, there is a period covering parts of three days in which no covenantal relation existed between God and his people. From a Christian perspective, this period appears to be a “down time” when chaos reigned. According to *Matthew 27:51*, the curtain of the temple was split from top to bottom, the earth shook, and rocks were broken. Splitting of the temple curtains is also reported at *Mark 15:38* and *Luke 23:45*, but without mention of shaking earth or broken rocks. *Matthew 27:52-53* continues with an account of how bodies of holy people were returned to life in their tombs, apparently to wait for a day or so before appearing to many people in Jerusalem after Christ’s resurrection. Outside of these three Gospels, there is no further mention in the NT of strange happenings of this sort.

In point of fact, little is said in the NT about happenings of any sort between Christ’s burial and his resurrection. *Matthew 27:62-66* tells of a guard being set at the tomb to make sure the disciples did not remove Jesus’ body as part of a fraudulently staged resurrection. And *Luke 23:56* has the women who had accompanied Jesus in his last hours returning to Galilee to keep the Sabbath. The Gospels *Mark* and *John* both skip over the Sabbath, and move directly to the narrative of the resurrection. As far as the NT generally is concerned, the Saturday before Sunday’s resurrection is mostly ignored.

Pope Emeriitus Benedict XVI (Joseph Ratzinger) wrote an article entitled “God’s Concealment on Holy Saturday” (“The Catholic Thing” on Twitter, April 15, 2017). The article begins with the question “what is really meant” by the “mysterious phrase” [in the

Apostle's Creed] that Jesus descended into hell. After observing that 'hell' is a bad translation of the Hebrew word *sheol*, which means a place of profound darkness where both the righteous and the unrighteous go after death, Ratzinger shifts to the question "what really happens when we descend into the profundity of death?" In his understanding, what really happens is that we enter an "absolute solitude" that cannot "be illuminated by love." On Holy Saturday, God's love was concealed even from Jesus, as signaled by his cry at moment of death "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Ratzinger's article concludes with the "hopeful certainty" that Jesus' time in "hell" infused a "presence of love in death's sphere" for which we can be grateful when we "draw near to the hour of our ultimate solitude."

The credal affirmation that Jesus spent Holy Saturday in hell, it might be noted, runs counter to *Luke 23:43*, which has Jesus saying to the repentent thief on the nearby cross: "today you will be with me in paradise" (*sēmeron met' emou esē en tō paradeisō*). This tension between creed and text adds to the confusion that marks the interval between Jesus' death and his resurrection.

With possibilities (i), (ii), and (iii) eliminated, remaining alternatives allow that the Lord's Supper became effective as a means of sharing Christ's eternal body either (iv) at the moment of resurrection or (v) not until his ascension into heaven. The difference between (iv) and (v) depends on what is to be made of *Luke 24:30*, which tells of the risen Lord blessing and breaking bread. Mention of his breaking bread is repeated at *Luke 24:35*. Does this blessing and breaking amount to participation in the Lord's Supper? If so, the Lord's Supper became effective after the resurrection but before the

ascension, thus establishing alternative (iv). If not, then there is no scriptural basis for (iv) instead of (v), making the difference between them moot.

The protocol of the Lord's Supper calls for breaking and eating bread as a means of sharing in the body of the crucified Christ. But breaking and sharing bread is not associated with the Lord's Supper exclusively in the NT. There are several NT references to breaking and eating bread that clearly have nothing to do with the Lord's Supper. *Mark* 6:37-43 and *Luke* 9:13-17 both tell of Jesus feeding 5,000 men with five loaves of bread and two fish. By way of preparing the food, Jesus "said a blessing and broke the loaves" (*eulogēsen kai kateklasen tous artous*, *Mark* 6:41), and then gave them to the disciples to distribute among the crowd. On another occasion, recounted in *Mark* 8:2-9, Jesus fed 4,000 people with seven loaves of bread and a few small fish. After giving thanks, he took the loaves, "broke them" (*eklasen*, 8:6), and told his disciples to distribute them. In the aftermath recorded at *Mark* 8:19, Jesus reminds his disciples that when he "broke the five loaves" (*tous pente artous eklasa*) for the 5,000, there were twelve baskets full of pieces left. Then at 8:20, he recalls that there were seven "baskets full of broken pieces" (*spuridōn plērōmata klasmatōn*) left after feeding the 4,000.

Another occasion of blessing and breaking bread unrelated to the Lord's Supper is recounted at *Acts* 27:35. It concerns Paul, who was in Roman custody, and his adventures on a ship that was running out of control on a storm-tossed sea near Crete. After 14 anxiety-ridden days during which no one on board ate (!), Paul urged the Roman soldiers to take command of the ship and to make the crew eat to give them strength. In order to set an example, Paul himself "took bread" (*labōn arton*), and "giving thanks to God" (*eucharistēsen tō theō*), "broke it and began to eat" (*klasas ērxato esthiein*). The next

morning, after the ship struck a reef off the coast of Malta, all 276 aboard made it safely to shore. Officially still in custody, Paul spent the next three months healing everyone on the island who was sick. As the story unfolds, all these good things began to happen after Paul gave thanks, took bread, and ate it in the midst of a violent storm. Still, despite the favorable outcome, it would take a long stretch of the imagination to make this dramatic scene with the bread into a celebration of the Lord's Supper.

There are other passages in *Acts*, nonetheless, where mention of breaking bread could plausibly be read with the Lord's Supper in mind. At 2:42-43, after 3,000 had been added to the fellowship by "many wonders and signs" (*polla te terata kai sēmeia*) accomplished by Peter and the other apostles, these newly converted brothers devoted themselves to "the fellowship, the breaking of the bread, and the prayers" (*tē koinōnia, tē klasei tou artou kai tais proseuchais*). Emphatic use of definite articles here suggests that specific practices were involved, very likely practices associated with the Lord's Supper. Another such case comes at *Acts* 20:7, which has Paul talking to a group of brothers on the night before he left Troas for Miletus. The occasion, as the narrator describes it, is "The first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread" (*En de tē mia tōn sabbatōn sunēgmenōn hēmōn klasai arton*). The first day of the week, of course, is the day Jesus rose from the dead. It seems not unlikely that the early Christians would have set this day aside for celebrating the Lord's Supper.

There are two sets of passages in *1 Corinthians*, furthermore, in which breaking of bread is expressly associated with the Lord's Supper. One was examined previously in connection with its distinctive use of the terms *metechō* and *koinōneō* in the sense of "share in" or "participate in." In 10:16, Paul asks rhetorically "is not the bread that we

break a participation in the body of Christ?” (*ton arton hon klōmen, ouchi koinōnia tou sōματος tou Christou estin;*). The sense is that breaking the bread, as part of the Lord’s Supper, contributes to sharing in the body of Christ on the cross. Paul goes on to argue at 10:17 that because “there is one bread” (*heis artos*), and “because we all partake of the one bread” (*hoi gar pantes ek tou henos artou metechomen*), “we who are many are one body” (*hen sōma hoi polloi esmen*). The reasoning here is elusive, but appears to go as follows. There is a unique institution of breaking bread that contributes to sharing in the body of Christ on the cross. We all (*hoi polloi*) participate in that same institution. Therefore we are united in sharing in the body of Christ. By way of critique, it indeed does follow that we are united as a group with this particular mode of sharing in common. But it does not follow that we as a group constitute a single body in any other respect. It certainly does not follow that we as a group are members of Christ’s body on the cross.

To be sure, there is another sense in which individuals might be grouped together as Christ’s body. This sense is succinctly expressed at *1 Corinthians* 12:27, where Paul tells his audience: “You are the body of Christ and severally members of it” (*Humeis de este sōma Christou kai melē ek merous*). The body of Christ in question here is the earthly church (see *Ephesians* 1:22-23), quite different from the body that hung on the cross. This presumably is the sense also at *Romans* 12:5, where Paul says: “so we who are many are one body in Christ” (*houtōs hoi polloi hen sōma esmen en Christō*). Whatever might be made of the sense in which the church is Christ’s body, however, it has nothing directly to do with the body on the cross in which participants in the Lord’s Supper share by breaking bread.

A second set of passages in *1 Corinthians* where breaking bread is expressly associated with the Lord's Supper is 11:20-24. Indeed, 11:20 is the only place in the NT where the Lord's Supper is mentioned by name (*kuriakon deipnon*). The drift of Paul's message to the Corinthians in this context is to point out respects in which their supposed observance of the Lord's Supper goes wrong. Specifically, they are wrong in treating the Lord's Supper as an occasion to satisfy natural hunger or to get drunk. After expressing his indignation (somewhat peevishly) at 11:22, Paul reminds his correspondents of what Jesus told him about how the Lord's Supper should be celebrated. On the night he was betrayed, Paul recounts, the Lord Jesus "took bread, gave thanks, and broke it" (*elaben arton ... eucharistēsas eklasen*, 11:23-24), saying: "This is my body which is for you; do this in memory of me" (*Touto mou estin to sōma to huper humōn` touto poieite eis tēn emēn anamnēsin*, 11:24). The significance of these verses, and of those immediately following regarding the cup, has already been discussed.

We have isolated several cases in which scriptural references to breaking bread have nothing to do with the Lord's Supper, along with several other cases in which the Lord's Supper is clearly implicated. This brings us back to the question whether Christ's blessing and breaking bread on the night of the day he was resurrected, cited at *Luke* 24:30, counts as a celebration of the Lord's Supper. Since this is the only recorded instance of blessing and breaking bread during the forty days between Christ's resurrection and his ascension, the question has a direct bearing on when the New Covenant went into effect.

Let us recall the circumstances in which Jesus blessed bread and broke it after his resurrection. In the other Gospels, the first person to see Jesus after the resurrection is

Mary Magdalene. But in *Luke*, although Mary Magdalene was among the first to see the empty tomb, the first to see the risen Jesus himself were two men (one named Cleopas) on the road to Emmaus. Moreover, this is the only direct reference to the Emmaus trip in the Gospels. There is indirect reference to the trip, however, at *Mark* 16:12, which notes that Jesus “appeared in another form” (*ephanerōthē en hetera morphē*) to two disciples while they were “walking in the country” (*poreuomenois eis agron*). As indicated in 16:9, “another form” here means other than the form in which “he appeared first to Mary Magdalene” (*ephanē prōton Maria tē Magdalēnē*).

The form in which Jesus appeared to Cleopas and his companion was such that “their eyes were kept from recognizing him” (*hoi de ophthalmoi autōn ektratounto tou mē epignōnai auton, Luke 24:16*). Incognito, Jesus asked what they are talking about. They responded with a brief account of Jesus’ crucifixion and of his tomb that had been found empty that morning. Jesus then launched into an apparently rather lengthy exposition of everything contained “in all the scriptures concerning himself” (*en pasais tais graphais ta peri heautou, 24:27*). This instruction began with Jesus scolding them for being “foolish and slow of heart to believe all the prophets have spoken” (*anoētoi kai bradeis tē kardia tou pisteuein epi pasin hois elalēsan hoi prophētai, 24:25*), which could well have revealed to them who was speaking. But the identity of Jesus remained unknown until the journey was over and he joined them for an evening meal.

Upon reclining at table with them, Jesus “took bread, gave thanks, broke it, and gave it to them” (*labōn ton arton eulogēsen kai klasas epedidou autois, 24:30*).

Immediately “their eyes were opened and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight” (*autōn de diēnoichthēsan hoi opnthalmoi kai epegnōsan auton kai autos*

aphantos egeneto ap' autōn, 24:31). Then they said to each other: “Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he explained the scriptures to us?” (*Ouchi hē kardia hēmōn kaiomenē ēn [en hēmin] hōs elalei hēmin en tē hodō, hōs diēnoigen hēmin tas graphas;*, 24:32). Within moments, the two were back on the road to Jerusalem.

Our question of the moment is whether Jesus’ breaking bread for these two men constitutes a celebration of the Lord’s Supper. While the question does not admit a ready answer, as we shall see, the answer on balance is “probably not.”

One complication is the uncertain status of Jesus’ visible presence during his post-resurrection interactions with his disciples. As stated explicitly by Peter in *Acts* 10:40-41, God raised Jesus on the third day, and “rendered him visible, not to all the people but to us previously chosen by God as witnesses” (*edōken auton emphanē genesthai, ou panti tō laō, alla martusin tois prokecheirotōnēmois hupo tou theou, ēmin*). In other words, God arranged that the only people who could see the post-resurrection Jesus were the disciples who interacted with him “after he rose from the dead” (*meta to anastēnai auton ek nekrōn*, 10:41).

This restriction on who could see him after his resurrection seems to have been anticipated by the pre-crucifixion Jesus himself. In *John* 14:19 Jesus tells his disciples that the time is near when “the world will see me no more” (*ho kosmos me ouketi theōrei*), but that “you will see me” (*humeis de theōreite me*). A few verses later, Judas (not Iscariot) asks: “Lord, how is it that you will manifest yourself to us but not to the world?” (*Kurie, ... ti gegonen hoti hēmin melleis emphanizein seauton kai ouchi tō kosmō;*, 14:22). Apparently ignoring the question, Jesus responds by affirming that loving

him is equivalent to keeping his word. On the topic of keeping his word, Jesus goes on to say that the Father will send a Helper (*paraklētos*) who “will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you” (*ekeinos humas didaxei panta kai hupomnēsei humas panta ha eipon humin [egō]*, 14:26). Characterized earlier as “the spirit of truth” (*to pneuma tēs alētheias*, *John* 14:17), this Helper is identified as “the Holy Spirit” (*to pneuma to hagion*) at 14:26.

Other references to the Helper occur at *John* 15:26 and 16:7, in the former of which the Helper is also characterized as the Spirit of Truth. These four passages in *John* contain the only references to the Holy Spirit as Helper in the NT. In *John* 14:19-26 specifically, Jesus’ main concern obviously was with the disciples remaining true to his word, rather than Judas’ question regarding who would see him after his resurrection.

Not only were Jesus’ appearances during the 40 days after his resurrection limited to his followers, but his mode of appearance varied from case to case as well. According to *John* 20:15, when he first appeared to Mary Magdalene she mistook him for a gardener. The two travelers to Emmaus, in *Luke* 24:13-31, viewed him throughout their trip as a total stranger. And *Mark* 16:12 makes a point of describing the appearances to Mary Magdalene and to the two travelers as two different forms (*morphē*) of appearance.

Another anomaly in *Luke* regarding Jesus’ post-resurrection appearances is his ability spontaneously to appear and to disappear. After breaking bread and giving it to the two travelers, Jesus simply vanished from their sight. Then when the two had joined the other disciples in Jerusalem, Jesus himself suddenly “stood among them” (*estē en mesō autōn*) and said “Peace to you” (*Eirēnē humin*, 24:36). The same sudden appearance and

the same spoken words are recorded in *John 20:26*, along with the additional information that the doors were locked.

From his birth to his crucifixion, as doctrine has it, Jesus was “wholly God” and “wholly man.” Beginning with his death on the cross, however, it seems he was “wholly” neither. Someone who is wholly God would not cry out “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (*Matthew 27:46, Mark 15:34*). Only with his resurrection does it seem plausible to think of him as wholly God once again. His status as wholly man, on the other hand, seems problematic from his crucifixion onward. The body of a dead person is not wholly a man. Someone who is wholly man, moreover, shares the attributes of other men, normal capacities and normal limitations both included. And among the limitations of normal men is their inability to appear or to disappear abruptly, without approaching or moving away from the place concerned. Normal men also are not limited by being visible only to a select group of other people. Taking all this into account, we may reasonably conclude that the resurrected Jesus was not wholly man.

Jesus himself seemed to have recognized that he was a different person after having arisen from the dead. At *Luke 24:44*, leading up to the ascension at 24:51, Jesus addressed his disciples and reminded them of “the words I spoke to you while I was still with you” (*hoi logoi mou hous elalēsa pros humas eti ōn sun humin*). He goes on to speak of the scriptures that had to be fulfilled, in particular those pertaining to his death and resurrection. The phrase “while I was still with you” at 24:44 suggests a difference between the person previously with them and the person addressing them presently. The sense seems to be that the person with them previously is no longer with them at the

moment of address. In effect, the pre-crucifixion Jesus is distinct from the Jesus about to be “carried up into heaven” (*anephereto eis ton ouranon*, 24:51).

Regardless of ambiguous identity, the Jesus that broke bread with the two men in Emmaus was only a few days past crucifixion and only a few hours past resurrection. How likely is it that this Jesus would celebrate the Lord’s Supper? The Lord’s Supper, once again, is a ritual enabling its participants to share in the eternal body and blood of the crucified Lord. The question, accordingly, may be rephrased to query the likelihood of the newly resurrected Jesus engaging in a ritual that enables sharing in his own eternal body and blood.

This likelihood seems low indeed, for the following reason. Jesus’ body had actually been broken and his blood actually shed less than three days before the occasion of breaking bread with the two travelers in Emmaus. To engage a protocol enabling him to share further in something he recently had experienced firsthand would be gratuitous and even depreciative. To do it again would detract from the original doing. This is the only occasion on record of Jesus breaking bread during the time between resurrection and ascension. The point of the preceding remarks, however, can be generalized. Jesus taught his disciples the protocols for enacting the Lord’s Supper before he died. But for Jesus to reenact something he had already done seems to make little sense.

In brief, there is no record in the NT of Jesus celebrating the Lord’s Supper himself, and in particular no record of celebrating it during the 40 days between his resurrection and his ascension. As far as the NT record is concerned, the first celebrations of the Lord’s Supper occurred in the early churches that were established by his disciples after his ascension. This eliminates possibility (iv), namely that the protocols of the

Lord's Supper were first engaged in the days after the resurrection but before the ascension. With possibilities (i), (ii), and (iii) eliminated previously, the upshot is (v) that the Lord's Supper was first celebrated after the resurrected Christ had ascended into heaven.

Celebration of the Lord's Supper takes place within the context of the New Covenant. This means that the New Covenant was in effect when the Lord's Supper was first celebrated in the early churches. But the NT leaves us in the dark about when specifically the New Covenant went into effect. For reasons just examined, it probably went into effect sometime after Christ's ascension into heaven. When exactly it went into effect, however, the NT leaves indeterminate.

As far as the overall Christian narrative is concerned, to be sure, when specifically the New Covenant went into effect makes no practical difference. From the first celebration of the Lord's Supper onward, the Christian narrative progresses with the New Covenant already in effect.

(4.24) Component (C): The Individual Journey to Eternal Life

For purposes of this essay, the Christian narrative has been divided into three major components. The first component (A) covers humanity's original sin in the Garden of Eden and subsequent attempts of the Jewish people to gain God's favor under terms of the Old Covenant. The second component (B) deals with the mission of Jesus Christ on earth, in the course of which he redeems humankind from original sin by his death on the cross, simultaneously brings the Old Covenant to an end, and lays the groundwork for a New Covenant between God and his people. We turn now to the third component (C),

concerned primarily with the journey of the individual Christian under the New Covenant toward the projected end of eternal life.

Transition into this final component of the narrative is marked by a number of substantial changes having to do with time. For one, events and circumstances included in (A) and (B) all took place in the past. As time progresses into the future, the first two components remain unaltered. Interpretations of texts contributing to (A) and (B), of course, might change indefinitely, and the texts themselves are always subject to scholarly redaction. As far as the Christian narrative itself is concerned, however, (A) and (B) deal exclusively with the past. Component (C), on the other hand, is continually being augmented as time progresses. Past events are included as a matter of course, inasmuch as present events soon recede to occupy past time. But past events are always followed by fresh events in the present, which means that this part of the narrative is constantly changing.

With the transition from (A) and (B) into (C), moreover, there are changes in what might be termed the “metrics” of the times involved. These changes have to do with the way time is measured. An individual Christian’s progression along the path of the New Covenant can be measured by the same public time intervals (years, days, hours) as those applicable in the case of another person occupied in essentially nonreligious pursuits. In a believer’s reenactment of Christ’s Passion at Easter, for instance, the interval between the crucifixion and the resurrection is commensurate with the corresponding time interval spent by another person not involved in the reenactment.

There are numerous relevant sequences the OT, on the other hand, to which measures of public time are not applicable. One such is the period of time that passed

between the initiation of the Old Covenant and its end with Christ's death on the cross. Although more than a millennium presumably was involved, we have no way of measuring that period precisely in terms of years. Similar instances can be found in the NT. Reenactments aside, there is no public measure of the time between Christ's actual death and his early morning appearance to Mary. We return shortly to this concept of public time measurement.

With regard to time, however, the most significant departure of (C) from earlier parts of the narrative is its recurring reference to eternal life. One possible understanding of eternal life is that of a life that extends endlessly through time. Another possible understanding is that of a state of life outside of time. In either case, our understanding of eternal life is essentially bound up with our understanding of time. Let us survey NT references to eternal life before turning to a more detailed examination of the nature of time.

(4.241) References to Eternal Life in the NT

There are more than forty occurrences in the NT of the expression *zōēn aiōnion* (eternal life), nearly half of which are in the Gospel *John*. The only occurrence in the Septuagint, by contrast, is at *Daniel* 12:2, although a few other passages (e.g., *Psalms* 49:9) contain language to a similar effect. Eternal life clearly was of less interest to the OT authors than to their NT counterparts. Interest in the NT is highlighted by the concern with eternal life evident in the words of Jesus himself. Of the roughly twenty occurrences in *John*, all but two come from the mouth of Jesus. The exceptions are one spoken by Peter (6:68) and one (probably) by John the Baptist (3:36).

An occurrence notd previously, but worth reiterating, comes in Jesus' response to Nicodemus, following the latter's expression of scepticism at Jesus' mention of the need to be "born anew" (*gennēthē anōthen*, 3:3). Included in Jesus' response were the words: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life" (*Houtōs gar ēgapēsen ho theos ton kosmon, hōste ton huion ton monogenē edōken, hina pas ho pisteuōn eis auton mē apolētai all' echē zōēn aiōnion*, 3:16). In the NT's network of love discussed previously, God's people are called upon to love God in return. The love flowing from God though his Son is instrumental in gaining eternal life for those who believe in the Son.

A second passage of particular interest in this regard is *John* 17:3. In his prayer immediately preceding his betrayal, Jesus lifted his eyes to heaven, averred that the time had come to glorify God, and acknowledged that God had given him authority to grant eternal life to all the followers God had provided him. Jesus then articulates what appears to be his understanding of eternal life. Jesus says: "And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent" (*hautē de estin hē aiōnios zōē hina ginōskōsin se ton monon alēthinon theon kai hon apesteilas 'Iēsoun Christon*, 17:3). We shall return to this passage in due course for a thorough examination. As will be seen, use of the verb *ginōskō* at 17:3 provides a bridge to the theme of God's love in *John* 3:16.

Yet another passage of particular relevance is *John* 12:50. Replying in a loud voice to those who secretly believe in him but are afraid to acknowledge it, Jesus says they will be judged on the last day by "the word he has spoken" (*ho logos hon elalēsa*, 12:48). He tells them next that the Father has commanded him regarding "what to say and

what to speak” (*ti eipō kai ti lalēsō*, 12:49). Then at 12:50, Jesus says: “I know that his commandment is eternal life” (*oida hoti hē entolē autou zōē aiōnios estin*). When we return for a thorough examination of *John* 17:3, *John* 12:50 will enter into consideration.

(4.2411) Perennial Puzzles of Time

It is commonly assumed that eternal life amounts to endless existence in time. There are several reasons for being suspicious of that assumption. One is that time itself most likely is not endless, in which case nothing could exist in it endlessly. Another is that time, as we know it, is a human construct, which makes it anomalous that the eternal lie of the NT should in any way depend on it. A third reason is that time itself is deeply puzzling, and has been as long as people have thought about it seriously. Before continuing our discussion of eternal lie, it is time to consider how earlier thinkers have responded to the puzzles of time.

Regardless of its nature in other respects, time is essentially bound up with motion. Perhaps the most enduring treatment of the relation between time and motion is that laid out in book IV of Aristotle’s *Physics*. A standard formulation of Aristotle’s view is found at 219b2, where he defines time as “number of motion with respect to before and after” (*arithmos kinēseōs kata to proteron kai husteron*). An alternative formulation in the same context employs the term *metron* (measure) instead of *arithmos*. Both *arithmos* and *metron* have numerous meanings in Attic Greek. The shared meaning here is “amount” or “extent.” Characterized either way, time marks out the extent of motion.

This definition should not be read as saying that time itself provides a scale along which extent of motion can be measured. Time itself is not a scale of measurement, but

rather a dimension that can be measured according to various temporal scales. As Aristotle makes explicit at *Physics* 220b15-16, moreover, time and motion are *interdependent*, not *independent* like measure and thing measured. Being interdependent, time and motion relate to each other in reciprocal ways. Time limits (*metroumen*) motion and vice versa. Each is what it is because of the other.

In brief, time and motion for Aristotle go hand in hand. Time measures the extent of motion (how far?) and motion, in turn, measures the extent of time (how long?). For Aristotle, moreover, both time and motion exist independently of human involvement, which means that they do not depend for their existence on humanly devised measuring scales. This makes Aristotle a realist regarding the existence of motion and time. We turn presently to reasons why Aristotle's realism in this regard appears to be mistaken.

Plato's view of time in the *Timaeus* is also realistic, albeit unlike Aristotle's in several salient respects. According to the *Timaeus*, the creator of the universe is designated both Father (*patera*, 28C4) [alternatively God (*ho theos*, 39B4)] and Maker (*poiētēn*, 28C3) [alternatively Demiurge (*dēmiourgos*, 29A3, *passim*)]. When its creator saw the universe alive and in motion, he sought to make it more like the Everlasting Living Being (*zōon aidion on*, 37D2) after which it was modeled. Since the model itself is eternal, and since it is not possible to bestow eternity on a created thing, he decided to make a moving image of eternity (*eikō ... kinēton ... aiōnos*, 37D5-6). The image would be like eternity in remaining One (*en henī*), but nonetheless in motion "according to number" (*kat' arithmon*, 37D7). The narrator then identifies this image with what we now call "time" (*chronon*, 37D8). Hence Plato's view that time is a moving image of eternity.

Plato's account overlaps with Aristotle's in tying time essentially to motion. Whereas Aristotle connects time with motion generally, however, Plato associates it with the motion of the heavenly bodies in particular. A complete orbit of the sun around the earth, for example, marks off a day. In constructing the physical component of the universe, the Demiurge arranged the respective motions of these bodies according to harmonically ordered geometrical proportions. This enables the motions of the heavenly bodies to be described in mathematical terms. In Aristotle's characterization of time as the number of motion, the term *arithmos* has nothing directly to do with number in mathematics. In Plato's view, by contrast, mathematical number is directly involved in the motions of the heavenly bodies that enable temporal measurement.

Another difference between Aristotle and Plato is that time in the *Physics* exists eternally, whereas time in the *Timaeus* is created by a divine Maker. Time was not created *in time*, to be sure, yet an act of creation was required to bring it into being. Plato nonetheless agrees with Aristotle in giving time a status not dependent on the existence of rational human beings. The heavenly bodies would persist in motion according to mathematical number even if humans were not around to keep track of the days and months. For both Plato and Aristotle, time exists independently of how it is measured. Time exists independently of being measured at all.

Prominent anti-realists regarding time include St. Augustine, Immanuel Kant, and J. M. E. McTaggart. Although none of their arguments against temporal realism is generally accepted as conclusive, it will be helpful to consider these arguments in summary form.

Augustine is famous for saying that he knows what time is until he has to explain it, upon which he finds he does not know after all (*Confessions*, book XI, caput 14). Augustine's discussion of time is taken up mostly with paradoxes and peculiarities that make time so hard for him to explain. Of particular interest, in comparison with Plato and Aristotle, is that Augustine is concerned mostly with the time of human experience. Another term for the time of human experience is "phenomenal time." Whereas Plato and Aristotle had little to say about phenomenal time, Augustine in turn showed little interest in the time implicated in the measurement of physical motion. The paradoxes and peculiarities that led to Augustine's temporal anti-realism are mostly anomalies associated with phenomenal time.

Augustine's anti-realism regarding time comes to the fore in book 11, caput 20, of the *Confessions*, where he affirms that the "present past," the "present present," and the "present future" all exist in the soul (or mind, *anima*). This conception of a present (a now) that can be located in past, present, and future alike, anticipates Willaim James' specious present examined previously. The latter is "specious" in that past, present and future are all implicated in the present of phenomenal time. As we shall see, this conception also anticipates McTaggart's well-known (among philosophers) A-series, in which events move sequentially from future to present and back into the past.

Even more explicitly anti-realist is a passage in the *Confessions* (book 11, caput 27) that merits quotation at length. "It is in you, my mind, that I measure times [sic]" (*In te, anime meus, tempora mea metior*). After defining memory as the impression (*affectionem*) caused by things as they pass by (*res praetereuntes*), and observing that memory remains (*manet*) when these things are gone, he affirms that it is the present

memory of these things that he measures and not the things that pass by themselves. He sums it up by saying of this memory unequivocally: “this I measure when I measure times; either this is time [literally these are times], accordingly, or I do not measure times” (*ipsam metior, cum tempora metior. ergo aut ipsa sunt tempora, aut non tempora metior*). This pronouncement is clear and forceful enough to count as a classic statement of anti-realism regarding time.

Aristotle was concerned with physical time, ignoring the phenomenal, whereas Augustine was concerned with phenomenal time, ignoring the physical. Immanuel Kant’s approach to time falls somewhere in between. Like Augustine, Kant approached time from the perspective of the human subject. His focus, however, was not on time as presented in the subject’s awareness, but rather on the subject’s perception of temporal processes in the world at large. In this respect, Kant shared Aristotle’s concern with the temporal features of the world in motion. Unlike Aristotle, however, Kant considered these features to be imposed by the subject as a condition of perception, rather than features inherent in the world itself.

As laid out in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, time and space are what Kant terms (in translation) “forms of sensible intuition.” Rational human beings order their fields of experience by projecting temporal and spatial structures upon them, in a way not unlike the way we project particular aromas on things we smell and particular flavors on things we taste. Although we can perceive the sensible world without smelling or tasting it, however, we cannot perceive it without organizing it in time and space. In this respect, time and space are conditions of our perception of the world of objects.

Time is the more basic of these conditions. Time shapes both the field of inner awareness and the field of objects in the external world. Space, on the other hand, determines the structure of the external world but does not apply to the organization of inner awareness. For Kant, the ordering of objects in space by temporal sequence constitutes what he understands to be the world of objects, which is to say the objective world. The objective world and its contents are importantly different from what he terms *ding an sich* (thing in itself). Although we are led to conjecture that the sense impressions we order in time and space originate in the *ding an sich*, this latter is beyond the reach of the rational mind. We can never experience things as they are in themselves, nor reach genuine knowledge about their existence. As far as the status of time is concerned, Kant is anti-realist with regard to things in themselves, but not with regard to the world of perceptual objects.

Apart from his anti-realism, there are further comparisons of Kant with Aristotle and Augustine that are instructive for our purposes. Despite his focus on time as a form of sensibility, Kant's concern with phenomenal time seems not to have gone beyond the sequence it imparts to inner experience. His works show little concern for the anomalies of phenomenal time that exercised Augustine in his *Confessions*. Also notable in this regard is Kant's lack of interest in the specious presence explored by William James in his *The Principles of Psychology*. Noteworthy in comparison with Aristotle in the *Physics*, moreover, Kant had nothing of interest to say about temporal measurement as such. An essential facet of time for Aristotle, as we have seen, is its service in the measurement of motion. But the measurement of motion in the world of objects seems not to have been one of Kant's concerns.

John M. E. McTaggart (1866-1925) was an expositor of Hegel, best known today for his arguments purporting to prove the unreality of time. Incorporated in the second volume of his *The Nature of Existence* (1921, 1927), these arguments are keyed to two ways of ordering events in time. The simpler of these two is referred to as the B-series. Events in the B-series are ordered by the relation *earlier than* (equivalently *later than*). Temporal order in the B-Series is permanent. Given that event e_i is earlier than (or later than) event e_{ii} at any one point in the series, the two events occupy the same relative positions at all other points in the series as well.

In the A-series, on the other hand, events are characterized as past, present, or future. These relative positions in time are not permanent. A given event e_i that now is present once was future and soon will be past. Its position in time, moreover, progressed from far future to near future before becoming present, and will recede from near past to distant past as the present moves forward. Whereas temporal properties in the B-series are permanent, in short, those in the A-series are only temporary.

McTaggart agrees with Aristotle that time is bound up with motion and hence with change. Since there is no change in the B-series, time cannot really occur in the context of that series. McTaggart's case for the unreality of time rests primarily on a complex argument that time cannot occur in the A-series either, inasmuch as the A-series is inconsistent. The argument begins with the observation that any given event in the A-series at some time or other has the properties of being future, being present, and being past. Since being future, present, and past simultaneously is inconsistent, this seems at first to disqualify the A-series as a context in which change can take place.

As McTaggart himself points out, however, events are not future, present, and past simultaneously, but rather *were* future, *are* present, and *will be* past. Pursuit of inconsistency then shifts to so-called “second-level properties.” To say an event *was* present is to say there was a point in the past at which it *is* present (past presence), to say it *is* present is to say there is a point in the present at which it *is* present (present presence), and to say it *will be* present is to say there is a point in the future when it *is* present (future presence). Similarly parsed, there is also a past future, a present future, and a future future, along with a past past, a present past, and a future past. With these second-level properties (9 in all) at hand, McTaggart points out that under these conditions a given event is present in the past, in the present, and in the future alike. He then argues that past, present, and future are different phases of time, and that it is impossible for an event to be in all three phases simultaneously. This is the gist, in truncated form, of McTaggart’s argument that the A-series is inconsistent, hence that it cannot support motion, and accordingly that time itself is unreal.

Accepted by some, more often rejected, McTaggart’s argument remains a staple in philosophic discussions of the nature of time. As with Augustine and Kant, McTaggart had little to say about temporal measurement. Matters of temporal realism and anti-realism aside, it is obvious that chronometers are used to measure time, and that chronometric time is deployed in measuring motion. We return to McTaggart after a brief survey of what measurement theory has to say about time.

(4.2412) Time as a Human Construct: Measurement Theory

Harvard psychologist Stanley S. Stevens (1906-1973) is generally recognized as the founder of contemporary measurement theory. Stevens distinguished three currently relevant forms of scalar measurement: the ordinal, the interval, and the ratio scales.

Ordinal scales show the rank order of the values they measure. An example is the ranking of consumer satisfaction on a scale of 1 to 10. An interval scale marks not only the order of the values it measures but the distance between those values as well. A common example is the Fahrenheit temperature scale, along which the interval between 30° and 40° is the same as that between 50° and 60°. A ratio scale, in turn, measures both order and intervals, but also enables intervals to be multiplied and divided (i.e., compared as ratios). To enable this, a ratio scale must either begin or end with a set value (typically zero). Scales measuring height and weight provide common examples. Something weighing 10 lbs. is twice as heavy as something weighing 5 lbs. This makes sense because some things (e.g., a body in orbit) weigh nothing at all.

Scales of each sort can be employed in measuring time. The measure implicated in Aristotle's definition of time orders events with respect to before and after. Such is the case with McTaggart's B-series as well. Both orderings produce sequences of events appropriately measured by an ordinal scale. Neither ordering, however, provides an indication of how far apart any two events are in time. This latter requires either an interval or a ratio scale.

Time in Plato's view seems to permit measurement by an interval scale. For Plato, a visible manifestation of passing time is the orbital movement of heavenly bodies. The seemingly regularity of the moon's rotation around the earth, for instance, makes possible

a calander based on the fixed interval of a lunar month. When a month on such a calander is divided into days and weeks, subdivisions in such terms are directly comparable in length with each other. Thus the interval between the 7th and the 10th day, for example, is the same as that between the 17th and the 20th. But different points along the scale could not be compared with each other with regard to time lapsed or time yet to go. Numerical comparisons of this latter sort would require a ratio scale with a fixed terminus.

In the domain of temporal measurement, it is harder to find circumstances in which a full-fledged ratio scale would apply. For help, we may look to analogies in temperature measurement. Of the three standard scales of temperature measurement, only the Kelvin scale begins with zero. Both Centigrade and Fahrenheit scales have zero values (0° C being the freezing point of water), but in neither case is zero the beginning of the scale. The lowest point on the Kelvin scale, however, is absolute zero, which theoretically is the coldest state of matter. Heat content of the measured substance increases with increasingly higher readings on the Kelvin scale. Because of this, readings on the Kelvin scale can be compared in terms of ratios. The ratio of the freezing point to the boiling point of water (273° K to 373° K), for example, is approximately 0.734. For a simpler example, 400° K indicates twice the heat content as 200° K. Ratios such as these are not available on the other two scales. Thus, for instance, 400° C does not indicate twice the heat content of 200° C.

Returning to temporal measurement, we can imagine a few possible scales on which ratio comparisons of this general sort would make sense. One theoretical possibility involves tracing time back to its presumed beginning with the Big Bang. Since we have only rough estimates of how long ago the Big Bang occurred, however, it would

be both cumbersome and pointless to incorporate it into a scale for measuring time in day-by-day circumstances.

Moving from scientific theory to speculative theology, we find another possibility in efforts to date God's creation of the universe on the basis of chronologies in the OT. In the mid-17th century, Archbishop James Ussher (of the Church of Ireland) published a book proclaiming that the universe was created 4004 years before the birth of Christ. According to Ussher's calculations, Noah's flood occurred in the year 2348. Given Christ's birth in 4004, it would follow that the earth was about 4/7ths younger at the time of the flood than at the time Christ was born. For reasons both theological and secular, however, the scale of time that provides this ratio never found its way into general circulation. For purposes of conducting the world's business, there is no use for a scale based on the assumption that time itself had a beginning.

A more intriguing possibility results from moving the fixed point of the scale from its beginning to its end. McTaggart himself provides an illustration, in the form of yet another series. While arguing that the A-series is inconsistent and hence that time is unreal, McTaggart conjectured that there nonetheless is a C-series that does exist, and that organizes seemingly temporal events in the manner in which they appear to be ordered by the B-series. Since time is unreal, things ordered according to the C-series are atemporal, a state McTaggart characterizes as eternal. In keeping with his title, "The Nature of Existence," McTaggart held that all existence is eternal in this sense.

Despite extensive discussion in volume 2 of his book, McTaggart apparently never reached a settled view about the nature of the C-series itself. The view he seemed to favor is that the C-series consists of progressively more adequate representations of

how things really are. The apparent forward directionality of time corresponds to later representations in the series being more adequate than their predecessors. At the end of the series is a maximally adequate representation, which amounts to a true depiction of how things really are. Here, in effect, is a temporally ordered series with a definite end but no fixed beginning. If this C-series were worked out in detail (who would try?), it would amount to a ratio scale of temporal measurement. In a God's-eye view of things, McTaggard's own view of time might be twice as close to being maximally adequate as the antiquated view of Archbishop Ussher.

As originally characterized by Stevens, a ratio scale begins with zero. McTaggard shows that a ratio scale might have a fixed end as well as a fixed beginning. Either arrangement provides a fixed reference point enabling progressions of elapsed time to be compared as multiples of each other. By and large, however, interval scales seem adequate to provide time comparisons relevant to everyday life. At a given point t_i in common time, person A is twice as old as person B if the interval between A's date of birth and t_i is twice that between t_i and the day B was born. The flight-time between Athens and Rome is half that between Athens and Paris if the interval elapsed between leaving Athens and arriving in Rome is half that between leaving Athens and reaching Paris. And in comparing lengths of warranties on cars under consideration for purchase, we match intervals between purchase dates and expiration dates of the warranties in question. For most purposes involving comparison of time intervals, that is to say, we do not require time scales fixed at either end.

(4.24121) Time Scales and Measuring Instruments

Our discussion of temporal measurement thus far has distinguished ordinal scales, interval scales, and ratio scales. We may refer to these collectively as *chronological scales*. They are scales involved in the measurement of time by chronometers and comparable instruments. The time to which these scales are applied, in turn, will be designated *chronological time*. If it should turn out that a time exists that cannot be measured, such as a time sustaining eternal life, then this time by definition would not be chronological.

There are further distinctions to be drawn among chronological scales regarding their calibration. Consider, for example, the scales used in timing various athletic events. Scales used in timing sports like football and basketball are usually calibrated in seconds. Track events like the 100-meter dash, by contrast, often employ time scales calibrated in milliseconds. Scales employed in space probes involve even finer calibrations, extending to the range of microseconds. At the other extreme are calendars calibrated to measure years and centuries, such as the Julian calendar introduced 46 BC and the Gregorian calendar introduced 1582 AD. All these time scales are linear, in the sense of all parts of the scale being calibrated in the same units.

Other time scales of interest are logarithmic instead. One such was devised by cybernetician Heinz von Foerster as a way of providing a more detailed timeline for recent events than for events in the distant past. A logarithmic time scale of much older vintage is incorporated in the cosmology of Hinduism. The rationale of the latter appears to be similar to that of von Foerster's metric, namely to enable more detail in the sequencing of recent events than in that of events long past. It should be noted, however,

that these are scales for ordering events that have already happened, with no practical application to future events or to events currently underway.

Regardless of calibration, the development of chronological scales is generally keyed to the development of instruments designed for their application. Sundials provide an instructive illustration. Before the invention of sundials, it was common practice to determine time of day by the length of one's shadow, but no particular time scale was associated with this expedient. The oldest existing sundial is an Egyptian relic dating from about 1500 BC, which employs a scale roughly calibrated in hours. Sundials are mentioned in the OT (*2 Kings* 20:9-11, *Isaiah* 38:8), but with no indication of how they were calibrated. Medieval Muslims used sundials expressly for determining times for prayer, which amounts to employing a scale marking off five specific times of day. As the design of sundials improved, articulation of the associated time scales became increasingly fine-grained. In the early years of mechanical clocks (14th to 16th century), sundials were used to correct clock settings. Increased accuracy came with improved materials and precision engineering. According to a recent website (<https://www.quora.com/How-accurate-are-sundials-at-telling-time>), there is a sundial in Belgium with an accuracy of ± 30 seconds. Since inaccuracies in sundial readings are not cumulative, unlike the case with clocks and watches, this makes sundials potentially more reliable than pocket watches as timepieces. An intriguing reference to a pocket sundial in the early-17th century can be found in Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, act 2, scene 7.

Chronological scales applied in use of sundials overlap those associated with waterclocks and hourglasses. Development of these several time-keeping technologies, accordingly, was correlated with development of mostly interchangeable scales of time

measurement. The oldest known waterclock, or clepsydra (“water stealer”), found in the tomb of the Egyptian pharaoh Amenhotep, dates back to 1500BC. Waterclocks came to Greece sometime before the 4th century BC, in time to be mentioned in Plato’s *Theaetetus* (*hudōr hreon*, 172E1). The major problem with waterclocks as instruments for measuring time is that the flow rate of water through a narrow channel is inversely proportional to its viscosity, and that viscosity increases markedly with falling temperature. It has been estimated that a clepsydra operating at normal room temperature would gain or lose about one-half hour per day with a 1° C change in temperature (“Waterclock,” Wikipedia).

The first known use of hourglasses, or sandglasses (clepsammia, “sand stealer”), was in 2nd century BC Alexandria. Sandglasses appeared in Europe during the 8th century AD, and were in common use as time measuring devices by the 14th century. Marine navigation relied on specially designed sandglasses until the early 19th century, when they gave way to more reliable mechanical chronometers. Sandglasses for other than marine use became increasingly smaller and cheaper, leading to the timers used today in cooking and in games such as scrabble and speed chess. For reasons having to do with environmental factors (e.g., temperature, humidity), neither waterclocks nor sandclocks are as accurate as carefully crafted sundials.

Despite differences in accuracy, however, sundials, waterclocks, and sandclocks are keyed to basically the same chronological scales. The main difference is that the scale applied by modern sundials is more finely calibrated than those traditionally associated with waterclocks and sandclocks. Development of more finely calibrated time scales depends on development of more accurate measuring instruments. With that requirement in view, let us consider photo-finish cameras and atomic clocks.

Photo-finish camera technology developed primarily as a means for timing the performance of competitors in horse races and human track events. Traditional hand-held stopwatches were capable of registering differences of 1/10 of a second, but further accuracy was limited by the reaction time of the user. This human factor was eliminated by recording the finish automatically on film, along with time elapsed since the start of the race. An early version of this technology employed full-frame video cameras, which achieved accuracy in the order of 1/100 of a second. But further accuracy here was limited by the time it takes a frame of film to pass the camera aperture. This limitation was eliminated by use of digitally activated line-scan cameras that record successive images of the finish line at a frequency ranging from 1/1000 to 1/2000 times a second. One effect of this technology has been to extend the articulation of humanly devised time scales to a degree far beyond relevance to mechanical measuring instruments such as wristwatches and stopwatches.

What appears close to an ultimate level of time-scale articulation has come with the development of atomic clocks. An atomic clock is a measuring device based on microwave signals emitted by electrons in atoms when they change energy levels. Most atomic clocks today incorporate cesium atoms (with a single electron in outer orbit) maintained in a vacuum at near 0° K. Early atomic clocks were accurate to a point theoretically equivalent to neither gaining nor losing a single second over a span of 300,000 years. By the turn of the century, atomic clocks were commercially available that maintained accuracy within a second over 20 million years. This accuracy enabled their use in global positioning systems and Internet transactions (worldwide banking, stock-trading) that require exact timing.

Extent of articulation is a property of time scales. Degree of accuracy is a property of the measuring instruments by means of which those scales are applied. In the case of sundials, the relevant scale of measurement is articulated in intervals of 30 seconds, corresponding to the ability of advanced sundials to measure time with a matching degree of accuracy. In the case of atomic clocks, relevant measuring scales are calibrated in microseconds, and the clocks in turn are capable of accuracy to a corresponding degree. Atomic clocks are accurate, but not calibrated themselves. And the measuring scales they apply are calibrated, but not themselves accurate or inaccurate. This establishes a distinction that at first might not be intuitively obvious: time scales are distinct from the instruments used to apply them.

Although distinct, time-measuring instruments and their corresponding time scales develop hand-in-hand. Without atomic clocks, we would not have chronological scales calibrated in microseconds. Just as we would not have time scales calibrated in 0.1-second intervals without stopwatches, or time scales calibrated in 15 second intervals without sundials. The chronological scale would not exist without the corresponding instrument that serves in its application.

Instruments for measuring time, such as sundials, stopwatches, and atomic clocks, obviously are human artifacts. A consequence is that chronological scales are human artifacts as well. This has bearings on the issue of temporal realism surveyed previously. As far as time scales are concerned, at least, the anti-realism of McTaggart turns out to be right.

(4.2413) Time as a Human Construct: Metered Time

An alternative designation for chronological time is “metered time” or “metricized time.” According to Aristotle’s memorable definition, time is the measure of motion. In order to measure motion, however, time itself must be metricized. Without itself being metricized, time would be incapable of measuring anything else.

We have already seen that time itself does not incorporate an inbuilt scale of measurement. It does not come already calibrated, as it were, in minutes, seconds, or microseconds. Time as such is distinct both from scales of chronological measurement and from instruments by which those scales are applied. Admitting this, we face the question of how time acquires the metrical features that enable it to measure other things.

Drawing on our previous discussion of Aristotle on time, we recall that in Aristotle’s definition the terms *metron* and *arithmos* are interchangeable. Time numbers motion in the sense of marking out its extent. In this capacity, time enables determination of how long a given motion takes. A bit later in the same context (*Physics* 220b15-16), Aristotle remarks that motion measures time as well. As time determines how long motion takes, so motion determines how long a given stretch of time lasts. According to Aristotle, time and motion are interactive, each marking out the extent of the other.

In Aristotle’s natural philosophy, nonetheless, time and motion are not dependent upon each other for existence. As affirmed several times in the *Physics*, “motion is eternal” (*aidion ... to kinoun estai*, 259a7; also 251b13, 267b24). Put otherwise, “there must always be motion without interruption” (*dei kinēsin aei einai kai mē dialeipein*, 258b10). Time, on the other hand, is not eternal, but “remains without end in a process of becoming” (*menei hē apeiria alla ginetai*, *Physics* 207b14). The sense is that time is a

potentiality for measured motion that is continuously in the process of being actualized. To be sure, “there is always time” (*aei chronos estin*, 251b13); but it is a time that unfolds endlessly in a process of becoming. Endless becoming is not equivalent to eternal existence.

If motion but not time is eternal, there is a distinction between motion in time and motion separate from time. There is a distinction, that is to say, between motion measured by time and motion from which temporal measures are absent. This is a distinction between measured and unmeasured motion. As we have seen, time that brings measure to motion must itself be metricized. Thus we return to the question of how time acquires the metrical features that enable it to measure other things.

Given the distinction between measured and unmeasured motion, the answer to this question is close at hand. First comes motion, which (for Aristotle) is eternal. Then comes a process of separating out segments of motion by articulating them according to one or another humanly devised scale of measurement. This latter process is different from subjecting portions of motion to measurement by time. Prior to the articulation of motion by scales of measurement, time does not exist. Time rather comes into existence with the articulation of motion by human scales of measurement. These scales become structural parts of the segments of motion they articulate. What comes into existence is motion articulated according to fixed intervals.

Motion articulated in fixed intervals is what we call time. The intervals are temporally designated in terms such as days, hours, minutes, and suchlike. Motion thus metricized is capable of bringing measure to other motion not metricized previously. Time, accordingly, is metricized motion capable of serving as a measure of motion

generally. Time thus acquires its metrical features as an integral part of the process that brings it into being.

The idea of metricized motion is more familiar than may at first appear. Instruments for gauging time, including sundials, watches, and atomic clocks, all involve localized motion. Sundials mark change in time by the progression of shadows across the surface, pocket watches by the movement of the hand around the face, and so forth. In each case the motion is measured by markings on the instrument, in conjunction with the chronological scales that give the markings their temporal significance. Instances of motion being measured by already established chronological scales, of course, are different from the segmentation of motion that gives rise to time in the first place. Like the latter, nonetheless, cases of the former are examples of motion being segmented by preestablished scales of measurement.

Metricized motion (time) differs from non-metricized motion (motion at large) in other interesting ways. As Aristotle says in *Physics* 259a16), motion at large is continuous. It is continuous not in the sense of being infinitely divisible (whatever that might mean for motion), but in the sense of not being divided into discrete parts. Time, on the other hand, is divided into discrete intervals. Scales pertaining to time are commonly divided into minutes, seconds, or microseconds, and motion takes on the same divisions when metricized as time. Such divisions show up in the discrete markings of clock faces and digital time-displays.

A correlative view for Aristotle (*Physics* 219a13) is that time also is continuous (infinitely divisible, *Physics* 185b10). Given time as presently conceived, this view is erroneous. The view that time itself is continuous, we should note, is not supported by the

fact that temporal scales can be articulated in increasingly smaller units: seconds, microseconds, microseconds, etc. For practical reasons, temporal scales probably will never be articulated beyond the level of nanoseconds. Given time as motion articulated by temporal scales, time is no more continuous than the scales that comprise it.

A further but related difference between metricized motion and motion at large is that the former is limited whereas the latter is unlimited. Metricized motion is numbered (thus Aristotle's definition of time as the number of motion), whereas motion at large lacks number. Accordingly, metricized motion is quantitative, whereas motion at large lacks quantity. Thus it makes sense to talk about the amount of time needed to do something (so many minutes), but not about the amount of motion (so many "movements"?) it takes to get from here to there.

Let us summarize our results thus far regarding time and measure. Time is metricized motion, which is to say motion articulated in distinct units according to a relevant scale of measurement. Thus articulated, metricized motion becomes available for measuring motion at large. Measurement scales, including scales of temporal measurement, develop hand-in-hand with measuring instruments for applying them. Instruments of temporal measurement (waterclocks, stopwatches, photofinish cameras) invariably are products of human ingenuity. Scales of temporal measurement, accordingly, depend on human ingenuity as well. Since scales of measurement inevitably are involved in the metricization of motion, time itself depends on human ingenuity in turn. Our main result thus far, in brief, is that time is a human product.

Although the present account draws on Aristotle in several respects, it differs from Aristotle regarding the reality of time. According to Aristotle, time is real in that its

existence does not depend on the existence of humanly devised measuring scales.

According to the present account, which identifies time with measured motion, the existence of time is bound up with the existence of scales that render it metrical.

Inasmuch as those scales are human constructs, so time is a human construct as well.

(4.2414) Before and After in Time Measurement

Aristotle was right in observing that time measures motion according to before and after.

This observation is equivalent to the view that time's measurement of motion proceeds in a forward rather than a backward direction. But it is quite distinct from the notion that events move forward in time, which is incoherent. It is also distinct from the notion that time itself moves forward, which lacks coherence as well. We can prepare for an examination of forward directionality in time measurement by considering why these two notions are incoherent.

Events do not move forward in time because time is not a medium of motion. For motion other than change of properties, the medium of motion is space. This is the case both for the metricized motion that constitutes time and for motion generally that is measured by time. If events moved forward in time, they would move in metricized motion. And the notion of something moving in motion is incoherent. Things are *in motion* while they move, but they do not *move in* motion (time, rather than space) as a medium.

The notion that time itself moves forward is harder to dispel, perhaps because it seems to be ingrained in patterns of common speech. We say, for example, that certain things happened (past tense) in the past and that other things will happen (future tense) in

the future, which might promote the gratuitous assumption that the time between happenings proceeds from past to future as well. This seeming movement of time is the basis of McTaggart's B-series, in which events are ordered as occurring earlier or later in time rather than each other. As events move forward in the B-series, they retain their relative order of before and after.

The thought of a forward-moving time, moreover, seems intrinsically bound up with the concept of entropy in thermodynamics. Entropy is energy that has lost its capacity to do work, typified by the lowgrade heat radiated back into space from the earth's surface. Highgrade heat reaches the earth's surface from the sun, is expended in doing the earth's work, and is reradiated into space as entropy. Simply defined, entropy is expended energy. According to the Second Law of Thermodynamics, the quantity of entropy in the universe tends to increase as the universe increases in age. Intuitively considered, the aging of the universe is correlated with the forward directionality of time.

In popular renditions of thermodynamics, the supposedly forward motion of time is sometimes described in terms of "time's arrow." Time moves in the direction pointed out by the arrow, and with this movement the universe grows older. The direction pointed out by time's arrow, accordingly, is the direction in which the amount of accumulated entropy in the universe tends to increase. In some accounts, to be sure, the thermodynamic fact of increasing entropy is taken to establish the directionality of time's arrow. According to such accounts, the forward directionality of time is a consequence of the ever-increasing amounts of entropy in the universe.

Although perhaps useful as a metaphor, however, the notion of time's arrow should not be taken literally. Time does not move forward for the simple reason that time

does not move at all. Motion can be measured; but the metricized motion that measures it is not something that moves itself. Motion is tantamount to change in place, but change in place itself does not change in place. Analogously, temperature measures heat content (a physical property); but temperature itself (e.g., 100° C) does not contain heat. No more does the process of becoming educated itself become educated, or the process of falling asleep itself fall asleep.

Time arrives on the human scene with the advent of measuring instruments keyed to scales that order events in fixed sequences. Such scales are included among ordinal scales and interval scales studied by measurement theory. Time acquires its ordering capacities as part of the process by which the motion that constitutes time becomes metricized. Thus the movement of shadows across the sundial are segmented into successive 15 minute intervals, and the movement of the hands around a stopwatch into successive intervals of 0.1 seconds. The succession of the intervals by which these movements are metricized lends time its ordering capacities. This succession, that is to say, enables time to mark order in the motion it measures.

Segmentation into successive intervals, however, does not automatically result in a temporal directionality of before and after. An analogy to the contrary is the orderly succession of integral numbers, which itself lacks temporal direction. As already noted, popular renditions of thermodynamics sometimes point to the steadily increasing amounts of entropy in the universe as the source of time's direction from before to after. Since this expedient assumes that time itself undergoes motion, as we have seen, it is incoherent and must be rejected. A more plausible account ties the forward directionality of time to what William James called "the specious present."

The specious present has figured prominently in earlier sections of this essay. For present purposes, we should recall specifically the way it figures in private awareness. This will prepare us for an examination of its role in the construction of communal time, including its contribution to time's forward orientation. The specious present is an expanse of subjective awareness in which the present flows seamlessly out of the future and into the past. Aspects of prior awareness are retained in the present, joined by anticipations of awareness yet to come. Constantly changing in content, present awareness persists in blending past and future together in an unbroken progression.

As a phenomenon of subjective awareness, the specious present does not occupy public space. The changes it undergoes in content, accordingly, do not qualify as spatial motion. Since chronological time (metricized motion) by definition is a measure of motion in space, this precludes measurement of the specious present by clocks and chronometers. An additional constraint on chronological measurement is that it requires attention focused on the instrument of measurement. To time a horserace with a stopwatch, for example, requires fixing attention on the stopwatch itself. In terms of subjective (inner) and objective (outer) awareness, the specious present lends structure to a subject's field of inner awareness, whereas chronological measurement involves awareness focused on external objects. Since the awareness of a given person cannot be directed inward and outward at the same time, a person could not apply chronological instruments in measuring the extent of his or her own specious present. Neither could someone else employ instruments in measuring that person's specious present, inasmuch as no one has access to the specious present of another person.

A person's specious present thus falls outside the domain of public (chronological) time. Nonetheless, the specious present can be brought into interactive relation with public time through its content. The content of the specious present consists of events exhibited within a subject's field of inner awareness. The specious present enters into relation with public time when readings on a chronological scale are exhibited within the inner awareness of a given subject. Since the inner awareness of a given subject is shaped by the specious present, we may assume that its contents come to exhibit that shape as a matter of course.

According to the present account, the scales applied to motion in producing time (in producing metricized motion) order events sequentially without distinction between before and after. Temporal directionality is added when the subject's inner awareness of those event-sequences shapes them in the fashion of the specious present. The inherent shape of the specious present is such that its contents are ordered in the direction of past to future. If this account is correct, the subjective structure of the specious present is the source of the forward cast of temporal measurement.

Undeterred by skepticism about other minds, we may take for granted that the vast majority of people with an inner life are familiar with the forward directionality of the specious present. For reasons already laid out, the specious present of a given person is not subject to chronological measurement, and cannot be shared in the awareness of other people. Yet there clearly is a public time in which most people participate. Different individuals attach the same significance to the moving hands of Big Ben In London, including a sense of that movement as indicating a forward temporal directionality. In the case of a given individual, this sense of forward directionality is contributed by the

internal structure of his or her specious present. Our concern at this point is to understand how a private sense of forward progression on the part of diverse individuals can be transformed into the forward directionality of public time.

Public time is based on a group's shared use of chronological instruments to coordinate interactions among its members. Although group activity can be coordinated by other means as well (gestures, word of mouth), interactions beyond a certain level of complexity often require precise timing. For chronological instruments to provide such timing, they must incorporate features that individuals in the group will recognize and interpret in a common fashion. In the case of clocks with moving hands, individuals must view this motion as displaying the articulations of a relevant time scale. They also must view the intervals into which the motion is articulated as ordered in a direction of before to after. Put otherwise, each individual must view these intervals as ordered in a manner corresponding to the past and future inherent in his or her own specious present.

Learning to view chronological instruments in this way is equivalent to learning how to tell time. The skill of telling time is tantamount to viewing publicly accessible chronological instruments in the same way as other people view them. Learning this skill, accordingly, is the same as learning how to tell public time. Although details are beyond recovery, public time must have come into being originally as part of the adaptive processes by which social groups evolved and gained stability. Once in place, however, public time is sustained by acculturation. Children learn to interpret the orderly movement of chronological instruments in view of the structure of their own specious present, and then go on to impart that skill to their children in turn. This, in a nutshell, is

how public time emerged from the private sense of before and after entertained by diverse individuals.

The last several sections of this essay have presented arguments to the effect that time is a human construct. A further argument is now at hand. If time is a measure of motion with respect to before and after, as Aristotle correctly observed, then the measure provided by time must be sensitive to the directionality of chronological order. Time itself must be capable of registering the relation of before to after. The directionality of time, accordingly, derives from the structure of the specious present inherent in the private awareness of introspective human beings. Without human beings on the scene, time as we know it would not exist.

(4.242) How Eternity Figures in the NT

One reason eternal life cannot amount to endless existence in time is that time is a human construct, making it incapable of supporting eternal existence. A related reason is that time itself is not endless. Construct or not, for anything to exist in it endlessly, time itself would have to be endless, which according to the Bible it is not. As far as the Christian narrative is concerned, there are references to the end of time in both the OT and the NT. *Daniel* 12:13 refers to the “end of days” (*sunteleian hēmerōn*) when the blessed will rest. *John* 12:48, in turn, speaks of judgment “on the last day” (*en tē eschatē hēmera*). And *Jude* 18-19 quotes the apostles who said that in “the last time” (*eschatou [tou] chronou*) there will be scoffers and those “devoid of the Spirit” (*pneuma mē echontes*).

If eternal life cannot be thought of as endless existence in time, however, it must be conceived as some mode of existence apart from time. Eternal life must be a mode of

atemporal existence. For Aristotle, as noted previously, time is not eternal, which entails in turn that the eternal is atemporal. McTaggart likewise characterized what is atemporal as eternal. From this point onward in the present investigation it will be assumed that eternal existence is existence outside of time.

In the Garden of Eden story, Adam and Eve sinned in aspiring to becoming like God. One aspect of God is his eternality. After their expulsion from the Garden, the gates were closed behind them to prevent their regaining access to the Tree of Eternal Life. Christ renewed that access by his death on the cross. By loving God and obeying his commandments, we read in the NT, the faithful Christian can join God in his state of eternal existence. The state in which God exists by nature becomes available to those who persevere in the way of Christ.

In some respects, at least, the eternal life to which the individual Christian aspires must be like the atemporal state in which God exists by nature. This divine state, in turn, might be expected to be similar to the atemporal state of Aristotle's first mover, which is the prototype of the Prime Mover identified as God in medieval Christian theology. As Aristotle puts it in *Physics* 259a7, "the first mover is eternal" (*aidion ... to kinoun estai prōton*), where by *aidion* (eternal) he means not in time (*Physics* 221b3-4). Let us continue our examination of eternal life by reflecting on the atemporal state in which God exists by nature.

(4.2421) The Eternality of God

The term 'presence' signifies a state of existence. In one sense, it signifies the existence of the present as a moment in time, a fleeting "now" between past and future. Another

sense pertains to existence outside of time. An example of the latter is the eternal presence of God as depicted in Christian theology. A sense of what this means can be got from *Exodus* 3:2-15. When God spoke to Moses from the burning bush, Moses asked the speaker his name. God responded: “I am who I am” (*egō eimi ho ōn*, 3:14; Hebrew, *’eh-yeh ’ā-šer ’eh-yeh*). As a matter of grammar, *ōn* is a present participle, in God’s case indicating an eternal presence. Eternality is made explicit in the verse immediately following, where God adds: “this is my name forever” (*touto mou estin onoma aiōnion*).

Theologians have interpreted *Exodus* 3:14 as support for the doctrine that God’s essence and his existence are the same. God’s essence is his nature, and his nature is to exist. Since God exists essentially, his existence is not subject to change. Were God’s existence to change, he would not exist, and nonexistence is contrary to God’s nature. By virtue of being changeless, accordingly, God’s existence is eternal. God’s existence is eternal in the sense of being outside human time. God’s timelessness goes hand-in-hand with his eternal presence.

God’s timelessness, we sometimes hear, is one of his perfections. The relevant sense of perfection (completion) is that of *Metaphysics* 1021b15-23, where Aristotle says we call complete (*teleion*) “that which with respect to excellence and goodness cannot be excelled in kind” (*to kat’ aretēn kai to eu mē echon hyperbolēn pros to genos*, 1021b15-16). Timelessness is a good that cannot be excelled because it completely precludes change. Any change from completion would leave room for incompleteness. But only things in time are subject to change. Timelessness, accordingly, is one of God’s perfections, in that it excludes God from temporal change.

Another perfection attributed to God is what theologians sometimes call *actus purus*. God is pure actuality, with nothing merely potential about him. The concepts of act and potency derive from Aristotle, and became stock-in-trade of theology during the Middle Ages. An acorn is potentially an oak tree, and a lump of clay is potentially a bowl or a statue. For an acorn to realize its potential, however, it must undergo change through time. Change is also required for the clay to become a bowl, and for the actualization of other potentialities as well. As long as potentiality remains, the thing in question falls short of perfect actuality. Potentiality thus is an imperfection, counter to the perfection of complete actuality. To describe God as *actus purus* is to say that nothing about him could possibly change. There is nothing he might become that differs from what he actually is.

Pure actuality thus joins timelessness as a perfection that isolates God from change in time. From a theological perspective, this has consequences for God's relation to things in time, including human beings and their everyday activities. If God is disengaged from the time of human beings, it may plausibly be assumed that his interaction with them must be atemporal as well. This poses problems for our reading of both the Old and the New Testament. In the OT there is frequent interaction between the Lord God and his people, often keyed to specific events in human time. On the third new moon after the Israelites had left Egypt (*Exodus* 19:1), for example, they reached the wilderness of Sinai, whereupon the Lord instructed Moses to tell them that they would become a holy nation if they kept his covenant. On the third day after that (*Exodus* 19:16), again following the Lord's instructions, Moses met the Lord on the top of the mountain to receive the Ten Commandments. A particularly difficult case in this regard comes with Moses' earlier encounter with the burning bush on Mount Horeb (Sinai). As

just mentioned, Moses asked the speaker from the bush his name. And God said in response “I am who I am.” Moses’ question and God’s response both occur in human time. Interactions like these would not occur if God were not engaged in the day-by-day activities of human beings.

Interestingly enough, this particular form of the problem does not arise in the NT. The problem of how a timeless God can interact in human time with human beings is avoided in the NT by dint of the fact that God does not appear on stage in the NT story. God is not listed, as it were, in the NT’s cast of characters. There are several contexts, to be sure, in which a “voice from heaven” (*phōnē ek tōn ouranōn*, *Matthew 3:17*), or a “voice from a cloud” (*phōnē ek tēs nephelēs*, *Matthew 17:5*, *Mark 9:7*, *Luke 9:35*), conveys a message expressing God’s pleasure with his Son. But the words conveying this message come from a mysterious distance. Unlike the case of the burning bush, the source of these words is not a character appearing on stage. A “voice from heaven” (*phōnē ek tou ouranou*) also conveys the response to Jesus’ request at *John 12:28* that the Father glorify his (the Father’s) name: “I have glorified it,” the voice says, “and I will glorify it again” (*edoxasa kai palin doxasō*). At any rate, given that God is only a voice in the cast of NT characters, there is no problem of a timeless God acting in human time as part of the NT narrative.

A needed caveat to this observation, of course, is that the identity of Jesus with God is a central theme of the NT. Speaking to the Jews who were ready to stone him, Jesus says unequivocally in *John 10:30*: “I and the Father are one” (*egō kai ho patēr hen esmen*). And Jesus is the key character in the NT from start to finish. So when Jesus speaks, God speaks accordingly. In whatever manner God engages in purposeful action,

one clear purpose in making Jesus human was to bring the Old Covenant to completion with his crucifixion. Another was to get the New Covenant underway with his resurrection and ascension. Yet another purpose, so at least it seems, was to provide a human voice by which the provisions of the New Covenant could be communicated. Timeless as the Father may be, the Son was no less involved in human time than those to whom his message of salvation was directed.

Nonetheless, God's timelessness still poses a problem for the NT component of the Christian narrative. It is a counterpart of the problem for the OT, only shifted to the context of the individual Christian believer. The OT problem is making sense of a timeless God's interaction with his people in human time. In the NT scheme of things, the interaction between God and disciples (Peter, Paul, etc.) first described in *Acts* continues with subsequent believers in later times. The New Covenant is a contract with God under which these later developments occur. As a matter of course, these later developments take place in human time. The problem in this regard, once again, is to make sense of an interaction of these subsequent believers with a timeless God, an interaction that continues in human time as long the New Covenant remains in effect.

This problem is not resolved as above, by the observation that the God of the NT dramatically is just "a voice from heaven." The context of concern is not the NT specifically as above, but the New Covenant generally. The God of the New Covenant is a personal God with whom individual believers interact directly. This God also exists essentially outside of time. Being outside of time, furthermore, the God of the New Covenant cannot be seen, and is inaccessible as well by other modes of sense perception.

How can an imperceptible God interact personally with people participating in the New Covenant?

The apparent key to this quandary of inaccessibility comes at *John* 12:45, where Jesus says: “whoever sees me sees him who sent me” (*ho theōrōn eme theōrei ton pempanta me*). What Jesus says here conveys meaning on different levels. Its surface meaning (1) is that, since the Son and the Father are the same, to see one is to see the other. This sense is repeated at *John* 14:9, where Jesus tells Philip “whoever has seen me has seen the Father” (*ho heōrakōs eme heōraken ton patera*). Meaning (2) comes to the fore at *John* 14:10, where Jesus expands on this previous remark to Philip, saying that the words he speaks are not his alone but rather “work done by the Father dwelling in me” (*ho de patēr en emoi menōn poiei ta erga autou*). The sense at *John* 14:10 is that the words spoken by the Jesus in Philip’s presence should be understood as coming from the Father himself.

Meaning (3) is deeper and more far-reaching. This sense emerges in the verses following *John* 12:45, in which Jesus speaks of ultimate things. The scene is set in *John* 12:36, where Jesus conceals (*ekrubē*) himself from those who had witnessed his signs but still did not believe. Crying aloud (*ekraxen*, 12:44) to himself, Jesus insists that seeing him is tantamount to seeing the one who sent him, and that he came into the world as a light to dispel darkness. He proclaims further that he came “not to judge the world, but to save the world” (*ou ... hina krinō ton kosmon, all’ hina sōsō ton kosmon*, 12:47). The judge of one who sees but does not believe is then identified in 12:48: “the word that I have spoken, that will judge him on the last day” (*ho logos hon elalēsa ekeinos krinei auton en tē eschatē hēmera*). The terminology of his passage is intriguing. The term for

‘word’ (*logos*) is singular and the verb for ‘have spoken’ (*elalēsa*) pertains to the past. One might wonder whether there is any connection with the *logos* that “was with God and was God” (*ēn pros ton theon, kai theos ēn, John 1:1*) in the beginning. If so, then 12:48 provides a closure of sorts, in that the *logos* of the beginning serves to judge those still in darkness at the end of time.

On the positive side of the ledger, referring back to his mission of bringing light to the world, Jesus characterizes this mission at *John 12:49* as God’s commandment (*entolēn*). He then tells what he knows about this commandment: “I know that this commandment is eternal life” (*oida hoti hē entolē autou zōē aiōnios estin, 12:50*). Jesus’ soul-searching soliloquy then ends with the self-reassuring remark: “What I say, therefore, I say as the Father told me” (*ha oun egō lalō, kathōs eirēken moi ho patēr, houtōs lalō, 12:50*).

Despite difficulties like these, the eternal presence of God is a presence outside of human time. Human time not only is a human construct, but due to its limited nature also is incapable of measuring eternity. The eternal life contemplated by Jesus in *John 12:50* presumably is atemporal in the same respect as God’s, and is so for the same reasons. With the eternal presence of God as a paradigm, let us turn to the question of what eternal life amounts to for an individual human being.

(4.2422) Jesus Defines Eternal Life

As already noted, the book *John* contains nearly eighteen references to eternal life spoken by Jesus himself. Chronologically the last of these occurs in *John 17:3*. It comes at the beginning of his long prayer to the Father (all of book 17) prior to his capture in

Gethsemane. In *John* 17:2, Jesus acknowledges that the Father has granted him authority to “give eternal life” (*dōsē ... zōēn aiōnion*) to all those the Father had assigned to his care. Then in 17:3, Jesus finally defines the eternal life he had been talking about throughout his ministry. “This,” he says, “is eternal life” (*hautē de estin hē aiōnios zōē*): “that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent” (*hina ginōskōsin se ton monon alēthinon theon kai hon apesteilas ’Iēsoun Christon*).

The Greek term *ginōskō* (Attic *gignōskō*) is not easy to translate. It would be a mistake to read it simply as equivalent to *epistamai* or *eidō* (other NT terms for ‘know’). The difficulty is not unique to the NT, but arises in the OT as well. The first use of the term in the OT occurs at *Genesis* 2:9, which records the Lord God’s placement of “the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil” (*to xulon tou eidenai gnōston kalou kai ponērou*) in the middle of the Garden of Eden. (As already noted, most English translators ignore the *eidenai* that precedes *gnōston* in this phrase.) The same term is used with the same reference at *Genesis* 2:17, 3:5, and 3:22.

But then in *Genesis* 4:1, the term changes its reference to what is sometimes phrased euphemistically the “biblical sense” of knowing. “Adam knew Eve his wife” (*Adam de egnō Euan tēn gunaika autou*), and she conceived and bore Cain. Then “Cain knew his wife” (*egnō Kain tēn gunaika autou*, 4:17), who conceived and bore Enoch. Then “Adam knew Eve” (*egnō de Adam Euan*, 4:25) again and fathered Seth. After 4:25, the next use of *ginōskō* in the copulative sense comes at *Genesis* 19:8, where Lot offers his two daughters “who have not known man” (*hai ouk egnōsan andra*) to the rampaging men of Sodom, hoping to protect the two men (angels, 19:1) he had sheltered overnight. A later use occurs at *Numbers* 31:17, where Moses orders his commanders to kill all the

male children of Midian, along with every woman who has “known man by lying with one” (*egnōken koitēn arsenos*). All virgins among the captives, however, the commanders are to “keep alive for themselves” (*zōgrēsate autas*, 31:18).

In the NT, by contrast, there are only two passages where *ginōskō* is used in the sense of sexual intercourse. But the role of these passages in the overall narrative is highly significant. Both have to do with the impending end of the Old Covenant. The Old Covenant reaches completion with the death of Jesus on the cross. The two passages in question, *Matthew* 1:25 and *Luke* 1:34, pertain to angelic messages concerning the birth of Jesus. *Luke* 1:34 is prior chronologically. The angel Gabriel had approached Mary with the message that she would bear a son to be called Jesus. Mary responded asking: “How can this be, since I do not know man?” (*Pōs estai touto, epei andra ou ginōskō*); Gabriel’s response is well known by NT readers: “The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you” (*Pneuma hagion epeleusetai epi se kai dunamis hupsistou episkiasei soi*, 1:35). Then in *Matthew* 1:20-25, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, telling him not to be afraid to take Mary as his wife since the child within her was conceived by the Holy Spirit. When Joseph woke from sleep, he did the angel’s bidding and took Mary as his wife. But “he did not know her until she had given birth to a son” (*ouk eginōskēn autēn heōs hou eteken huion*, 1:25). With Jesus’ birth, of course, the Old Covenant is only thirty-three years or so from completion.

The conception and birth of Jesus also presage the beginning of the New Covenant. For an individual believer, participation in the New Covenant reaches fulfillment in a state of eternal life. As defined by Jesus at *John* 17:3, to say it again,

eternal life is the knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ whom he has sent. The term *ginōskō* thus plays prominent roles at both the beginning and the end of this part of the Christian narrative. There is the *ginōskō* of Mary's demurral that she did not know man, and the *ginōskōsin* of knowing God in Jesus' definition of eternal life. It seems not unreasonable to assume that the connotations of these two occurrences somehow interact. If nothing else, both carry the sense of an intimate personal relationship.

There are other occurrences of *ginōskō* in the NT that convey a sense of intimacy as well. In *2 Corinthians* 5:21, Paul refers to Christ as "one who knew no sin" (*ton mē gnonta hamartian*). The sense here is akin to that of a woman not knowing man. Both are matters of deeply private involvement, quite different from the cognitive awareness conveyed by *epistami* and *eidō*. Another distinctly intimate sense comes into play in cases of knowing the mind or heart of another person. Quoting verbatim the (Septuagint) Greek of *Isaiah* 40:13, Paul asks in *Romans* 11:34: "Who has known the mind of the Lord?" (*Tis ... egnō noun kuriou;*). And *Luke* 16:15 depicts Jesus rebuking the Pharisees and warning them that "God knows your hearts" (*ho de theos ginōskei tas kardias humōn*). In such cases, the kind of knowing conveyed by *ginōskō* is an intuitive grasp of another person's inner being. A similar sense amounts to grasping the identity of another person. This is illustrated in *Luke* 24:35. Having anonymously accompanied Cleopas and his companion all the way to Emmaus, Jesus broke bread and revealed his identity to them. After returning to Jerusalem and meeting with the disciples, they told what had happened with Jesus on the road and "how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread" (*hōs egnōsthē autois en tē klasei tou artou*).

Other relevant aspects of this kind of knowing are featured in the well-known 13th chapter of *I Corinthians*. One notable passage is 13:12, where Paul avows (in the first person) that whereas now “I know in part” (*ginōskō ek merous*) only, the time will come when “I shall know [fully] even as I have been [fully] known” (*epignōsomai kathōs kai epegnōsthēn*). (Included in many English translations, the adverb ‘fully’ here comes from 13:9-10, which says that now “we know in part” (*ek merous ... ginōskomen*), but that “when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away” (*hotan de elthē to teleion, to ek merous katargēthēsetai*.) Especially notable in 13:10 is that the knowledge in question admits varying degrees of completion (perfection, *teleion*). Continuing in 13:11, Paul says that when he was a child, he spoke (*elaloun*) like a child, thought (*ephronoun*) like a child, and reasoned (*elogizomēn*) like a child. But “when I became a man” (*hote gegona anēr*), he says, “I gave up childish things” (*katērgēka ta tou nēpiou*). So it is also with his knowledge (*gnōskō*) cited at 13:12.

Chapter 13 of *I Corinthians*, however, is known best for its memorable verses on love. Already treated, these passages should be reviewed in the present context. And as far as understanding *ginōskōsin* at *John* 17:3 is concerned, the love that accompanies the knowing of *I Corinthians* 13:12 is the most prominent feature of that knowing. Lacking love, Paul says in the first person, even though I speak in the tongues of men and angels, “I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal” (*chalkos ēchōn ē kumbalon alalazon*, 13:1). Even though I can prophesy, understand all mysteries, and have “all knowledge” (*pasan tēn gnōsin*, 13:2), he continues, without love I am nothing. And without love, “I gain nothing” (*ouden ōpheloumai*, 13:3), even though I give away all my possessions and yield my body to be burned. Prophecy, tongues, and knowledge (*gnōsis*, 13:8), he warns,

will all pass away; whereas “love never fails” (*Hē agapē oudepote piptei*, 13:8). Paul concludes book 13 with a ranking of Christian virtues: so now “faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love” (*meni pistis, elpis, agapē, ta tria tauta` meizōn de toutōn hē agapē*, 13:13).

These luminous passages about love provide a context for Paul’s remarks at 13:12 about knowing fully and being fully known. The overall message is that the transition from knowing in part to knowing fully is promoted by love. Although God is not mentioned in these passages, the sense clearly is that Paul believes his progression from partial knowledge to full knowledge is conditional upon his love of God. Loving God, Paul will come to know God fully, even as God has fully known him. The dynamics of this interaction with God are stated explicitly in *1 Corinthians* 8:3, which reads: “if anyone loves God, then the same person is known by him” (*ei de tis agapa ton theon, houtos egnōstai hup’ autou*). Loving God is sufficient for being known by God. Inasmuch as Paul will come to know even as he has been known (*1 Corinthians* 13:12), moreover, it follows (for Paul) that loving God is sufficient for knowing God as well.

There is a set of remarks in *1 John*, chapter 4, furthermore, to the effect that knowing God (KG) is sufficient for loving God (LG) in turn (KG only if LG). Since “love is from God” (*hē agapē ek tou theou estin*, 4:7), “whoever loves has been born of God and knows God” (*pas ho agapōn ek tou theou gegennētai kai ginōskei ton theon*, 4:7). Inasmuch as “God is love” (*ho theos agapē estin*, 4:8), moreover, it follows that “someone who does not love cannot know God” (*ho mē agapōn ouk egnō ton theon*, 4:8). Loving God, that is to say, is not only sufficient but also necessary for knowing God (KG only if LG).

Given this equivalence between loving God and knowing God, it stands to reason that loving God also admits varying degrees of perfection. Inasmuch as “God is love” (*Ho theos agapē estin*, 4:16), the author of *1 John* assures us, “whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in that person” (*ho menōn en tē agapē en tō theō menei kai ho theos en autō menei*, 4:16). It is by coming to realize this mutual indwelling (*menei*) that “love is perfected among us” (*teteleiōtai hē agapē meth’ hēmōn*, 4:17).

The *1 John* sequence continues with a statement tracing our ability to abide in love back to God himself: “we love because he first loved us” (*hēmeis agapōmen, hoti autos prōtos ēgapēsen hēmas*, 4:19). This recalls, once again, what probably is the most forceful statement in the NT regarding the relevance of love to eternal life. “For God so loved the world” (*Houtōs gar ēgapēsen ho theos ton kosmon*), says *John* 3:16, “as to give his only begotten Son, that all who believe in him should not perish but have everlasting life” (*hōste ton huion ton monogenē edōken, hina pas ho pisteuōn eis auton mē apolētai all’ echē zōēn aiōnion*).

Chapter 4 of *1 John* makes an essential contribution to the argument above establishing the equivalence of loving God to knowing God. This equivalence enables expansion of the definition of eternal life at *John* 17:3 to include loving God as a component. In effect, eternal life is to know and to love the only true God, along with Jesus Christ whom God has sent. There is a passage in book 5 of *1 John*, moreover, that brings 12:50 of the Gospel *John* into the equation as well. As previously observed, *John* 12:50 is where Jesus says he knows that God’s commandment is eternal life.

John 12:50, it should be noted, does not itself constitute a definition of eternal life. However defined, eternal life is a state or condition. And unlike knowing God and

loving God, a commandment of God is not a state or condition. There is such a state, nonetheless, as that of keeping God's commandments. This is a state that all proper Christians presumably strive to attain. And *1 John 5:3* pertains to that state. According to *1 John 5:3*, "this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments" (*hautē ... estin hē agape tou theou. hina tas entolas autou tērōmen*). Taken literally, this passage says that loving God and keeping his commandments are equivalent states.

As already shown, knowing God is equivalent to loving God. And loving God is equivalent to keeping his commandments. Thus if eternal life is knowing God, as *John 17:3* affirms, it follows that keeping God's commandments (fully accomplished) is eternal life as well. This, in effect, seems to be what Jesus says in truncated form at *John 12:50*, in saying he knows that God's commandment is eternal life.

Let us summarize. At *John 17:3*, Jesus defines eternal life as knowing God and Jesus Christ whom he has sent. The Greek term for 'knowing' here is a form of *ginōskō*, which conveys the connotation of an intimate personal relationship. Passages from chapter 13 of *1 Corinthians* have been brought to bear in showing that love is an essential concomitant of the knowledge that constitutes eternal life. Since God is love, according to *1 John 4:7,16*, knowing God is inseparable from knowing love. According to *1 John 5:3*, moreover, loving God is inseparable from keeping his commandments. The upshot is that knowing God, loving God, and keeping his commandments, all are aspects of eternal life. The centrality of love among these aspects is indicated by *John 3:16*, according to which God's love for the world prompted the gift of his Son, enabling those in the world to achieve eternal life. The essential message of *John 17:3*, accordingly, is that eternal life is the state in which a given individual returns love to God, its original source.

(4.2423) Glory

John 17:3 is embedded in a series of passages about glory. First is *John* 17:1, which portrays Jesus as praying: “Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son, that the Son may glorify you” (*Pater, elēluthen hē hōra` doxason sou ton huion, hina ho huiois doxasē se*). Then at 17:4, Jesus says: “I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do” (*egō se edoxasa epi tēs gēs to ergon teleiōsas ho dedōkas moi hina poiēsō*). This is followed by the enigmatic request at 17:5: “Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory I had before the world existed” (*pater, para se autō tē doxē hē eichon pro tou ton kosmon einai para soi*).

Connection between the themes of glory and of eternal life is established by *John* 17:2, which says in effect that the Son should glorify the Father inasmuch as the Father has “given him [the Son] authority over all flesh, to give eternal life” (*edōkas autō exousian pasēs sarkos, hina ... dōsē ... zōēn aiōnion*) to all the Father has entrusted to his care. Also relevant in this regard is *2 Corinthians* 4:17, which depicts a person’s temporal affliction as accumulating “an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison” (*kath’ hyperbolēn eis hyperbolēn aiōnion baros doxēs*).

The terms translated ‘glory’ and ‘glorify’ in these passages are *doxa* and *doxazō*, respectively. Both terms are used in the OT Septuagint as well, occurring more frequently there but with a different range of application. The Hebrew word most frequently corresponding to *doxa* in the Septuagint is *kə-bō-wd*, which originally meant weight (compare *baros doxēs* at *2 Corinthians* 4:17). English equivalents of *doxa* in the OT include ‘riches’, ‘abundance’, ‘reputatiion’, ‘splendor’, ‘honor’, ‘dignity’, and of course

‘glory’. *Exodus* 14:4, for instance, refers to God’s intention to “gain glory over Pharaoh” (*endoxasthēsomai en Pharaō*), which on a more exalted scale is not unlike a Plains Indian counting coup over an enemy.

In literary Greek of the NT period, *doxa* generally means something in the neighborhood of opinion, expectation, or estimation, all of which might contribute to reputation. Older writers such as Herodotus and Pindar, however, sometimes used *doxa* in the direct sense of honor and glory. Thus when use in this sense became prominent in the NT, this use was not without precedent. Apart from writings of NT scholarship, nonetheless, use of *doxa* in the sense of honor and glory appears to have lapsed in subsequent Greek literature. The storyline of the NT involves frequent mention of *doxa* being gained, acknowledged and sometimes transferred to other parties. Once the basic storyline had been formulated, however, need for a special term bearing the sense of honor and glory apparently diminished.

A standard survey of meanings conveyed by *doxa* and *doxazō* in the NT is Gerhard Kittel’s *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (translated and edited by Geoffrey W. Bromiley, 1964). Commentators who pursue the matter tend to come up with their own ways of classifying these meanings. The classifications below are my own doing, and are aimed ultimately at making sense of Jesus’ references to glory and glorification in *John* 17:1-5. The first of these classifications distinguishes among various meanings of *doxa* by giving them numerical labels. A few (not all) instances of each are identified, with occasional commentary.

Doxa(1) – wealth, possessions

The most explicit NT use of *doxa* in this sense is at *Matthew* 4:8, where the devil takes Jesus to a high mountain and showed him “all the kingdoms of the earth and their glory” (*pasas tas basileias tou kosmou kai tēn doxan autōn*).

An OT use in this sense comes at *Genesis* 31:1, where the sons of Laban complain that Jacob had gained “all his wealth” (*pasan tēn doxan tautēn*) from their father.

Doxa(2) – visible splendor

Matthew 6:29 and *Luke* 12:27 both affirm that “Solomon in all his glory” (*Solomōn en pasē tē doxē autou*) is not arrayed like the lilies of the field. On the occasion of the transfiguration, as recorded in *Luke* 9:32, Peter, John, and James awoke to see Jesus in “his glory” (*tēn doxan autou*) and the two men (Moses and Elijah) standing with him. In *1 Corinthians* 11:15, long hair on a woman (but not a man) is said to constitute “her glory” (*doxa autē*).

OT uses of *doxa* in this sense are comparably splendid. *Ezekiel* 1:28 compares “the likeness of the glory of God” (*homoiōmatos doxēs kuriou*) to a rainbow. *Ezekiel* 43:2 tells of “the glory of the God of Israel” (*doxa theou Israēl*) coming from the east, adding that his coming was like the sound of many waters and that “the earth shone with his glory” (*hē gē exelampen ... apo tēs doxēs*).

Isaiah 60:1 urges Jerusalem to “arise and shine” (*phōtizou phōtizou*), for “the glory of the Lord has risen upon you” (*hē doxa kuriou epi se anatetalken*).

Reminiscent of the glory of women’s hair in *1 Corinthians* 11:15, *Proverbs* 20:29 observes that “the glory of old men is [plenteous] grey hair” (*doxa de presbuterōn poliai*).

Doxa(3) – forceful manifestation

Visible splendor by itself does not always bring about a palpable effect. Uses of *doxa* that fall under the present heading all have to do with producing effects that make a difference. The most straightforward example in the NT, at 2 *Corinthians* 3:7, refers back to the Israelites who could not gaze at “Moses’ face because of its glory” (*to prosōpon Mōuseōs dia tēn doxan*). A more convoluted example occurs later in the same chapter, where Paul avers that “beholding the glory of the Lord” (*tēn doxan kuriou katoptrizomenoi*, 3:18) transforms the believer “from glory to glory” (*apo doxēs eis doxan*). The former is the glory of Moses’ face that “was being abolished” (*tēn katargoumenēn*, 3:7). This glory is being abolished by “the ministry of the Spirit that has more glory” (*mallon hē diakonia tou pneumatōs estai en doxē*, 3:8) and hence will replace it.

Examples are more frequent in the OT. *Exodus* 33:22-23 has to do with the effect of God’s glory on Moses. After warning Moses that he cannot see God’s face and live, God tells him that when “my [God’s] glory passes by” (*parelthē mou hē doxa*, 33:22), God will put Moses in the crack of a rock and cover Moses with his hand. Once past, God will remove his hand, allowing Moses to see his back. At *Exodus* 40:34-35 we hear how “the tabernacle was filled with the glory of the Lord” (*doxēs kuriou eplēsthē hē skēnē*, 40:34), so that Moses was unable to enter because “the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle” (*doxēs kuriou eplēsthē hē skēnē*, 40:35). Speaking more abstractly, *Proverbs* 25:2 says: “the glory of God conceals a topic” (*doxa theou kruptei logon*), whereas “the glory of kings is to seek things out” (*doxa de basileōs tima pragmata*).

Doxa(4) – power

Power in general is distinct from *doxa*(3), which may be thought of as power exhibited in particular actions. Power in a general sense is associated with *doxa* in *Matthew* 24:30, which predicts a time when the Son of Man will be seen “coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory” (*erchomenon epi tōn nephelōn tou ouranou meta dunameōs kai doxēs pollēs*). Another example can be found in *2 Thessalonians* 1:9, where Paul warns of the disastrous fate of those who are removed “from the countenance of the Lord and from the glory of his might” (*apo prosōpou tou kuriou kai apo tēs doxēs tēs ischuos autou*). In a similar vein, the author of *2 Peter* excoriates evildoers who do not hesitate to blaspheme glory (*doxas*, 2:10, i.e., that of angels), “even though angels are greater in might and power” (*hopou angeloi ischui kai dunamei meizones*, 2:11).

In the OT, power of some general sort is indicated in *Psalms* 24:10, which reads (punctuation added in translation): “Who is this King of glory? The Lord of power, he is this King of glory!” (*Tis estin houtos ho basileus tēs doxēs kurios tōn dunameōn autos estin ho basileus tēs doxēs*). (It may be noted that the expression *kurios tōn dunameōn*, which is used more than a dozen times in the Septuagint, is usually translated idiomatically as “Lord of hosts.” The expression does not occur in the NT.)

Doxa(5) – majesty, dominion

Invoking “our Lord Jesus Christ” (*’Iēsou Christou tou kuriou hēmōn*), the doxology of *Jude* 25 attributes “glory, majesty, dominion, and authority” (*doxa megalōsunē kratos kai exousia*) to God our savior, “now and forever. Amen” (*nun*

kai eis pantas tous aiōnas, amēn). In similar terms, *1 Peter* 4:11 praises God saying: “to him belongs glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen” (*hō estin hē doxa kai to kratos eis tous aiōnas tōn aiōnōn, amēn*). *Revelation* 1:6 follows suit with “to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen” (*autō hē doxa kai to kratos eis tous aiōnas [tōn aiōnōn]’ amen*).

A term often translated ‘majesty’ in the Septuagint is *megaloprepeia*.

There are two Psalms in which this term is paired with *doxa*. In *Psalms* 21, David sings praises to the Lord who “has bestowed glory and majesty upon him” (*doxan kai megaloprepeian epithēseis ep’ auton*, 21:5). Another song of praise is *Psalms* 145, in which David says to the Lord that he will “will speak of the glorious majesty of your holiness” (*tēn megaloprepeian tēs doxēs tēs agiōsunēs sou lalēsousin*) and spell out “your wondrous works” (*ta thaumasia sou*, 145:5). Later in the same Psalm, still addressing the Lord, David alludes to “the glorious majesty of your kingdom” (*tēn doxan tēs megaloprepeias tēs basileias sou*, 145:12).

Setting aside the noun *doxa* for the moment, we turn now to the verb *doxazō*.

Obviously enough, the verb means “to glorify,” or “to impart glory;” but it is not immediately obvious what kinds of glory can be imparted. Glory in the sense of wealth (*doxa*(1)), at least, seems to be excluded. Becoming rich by inheritance, for example, would not normally be thought of as resulting from glorification. *Doxa*(2) (visible splendor) is also dubious. Although the glory of the lilies may be God’s doing, it seems implausible to think of that glory as a result of glorification. On the other hand, there are forms of glorification from which no glory in particular seems to result. In *Luke*’s story of

Jesus' birth, for instance, the "glory of the Lord" (*doxa kuriou*, 2:9) shone round the shepherds and they "glorified God" (*doxazontes ... ton theon*, 2:20) in turn. But glorification by the shepherds presumably did not contribute to the greater glory of God, who is full of glory independently of being glorified by mere mortals.

It is even unclear whether or how God's glory is increased by Jesus' glorification of the Father mentioned in *John* 17:1 and 17:4. Our current task is to gain understanding of those passages. To this end, we shall examine various distinct senses of *doxazō* in the NT. Although the term occurs frequently in the OT as well, OT occurrences will be considered inessential for this particular purpose.

The classification that follows is not an attempt to itemize all occurrences of glorification in the NT, but an attempt rather to categorize paradigmatic instances by type. One type of glorification that also is inessential for present purposes is self-glorification among people. An example is noted at *Revelation* 18:7, where Bablyon is accused of "glorifying herself" (*edoxasen autēn*). This is said to result in her being "burned up with fire" (*en puri katakauthēsetai*, 18:8). A similar transgression is that of the hypocrites at *Matthew* 6:2, who publicly trumpet their gifts to the needy "that they may be glorified by others" (*hopōs doxasthōsin hupo tōn anthrōpōn*). That attention from others is all the reward they can expect. Distinct from glory in the sight of other people, the types of glorification relevant to present purposes involve either God the Father or Christ the Son.

Since *doxazō* is a transitive verb, it will be relevant to note who glorifies whom in particular cases. If X glorifies Y in a particular case, this will be symbolized 'X > Y'. In this formula, 'X' and 'Y' both serve as variables. Thus 'human > God', in the first item

below, symbolizes glorification of God by an individual human or group of human beings; and *mutatis mutandis* for subsequent items.

Doxazō(1) – to praise

(human \supset God)

Matthew 15:31; after witnessing the lame walking and the blind seeing, the crowds glorified (*edoxasan*) God.

Mark 2:12; the witnesses glorified (*doxazein*) God when the paralytic picked up his bed and walked.

Luke 7:16; after Jesus resurrected the dead man of Nain, the crowds glorified (*edoxazon*) God.

Acts 21:20; after Paul spoke of what God had done for the Gentiles, the elders glorified (*edoxazon*) God.

(human \supset Jesus)

Luke 4:15; returning to Galilee after his temptation by the Devil, Jesus taught in the synagogues, being glorified (*doxazomenos*) by all.

(human \supset word of God)

Acts 13:48; hearing *Isaiah* 49:6 interpreted to make them agents of salvation, the Gentiles glorified (*edoxazon*) the word of the Lord.

In these examples, praise is always rendered by lesser to greater entities. Neither Jesus nor God praises human beings. Nor do Jesus and God praise each other. Praise in these examples is always directed from humanity to divinity. Moreover, there is no apparent reason to think that glorification in the form of praise enhances the status of the entity glorified. God's glory was no greater because he was praised by the people.

Doxazō(2) – to magnify, render preeminent

(human \supset God)

Romans 15:6; Paul urges the Gentiles to live in accord with Christ Jesus, so that they might glorify (*doxazēte*) God his Father.

2 Corinthians 9:13; by their contributions to the Macedonians, Paul's Corinthian audience will glorify (*doxazontes*) God.

1 Peter 4:16; the author advises that those who suffer as Christians let their faith and hope glorify (*doxazetō*) God.

(Jesus \supset God)

John 14:13; the Son will glorify (*doxasthē*) the Father by granting the petitions of the disciples.

John 21:19; Jesus is about to glorify (*doxasei*) God by the manner of his death.

(event \supset God)

John 15:8; the Father is glorified (*edoxasthē*) by the fruitfulness of Jesus' disciples.

(God \supset Jesus)

John 17:1; praying to the Father, the Son asks the Father to glorify (*doxason*) him. (We return to this case presently.)

(event \supset Jesus)

John 11:4; Lazarus' illness and subsequent return to life is for the glorification (*doxasthē*) of the Son of God.

John 17:10; Jesus is glorified (*dedoxasmai*) by the existence of certain people God has given to his care.

(Spirit of Truth \supset Jesus)

John 16:14; the Spirit of Truth will glorify (*doxasei*) Jesus by declaring what the Father has in store for him.

Glorification under this heading is not a matter of praise. Praise is an intentional act directed toward a specific object; and such things as the way the Gentiles live, the faith and hope of the Christians, and Lazarus' return to life, are not intentional acts. Unlike *doxazō*(1), *doxazō*(2) redounds to the greatness (preeminence) of its recipient. In this respect, it magnifies its recipient. The only recipients of *doxazō*(2) in the NT are God and Jesus, each of whom is represented (in *John 14:13*, *17:1*, and *21:19*) as being about to magnify the other.

John 17:4 also fits under this category. Speaking of the past, Jesus says to the Father: "I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work you gave me to do" (*egō se edoxasa epi tēs gēs to ergon teleiōsas ho dedōkas moi hina poiēsō*). This differs from the foregoing case of *John 17:1* in at least two respects. Both cases pertain to glorification of the Father by the Son. *John 17:1*, however, refers to a glorification yet to take place, whereas the glorification of *17:4* is a matter of past accomplishment. The other difference is that for the glorification of *17:1* to take place, the Son needs additional help from the Father. By accomplishing the work given him to do on earth (*17:4*), the Son has reached his final challenge. His final challenge is to assume the burden of sin accumulated by humanity since Adam, and to die willingly in expiation of that sin. The Son will glorify

the Father in meeting this challenge, but asks the Father for further help (glorification) to give him strength.

An even more ultimate form of glorification enters the story at *John* 17:5. And now, Jesus says to the Father, “glorify me ... in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world existed” (*doxason me ... para seautō tē doxē hē eichon pro tou ton kosmon einai para soi*). The ultimate character of this glorification is tied to the kind of glory it provides. And this glory in turn is more ultimate than any of the five forms of glory examined previously. Thus we have an additional form of glory and an additional form of glorification to go with it. Let us consider them together.

Doxazō(3) – to restore eternal glory

Doxa(6) – eternal glory

The eternal character of this glory is reiterated in *John* 17:24, where Jesus addresses the Father and refers to “the glory you gave me ... before the beginning of the world” (*tēn doxan tēn emēn, hēn dedōkas moi ... pro katabolēs kosmou*). Given that time began with the beginning of the world, this glory was atemporal. Its atemporal character is in accord with our previous discussion of the sense in which being eternal is being out of time. Apart from being eternal, there are other respects in which *doxa*(6) differs from the other five. It is both superlative and unconditional.

The superlative character of this glory is demonstrated in *John* 8:54, where Jesus says to a group of hostile Jews: “If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing; it is my Father who glorifies me” (*Ean egō doxasō emauton, hē doxa mou ouden estin`estin ho patēr mou ho doxazōn me*). The negating factor here is not self-

glorification. After all, we hear of God glorifying his own name in *John* 12:28 where, in response to Jesus' request "Father, glorify your name" (*pater, doxason sou to onoma*), a voice from heaven replies "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again" (*edoxasa kai palin doxasō*). Inasmuch as a name is an attribute of the person bearing it, this seems equivalent to God's glorifying himself. So there would seem to be nothing self-defeating about Jesus glorifying himself in turn. The negating factor here, rather, is the supreme worth of the glory Jesus receives from God, which renders other glories unworthy to the point of being nothing (*ouden estin*) at all.

Regarding the unconditional character of *doxa*(6), we may recall that the five previous forms of *doxa* are all contextual. They are manifested in particular contexts, and contingent upon particular circumstances. As such, they vary with time and place. Being contextual in this manner, moreover, these other forms of glory depend upon other factors for their existence. The glory of Moses' face described at *2 Corinthians* 3:7, for instance, depended on Moses' presence on Mount Sinai under those particular circumstances.

In sharp contrast, *Doxa*(6) is neither contextual nor contingent. This, I take it, is the significance of Jesus' petition at *John* 17:5 that the Father glorify him "in [the Father's] presence" (*para seautō*). Being eternal, God's presence is not contingent. A consequence of its being in God's presence is that the glory Jesus seeks also is eternal and unconditional.

Another reference to this eternal *doxa*(6) comes at *John* 17:24, where the Son prays to the Father in behalf of the people his Father gave him. He prays that

his people be with him so that “they may see the glory you gave me, because you loved me, before the foundation of the world” (*theōrōsin tēn doxan tēn emēn, hēn dedōkas moi hoti ēgapēsas me pro katabolēs kosmou*). This *doxa* is eternal because the Son received it before the world began. Interestingly enough, the verb *doxazō* does not appear in this passage. There is reference instead to the *doxa* the Father gave to the Son.

The only explicit reference to *doxazō*(3) in the NT is at *John* 17:5, which bears repeating for this reason. And now, Father, Jesus says: “glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world existed” (*doxason me su ... para seautō tē doxē hē eichon pro tou ton kosmon einai para soi*). Anticipating his death, resurrection, and subsequent ascension, Jesus requests return to his original state of eternal glory.

Although interesting in their own right, the primary purpose of the foregoing classifications is to throw light on the immediate context of Jesus’ definition of eternal life at *John* 17:3. The dramatic occasion, we recall, is Jesus’ prayer to the Father before proceeding to Gethsemane for his betrayal. Let us recapitulate the salient features of this immediate context.

John 17:1 tells how Christ petitioned the Father to glorify the Son., enabling the Son to glorify the Father by completing his mission. In neither respect is glorification primarily a matter of praise; hence neither is an instance of *doxazō*(1). In both respects, moreover, the relevant glorification is conditional on particular circumstances (the prayer in Gethsemane), and hence lacks the eternity of *doxazō*(3). This leaves *doxazō*(2). Jesus

asks the Father to magnify his resolution and power in order to help him complete his mission. By completing his mission, the Son will magnify the Father in turn.

John 17:2 identifies the Son's mission. The Father has given over a certain group of people to his care. The Son's mission is to bring eternal life to these people. *John* 17:3, in turn, is the central passage of the five, in which eternal life is defined as knowing the Father and the Son.

John 17:4 depicts Jesus taking a "backward look," as it were, at the event which is about to complete his mission. From a timeless perspective, this makes some kind of sense. Jesus says to the Father, "I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work you gave me to do" (Greek above). As is the case at 17:1, the glorification in question is that of *doxazō*(2). Considered in retrospect, the Father's preeminence will have been magnified by the Son's success.

John 17:5 again portrays the Son speaking to the Father from a timeless perspective: "glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world existed" (Greek above). With his earthly mission accomplished, the Son petitions the Father to restore him to the glory he enjoyed before time began. This glory is eternal because it is timeless. And the glorification that imparts this glory is eternal itself, inasmuch as it is said to occur in the Father's eternal presence. These are paradigm instances of *doxa*(6) and *doxazō*(3), respectively. As far as I can determine, there is no other instance of *doxazō*(3) in the NT.

(4.2424) Eternal Glory and Eternal Life

In his second letter to the Corinthians, Paul assures his audience that the temporal afflictions they endure are preparing them for an “eternal weight of glory” (*aiōnion baros doxēs*, 4:17) beyond compare. This description of glory in terms of *baros* is unique in the NT. It presumably echoes the earlier use of *kā-bō-wd* (translated *doxa* in the Septuagint) as a term for weight. Use of the adjective *aiōnion* (eternal) here is more relevant for present purposes. The expression *aiōnion ... doxēs* is also unique in being the only explicit reference in the NT to an eternal glory. Being eternal, this must be a form of glory that is not manifest perceptually. Paul seems to acknowledge this in *2 Corinthians* 4:18, with his observation that “visible things are transient” (*blepomena proskaira*) whereas “unseen things are eternal” (*ta de mē blepomena aiōnia*).

There is a clear parallel in this regard between *2 Corinthians* 4:17 and *John* 17:24. This latter is the passage where Jesus prays that his people might see the glory his Father gave him before the world began. In discussing this passage above, we observed that the glory (*doxa*) here must in some sense exist apart from time, and hence qualify for description as eternal. In a word, the glory of both *2 Corinthians* 4:17 and *John* 17:24 counts as an instance of *doxa*(6).

Chapter 17 of the Gospel *John* is given over to Jesus’ anguished prayer to God immediately before his betrayal in Gethsemane. The first five verses of this chapter contain Jesus’ definition of eternal life, along with various references to glory discussed in the previous section. The remainder of this chapter leading up to 17:24 consists of a petition by Jesus in behalf of his followers, and includes further disclosures pertaining to

eternal life. Let us review our previous findings on this topic, before moving on to these further disclosures.

According to *John* 17:3, eternal life consists in knowing God and Jesus Christ whom he has sent. Taken together, *I Corinthians* 8:3, *I Corinthians* 13:12, and *I John* 4:7-8 entail that knowing God is equivalent to loving God. According to *I John* 5:3, loving God in this life is tantamount to keeping his commandments. In the timelessness of eternity, loving God is a state that accords with keeping God's commands on earth. Thus Jesus says (elliptically), at *John* 12:50, that keeping God's command is eternal life. The upshot is that knowing God, loving God, and being in accord with his commands, all are aspects of eternal life.

In *John* 17:20, Jesus makes it clear that he is praying not just for his current disciples, but also for "those who will believe in me through their teaching" (*tōn pisteuontōn dia tou logou autōn eis eme*). In behalf of all these, he prays "that they all may be one" (*pantes hen ōsin*)-- that they all be one "just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you" (*kathōs su, pater, en emoi kagō en soi*, 17:21). He prays that in this way "they also may be in us" (*autoi en hēmin ōsin*). This will come about, Jesus continues, as a consequence of shared glory (presumably *doxa*(4)): "the glory you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one" (*kagō tēn doxan hēn dedōkas moi dedōka autois, hina ōsin en kathōs hēmeis hen*, 17:22). As a final touch to this line of thought, Jesus adds: "I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one" (*egō en autois kai su en emoi, hina ōsin teteleiōmenoi eis hen*, 17:23).

There is an earlier passage in which this unity of all believers with Father and Son is extended into the timeless realm. In *John* 17:10, Jesus says: "all mine are yours, and

yours are mine, and I am glorified in them” (*ta ema panta sa estin kai ta sa ema, kai dedoxasmai en autois*). The timeless character of this complex unity is evident in Jesus’ (present tense) remark: “I am no longer in the world” (*ouketi eimi en tō kosmō*, 17:11), adding that he had kept his people in his Father’s name, “that they many be one, even as we [are one]” (*hina ōsin hen kathōs hēmeis*). The cumulative sense of these passages is that the glory God gave Jesus was passed on to his people, with the result that the Son’s followers join the Father and the Son in a unity that becomes perfected with Jesus’ death. Along with knowing God, loving God, and being in accord with his will, another aspect of eternal life is unity with the Father and the Son.

A specific motive behind Jesus’ prayer to the Father is disclosed at *John* 17:13. I have spoken these things while still “in the world” (*en tō kosmō*), Jesus tells the Father, so that my followers “may have my joy fulfilled in themselves” (*echōsin tēn charan tēn emēn peplērōmenēn en heautois*, 17:13). The sense seems to be that Jesus’ joy in completing his mission should be shared with his followers and brought to completion in them. Essentially the same thought is expressed in *John* 15:11. After urging his disciples to keep his commandments and abide in his love (*John* 15:10), Jesus tells them he has said these things that “my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full” (*hē chara hē emē en humin ē kai hē chara humin plērōthē*).

The verb associated with the noun *chara* is *chairō*. This verb carries a variety of meanings in the NT, including that of the common greeting *Chaire* (“good day,” as at *Matthew* 26:49). Among its uses as a transitive verb is that of taking joy in, or simply enjoying. An example is found in *Romans* 12:12, where Paul urges his audience to “rejoice in hope” (*tē elpidi chairontes*). The noun *chara* and the verb *chairō* interact in

John 16:22. In the moments before his prayer to the Father, Jesus tells his disciples that he will see them again (after his resurrection). And when that happens, he tells them, “your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you” (*charēsetai humōn hē kardia, kai tēn charan humōn oudeis airei aph’ humōn*). Rephrased in English, Jesus is telling his disciples that they will find joy in his reappearance. More succinctly, they will enjoy the occasion of seeing him again. Another use of the verb in this sense occurs at *Philippians* 4:4, where Paul says “Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice” (*Chairete en kuriō pantote` palin erō, chairete*). What Paul reiterates here is that his audience should never refrain from enjoying the Lord.

In conjunction with *John* 15:11 and *John* 17: 12, *Philippians* 4:4 can be read as adding yet another aspect to eternal life. Along with knowing God, loving God, and existing in unity with Father and Son, eternal life also comprises enjoying the Lord always (*pantote*).

(4.2425) “The Chief End of Man”

The first entry in the Westminster Catechism is among the most widely known doctrines of Christianity. The Westminster Catechism was the joint work of theologians from the Churches of Scotland (Presbyterian, Congregational) and of England (Anglican), and was prepared to serve their shared catechetical needs. The document was made public in 1648, when it was issued in both shorter and longer versions.

Question 1 (Q1) of the Westminster Catechism is: “What is the chief end of man?” The answer (A1) is: “Man’s chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever.” There is nothing in either the longer or the shorter version about what it means to glorify

God. Questions 56 and 83 of the longer version also mention the glory of Christ, but again without saying anything about the nature of that particular glory. Theologians have discussed both issues at length, but often with results that contribute more to piety than to clarification.

Of the three forms of glorification distinguished above, only *doxazō*(1) is a plausible interpretation of the glorification of God enjoined as man's chief end. To glorify God in that sense is to render God praise. It is conceivable that the glorification in question also includes a diluted form of *doxazō*(2), which is the magnification Jesus rendered to God by the completion of his mission (*John* 17:1). But this seems implausible, in that it likens achievement of man's chief end to Jesus' death on the cross. As far as *doxazō*(3) is concerned, it is not even conceivable that achieving man's chief end is any thing like restoring Jesus to the glory he had with God before the world began.

Praising God is an activity in which a person might engage during his or her tenure on earth. It may in some sense be conceivable that a person engage in this activity after death. It may be conceivable, for instance, that a "departed soul" join a "heavenly host" like the one that "praised God" (*ainountōn ton theon, Luke* 2:13) on the occasion of Jesus' nativity. As will soon be seen, however, there are reasons for thinking that the human soul loses active capacities of all sorts after death. If sound, these are reasons for denying that a human person might praise God while in a state of timeless existence.

The second stage of A1 is to enjoy God forever. Unlike glorifying God, eternal enjoyment of God is a state rather than an activity. For reasons discussed previously, the state of receiving joy from the presence of God is an aspect of the eternal life depicted in

the NT. Receiving joy is a passive state that might endure after all capacity for action has been lost. Thus conceived, it makes sense to speak of enjoying God forever.

If glorifying God is understood as praising God during this life, in the sense of *doxazō*(1), and if enjoying God forever is understood as a timeless form of the joy Jesus seeks for his followers in *John* 17:13, then the answer to Q1 of the Westminster Catechism has a straightforward scriptural basis. The chief end of man is to praise God on earth and then to partake in the enjoyment of God that comes with eternal life.

The iconic Baltimore Catechism served as the Roman Catholic counterpart of the Westminster Catechism from the final decade of the 19th Century through the 1960s. Based on Cardinal Bellarmine's Catechism of 1597, this compilation was frequently revised, both in format and content. The quotations that follow come from *Baltimore Catechism No. 4* of 1891, issued as an instruction manual for catechists.

The Catholic counterpart of Westminster Q1 is Question 6 (Q6), Lesson 1, of this Catechism. Q6 is: "Why did God make you?" Answer 6 (A6) follows: "God made me to know Him, to love Him, and to serve Him in this world, and to be happy with Him forever in the next." Since this document was written in English, and for use primarily in the U.S., there are no other-language versions ready at hand to help us decipher what A6 means.

Interpreting the text in light of previous discussion, we may assume that God is to be known in the sense of *ginoskō*, and loved in the sense of *agapaō*, in line with the treatment of those terms above. Under this interpretation, the first part of the answer to Q6 is that God made us to know him in a manner that includes loving him as well, and that the love in question is unconditional. Although knowing God in this manner is

defined as part of eternal life in *John* 17:3, Baltimore A6 identifies it as part of one's purpose "in this world."

As far as precedent in scripture is concerned, however, inclusion of serving God as part of A6 poses a problem. The only references to serving God in the NT employ the term *douleuō*, which means literally "to serve as a slave." One such reference comes at *Matthew* 6:24, which reads: "You cannot serve God and material wealth" (*ou dunasthe theō douleuein kai mamōna*). The same caution, in exactly the same words, appears at *Luke* 16:13. A further reference is at *1 Thessalonians* 1:9, where Paul addresses people who turned "from idols to serve the living and true God" (*apo tōn eidōlōn douleuein theō zōnti kai alēthinō*). In effect, all three passages say it is better to enslave oneself to God than to some known evil. Taken in their NT contexts, these references to enslavement by God seem best understood in some metaphorical sense. Be that as it may, these passages offer little help by way of response to the question (Q6) why God made us. Given other passages like *Galatians* 5:1, with the message that "for freedom's sake, Christ has set us free" (*tē eleutheria hēmas Christos ēleutherōsen*), it seems dubious that enslavement of any sort is part of the reason we were made.

Something perhaps closer to the sort of service in question is expressed by the term *diakoneō*, which conveys the sense of "minister to" or "wait upon." Prominent passages employing this term include *Matthew* 4:11, which tells how the angels ministered (*diēkonoun*) to Jesus after his temptation by the devil, and *Luke* 10:40, in which Martha complains to Jesus that Mary has left her to serve (*diakonein*) the dinner guests by herself. To serve another person in this sense is to care for that person's needs.

But there is no context in the NT where the term *diakoneō* is used in reference to either God or Jesus being served by common people such as Martha.

To the contrary, there are several passages in the NT where *diakoneō* is used in reference to common people being served by Jesus. At *Matthew 20:28*, for instance, after telling the disciples (at 20:26) that the first among them would be their servant (*diakonos*), Jesus says of himself that “the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve” (*ho huios tou anthrōpou ouk ēlthen diakonēthēnai alla diakonēsai*). This lesson is repeated at *Luke 22:27*. After stating that, in the eyes of the Gentiles, one who reclines at table is greater than one who serves, Jesus tells his disciples: “I am among you as one who serves” (*egō de en mesō humōn eimi hōs ho diakonōn*). The sense of both *Matthew 20:28* and *Luke 22:27* is that being a servant surpasses being served in spiritual worth. With regard to A6 of *Baltimore Catechism No. 4*, it seems unlikely that we were created to become spiritually superior to God by serving him.

Given the lack of clear precedents in the NT, it is reasonable to assume that the “serving God” clause in A6 derived from other sources. In point of fact, there are several passages mentioning service to God in the Septuagint, all employing the slavery-related term *douleuō*. A prominent instance is *Isaiah 53:11*, where the Lord alludes to “the righteous one, my servant” (*dikaion ... douleuonta*) who will bear the iniquities of many. Christians traditionally read this passage as referring to the forthcoming mission of Jesus Christ. According to this reading, Jesus will serve the Lord by dying for the remission of humankind’s sins. This ultimate service on the part of Jesus, however, cannot plausibly be understood as precedent for the service of God mentioned in Baltimore A6.

A more plausible precedent is provided by *1 Chronicles* 28:9. King David has assembled the leaders of Israel and announced Solomon as his chosen successor. Then David says to Solomon: “Solomon my son, know the God of your father and serve him with a whole heart and a willing mind” (*Salōmōn huie mou gnōthi ton theon tōn paterōn sou kai douleue autō en kardia teleia kai psuchē thelousē*). In light of this OT precedent, it makes sense to read A6 as saying that we were created to serve God in the manner that David prescribed to Solomon; that is, “with a whole heart and a willing mind.”

This passage from *1 Chronicles* also employs the term *ginoskō* in a way seemingly in keeping with *John* 17:3. The passage can be read as saying that Solomon is to “know God” (*gnōthi ... theon*) in the way that *John* 17:3 links to eternal life. Adding this passage from the OT to the mix, we have a feasible interpretation of that part of A6 that pertains to knowing God and serving him during the present life. As far as loving God in this world is concerned, there is ample precedent in the NT (consider the first great commandment).

The remaining clause of A6 affirms that human individuals were made to be happy with God forever in the next world. As far as I can tell, there is nothing about being happy with God in the NT. The standard Greek terms for happiness are *eudaimonia* and *makarios*. The former does not appear in the NT. And although *makarios* occurs frequently, it always is used in the sense of “fortunate” or “blessed.” Typical instances of this use occur in the Beatitudes (*Matthew* 5:2-11), one of which is “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy” (*makarioi hoi eleēmones, hoti autoi eleēthēsontai*, 5:7). There are no locutions in the NT that might plausibly be interpreted as referring to a state of being happy with God.

Use of *makarios* in the sense of “blessed” prevails in the Septuagint as well. Translators of the Septuagint occasionally used the Greek term *thelēma* (choice or will) to render various Hebrew terms for delight or pleasure. A case in point is *Psalms* 1:1-2, where the man is termed “blessed” (*makarios*) “whose pleasure is in the law of the Lord” (*ē en tō nomō kuriou to thelēma autou*). But this seems irrelevant to the future happiness with God cited in Baltimore A6. However elevated the delights and pleasures of this life may be, they surely bear no credible similarity to eternal happiness with God in the life to come.

On balance, one must conclude that what *Baltimore Catechism No. 4* says about eternal happiness with God has no scriptural basis. In this regard, it is noteworthy that the 1994 *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, eschewing the Q&A format, proclaims that the end for which man was created is “to share, by knowledge and love, in God’s own life” (entry 356). No account is given in this document of how knowing and loving God might constitute sharing in God’s own life. For Christians who appreciate direct answers to important questions, A1 remains a preferable option.

(4.2426) Eternal Life and the Individual Life-Story

When an individual life-story is merged with a religious narrative, a typical result is the adoption of religious ends and purposes to shape the life of the individual concerned. A prominent end of the Christian narrative is the achievement of eternal life. According to the preceding analysis, eternal life is a timeless state of being. What does it mean for a given individual to adopt a timeless state of being as the end of his or her life?

The question is one of intelligibility. When an individual person thinks of a timeless state as the end of his or her life, what might that person have in mind? It is of course possible that the person has nothing specific in mind, and that the question simply does not arise. It is also possible that the person has entertained the question, but is content to leave it unanswered. Some might even think of eternal life as a “mystery” that a “proper Christian” ought not call into question. Let us adopt the alternative approach of trying to make eternal life at least basically intelligible.

As may be recalled, the medium on which given individual’s life-story is “recorded,” so to speak, is that individual’s self-awareness. In self-awareness, one’s attention is directed inward toward oneself. The attention of the subject-self is directed toward the object-self. Although in one respect subject-self and object-self must be the same, else awareness of self could not occur, there are other respects in which they differ. For one, the subject-self is active whereas the object-self is passive. This is why the subject-self is aware of the object-self, but not vice versa. Another difference lies in their respective relations to the outside world. When the attention of the subject-self is directed outward, it can be aware of objects outside itself. But the object-self is not accessible from without. It is capable of relating as object only to its corresponding subject-self.

An associated difference of particular importance for present purposes is that the object-self depends upon the subject-self for its existence, but not vice versa. The object-self, by definition, is an object of awareness, and its corresponding subject-self is the only possible seat of that awareness. Hence the subject-self is a necessary condition of the object-self’s being what it is. On the other hand, people commonly are aware of various things while not simultaneously aware of themselves. This happens whenever people are

engaged in external activities that occupy their full attention. In such cases there is still an active self that serves as subject even though the corresponding object-self has been excluded from attention. Lack of an internal object in such cases does not render the subject nonexistent. As far as the self's awareness of itself is concerned, object depends on subject but not subject on object.

One further difference of immediate relevance has to do with dependence on episodic memory. As may be recalled from earlier discussions, episodic memory is a two-term relation between a remembering subject and the object or event it remembers. The object-self of self-awareness is rendered continuous by its presence in episodic memory. Without episodic memory, the object-self of one moment would remain unconnected with the object-self of an earlier or a later moment. Apart from episodic memory, that is to say, the object-self would lack self-identity through time. The self-identity of the subject-self, on the other hand, is bound up with its own activity. It is not unusual for the subject-self to remain actively aware without memory of any sort being immediately involved.

During the course of a normal human life there are moments of inner awareness when the self is aware of itself, and moments of outer awareness when it is aware only of things distinct from itself. The subject is the same in both cases, but with different objects of awareness. In both cases, the periods of awareness are finite, taking place within the confines of a normal lifetime. In both case, moreover, the periods in question are measurable in human time. If the self is to be capable of timeless existence, accordingly, this must be a mode of existence beyond the range of a human lifetime and exempt from

measurement by human time. In some manner or another, eternal existence of the human self must be a mode of existence beyond bodily death.

In what manner might the human self exist after bodily death? To bring the question into focus, let us consider it from the perspective of a hypothetical person N who dies at time $t(d)$. Before $t(d)$, N's awareness functions in a normal human fashion. N's subject-self is sometimes aware of N's object-self, and sometimes aware of things in N's external environment. Awareness of N's object-self depends on episodic memory, which in turn depends on proper operation of the neuronal circuits by which N's memory is supported. At $t(d)$, all neuronal functions in N's brain cease to operate. After $t(d)$, accordingly, N's object-self no longer exists in time.

Since subject-self is not dependent on object-self for existence, however, nonexistence of N's object-self after $t(d)$ does not render N's subject-self nonexistent as well. Yet if N's subject-self is to continue existing after $t(d)$, the manner of its existence must change substantially. In particular, the deceased person's subject-self must lose its capacity to initiate action. Before $t(d)$, N's subject-self was an active factor in determining what N thought, what N said, what N did, and so forth. After $t(d)$, N's subject-self is no longer active. It may retain a potential for action in some sense or other, but it no longer exercises that potential.

An analogy might help. Think of an ocean-going vessel equipped with an autopilot. When the autopilot is engaged, it is actively involved in determining the ship's speed and direction of motion. When the autopilot is disengaged, it is not actively involved in running the ship, but retains the potential to do so nonetheless. The autopilot continues to exist as a manifestation of the potential to run the ship. N's subject-self after

t(d) might be compared to the disengaged autopilot. It continues to exist as a manifestation of a certain potential. It manifests the potential to manage N's affairs, a potential regularly actualized before N's death.

Suggestive as this analogy might be, there nonetheless are two respects in which the comparison falls short. One is that the ship's autopilot can be reengaged, which is to say that its potential can be reactivated. N's subject-self, on the other hand, has been deactivated permanently, which means that it is incapable of returning to an active state. The second disanalogy has to do with mode of existence. The ship's autopilot is part of the physical world, and remains so whether engaged or not. But N's subject-self is not a physical object, and its mode of existence is immaterial. Thinking about the continuing existence of physical mechanisms is not much help in clarifying the continuing existence of immaterial entities.

Let us attempt to articulate a more suitable analogy. N's self (short for subject-self) after death is entirely inactive, meaning that it is incapable of acting on its own. A thing's being incapable of action, however, does not preclude its being acted on by other things. Indeed, being acted on by other things might be sufficient to maintain something in existence. Relevant advice in this regard is found in *De Anima* 417b2-5, where Aristotle observes that being affected (*paschein*) can mean two things. One is destruction of something by something else that opposes it. The other is a matter of preservation instead. A thing that exists potentially (*dunamei ontos*) can be preserved by something else that (1) actually exists (*entelecheia ontos*) and (2) is like it in the way that a potentiality (*dunamis*, power, capacity) might be like an actuality (*entelecheian*). Aristotle's example treats "having knowledge" (*to echon tēn epistēmēn*, 417b5-6) as a

potential state that can be actualized by contemplation (*theōroun*). Becoming actualized in this manner does not nullify the potential of having knowledge. The potential remains even when actualized. Actualization, as it were, preserves the potential in being.

In similar fashion, an opera singer has the potential of singing an aria, and this potential remains while the aria is actually being sung. The potentialities of knowing and of singing are both active capacities, inasmuch as knowing and singing are things people do. As active contemplation preserves the potentiality of having knowledge, so actually singing an aria preserves the singer's capacity for actually singing it. In both cases, the activity in question preserves an *active* capacity, that of knowing and that of singing respectively.

Examples of the actual sustaining the potential are available for *passive* capacities as well. A passive capacity is a potential for receiving action, which is say a potential for being acted upon. For an example, consider the aria "Musetta's Waltz" from Puccini's *La Boheme*. This aria has the potential of being sung; and being sung is not something the aria does but rather something that happens to it. With the singing of the aria, this potential is actualized. When a vocalist actualizes the aria's potential of being sung by actually singing it, this clearly does not eliminate the potential in question. Instead, the act of singing sustains in existence the potential of the aria's being sung.

While being sung, the aria retains the potential of being sung by other singers. In point of fact, the aria remains in existence as long as there are singers with the potential to sing it. Its existence is sustained as long as it remains in the repertoire of active singers. If the series of singers with potential to sing the aria continued endlessly (per impossibile), then "Musetta's Waltz" itself would enjoy endless existence.

With the analogy of a musical aria at hand, we are ready to put forward an account of the mode of existence implicated in eternal life. Underlying this account is *John 17:3*, in which Jesus defines eternal life as knowing God and knowing Jesus Christ whom he sent. The term for knowing (*ginōskō*) in this particular passage, it has been argued, stands for an intimate personal relationship between knower and known. In this relationship, knower and known are intimately bound together by love. The origin of this love is God himself, who is identified with love in *1 John 4:8* and *4:16*. An overall context for the picture thus far is *John 3:16*, according to which God so loved the world that he sent his only son, that whoever believes in him should have eternal life. As God loved us, so we are enjoined to love God in return (*1 John 4:19*).

Apart from the relation between knower and known, knowing God and loving God themselves are intimately related. According to certain passages in *1 Corinthians*, as we have seen, loving God is sufficient for knowing God on the part of a given individual. According to certain passages in *1 John*, moreover, knowing God is sufficient for loving God in turn. It follows that knowing God and loving God are inseparable. This provides further support for the inclusion of love in the relation between knower and known at *John 17:3*. To know God is to love God as well; and the same holds for knowing and loving Jesus Christ.

There is also a close relation between loving God and being known by God. In the words of *1 Corinthians 8:3*, “if anyone loves God, then that person is known by him” (Greek above). Actually being known by God, of course, is the actualization of a passive potential. For a person N to love God is for an active potential on the part of N to be actualized. That potential is actualized by N’s act of loving. For N to be known by God,

on the other hand, involves both a passive potential on the part of N and an act of knowing on the part of God. Before t(d), while N was still alive, N actively loved God and was actively known by God in turn. Such at least is the case according to *1 Corinthians* 8:3.

In what respect is this relation between God and N changed by N's death? After death, of course, N's self is no longer active. It has lost the potential of loving, along with other active potentials. But N's self retains any number of passive potentialities. It retains the passive potentials of being remembered, of being yearned for, of being emulated, and so forth. In the manner that the passive potential of "Musetta's Waltz" is sustained in existence by the active potentials of persons prepared to sing it, so N's passive potentials of being remembered and being emulated are sustained in existence by the active potentials of those who remember, emulate, and so forth. But since the lifespans of those who remember, who yearn for, and who emulate N are limited, the time during which N's passive potentiality is sustained by their active potentials is limited as well. As the passive potentiality of "Musetta's Waltz" remains only while there are people with the active potential of singing it, so N's various passive potentialities remain only as long as there are people capable of actualizing those potentialities. To put it simply, N's self continues to exist as a set of passive potentialities only as long as there remain persons who actively relate in some fashion to that departed self.

Among passive potentials characterizing N after death, however, may be that of being known by God. According to *1 Corinthians* 8:3, anyone who loves God is known (*egnōstai*) by God. The verb *egnōstai* in this passage is a passive form of *ginōskō*, the term that figured prominently in the preceding analysis of *John* 17:3. As part of this

analysis, it was concluded that in the context of *John* 17:3, knowing God and loving God are inseparable. The same intimate interdependency may be assumed to apply in the case of being known by God at *1 Corinthians* 8:3. To be known by God is inseparable from being loved by God. Once the passive state of being known by God is achieved, it is sustained as long as God exists. Since God exists timelessly, which is to say eternally, it follows that the self of the individual person who has come to love God is sustained in a timeless state of being. This state of being includes being loved by God among its essential features. It is not implausible, accordingly, to understand being loved by God as another facet of eternal life at *John* 17:3.

According to *1 John* 5:3, to love God is to keep his commandments. Within the purview of the New Covenant, one of the greatest commandments is to love one's neighbor as oneself. In the narrative of the Gospel *John*, Jesus delivered this commandment to his disciples on the occasion of a particular meal (13:34). Despite its presumably timeless intent, this commandment was introduced at a particular time on a particular occasion. Moreover, the efforts of Jesus' followers to keep the commandment took place in the course of their day-by-day lives. This means that the state of timeless existence that comes with being known by God has antecedents in human time. One has to manage one's affairs on earth in an auspicious way in order to gain eternal existence in the life to come.

We may return to our fictional N for an illustration. Before death at $t(d)$, let us suppose, N strives earnestly to keep God's commandments. Up to a certain point before death, N was still trying to muster the love of God that eventuates in eternal life. After $t(d)$, the time of striving on N's part is past. After death, N's self is no longer active and

no longer capable of altering N's relationship with God. But if N's life on balance has been conducted auspiciously, by t(d) N will have become known by God . And if N exists in the passive state of being known by God at t(d), that state of being will be sustained eternally. N will have joined God in his timeless state of existence.

In that timeless state, N will participate in the divine Love of God. The Love in which N will then participate is not the same as the love for humankind that moved God to send his only begotten Son. The love that prompted the coming of Christ was a general love of humanity at large that provided humankind an opportunity to recover from Adam's sin. The Love of God in which N comes to participate after t(d), on the other hand, is a Love that N shares with God as an individual person. This is in accord with *John* 15:10-11, where Jesus tells his disciples that if they keep his commandments, they will participate in his joy to the fullest extent.

This participation is a relationship between an individual person and a personal God, the God of *1 John* 4:8 who is the same as Love. In the case of an N who has kept God's commandments, when N departs from time-bound life this relation achieves fulfillment.

(4.2427) Comparison with Immortality in Plato's *Symposium*

There are parallels between this account of eternal life and the account of immortality in Plato's *Symposium*. Divine love is featured in both accounts. Also featured is the condition of passive potentiality that can be actualized by the activity of other persons. Divinity, of course, is treated differently in the two contexts. And while the condition of passive potentiality is implicit in the *Symposium*, it is not explicitly mentioned as such.

Another difference concerns the terms for love employed in the two contexts. *Agapē*, the term used in most of the NT passages about love quoted previously, does not appear in the *Symposium*. *Andrōs*, the main term for love in the *Symposium*, is never used in the NT. Important as these differences may be, however, the similarities between the two accounts are striking.

Love (*erōs*) in the *Symposium* account is a multifaceted emotion. It is always directed toward objects the lover finds beautiful, but these objects take different forms on different levels of being. There are beautiful bodies, beautiful souls, and beautiful civic practices, all inferior in beauty to the Form Beauty itself. When love is engaged on a given level, it engenders products commensurate with the level in question. When directed toward beautiful (opposite sex) bodies, for example, it engenders bodily offspring. When directed toward beautiful (same sex) souls, it engenders heartfelt poetry (think Sappho). When directed toward beautiful civic practices, it engenders enduring laws and institutions (think Solon); and so forth.

A central theme of the *Symposium* account is that love, regardless of object, is pursued as a means of postponing mortality. This is obvious in the case of bodily offspring, insofar as features of the parent live on in the child. While the postponement is temporary at best, bodily procreation is a means of staving off mortality that humans share with other animals. A more enduring form of delayed mortality is achieved by love of (same sex) souls. Sappho, for example, lives on to the present day in the poetry produced out of love for her students. So it is with Solon in turn, who is still remembered for the laws he created for 6th century Athens.

This is the point in the *Symposium* account where passive potentiality comes into play. Sappho had the passive potentiality of being revered for her exquisite poetry. And Solon had the passive potential of being admired for his contribution to Athenian law. Both remain alive as paragons in their respective fields as long as those potentials are rendered actual in the memories of living people. Sappho and Solon continue to resist mortality as long as their passive potentialities for being esteemed are actively realized in the esteem of those who remember them.

At the top of the hierarchy of beautiful objects is the Form Beauty itself. Unlike beautiful bodies, beautiful souls, and beautiful practices, the Form Beauty itself never changes. In the words of the dialogue, Beauty itself “exists eternally” (*aei on*, 211A1). It “neither comes into being nor passes away, neither waxes nor wanes” (*oute gignomenon oute apollumenon oute auxanomenon oute phthinon*, 211A1-2). Beauty itself is a “divine beauty” (*to theion kalon*, 211E3), which a lover comes to know when “the lesson [of love] is complete’ (*to mathēma teleutēsē*, 211C7-8).

When the lesson has been completed, the lover who perseveres is in a position to receive immortality in its fullest form. This comes about in the following manner. In previous stages of the hierarchy, the lover produces offspring commensurate with the beauties there encountered. So it is also with Beauty on the highest level of the hierarchy. The product of procreation with Beauty itself is “true virtue” (*aretēn alēthē*, 212A6) on the part of the lover. In the Platonic scheme of things, true virtue is superior to bodily offspring, fine poetry, and enduring institutions taken together. The lesson of love is complete when the lover engenders true virtue in procreation with Beauty itself.

True immortality is yet to come. Having achieved true virtue, the favored lover must sustain it and nourish it. Then, having “engendered true virtue and nourished it” (*tekonti de aretēn alēthē kai threpsamenō*, 212A6), the lover will gain the attention of the gods. More specifically, the lover then “will become a friend of the gods” (*theophilei genesthai*, 212A6-7). The *Symposium* account ends with the suggestion: “if any of all humans should be immortal, that [would be the person]” (*eiper tō allō anthrōpōn, athanatō ... ekeinō*, 212A7-8).

Let us summarize the lover’s circumstances upon completion of the ascent. In procreating with ultimate Beauty, the favored lover engenders true virtue. By begetting and nourishing true virtue, the lover becomes a friend of the gods. From the beginning of the lover’s ascent to that end, he or she has a passive potentiality of being befriended by the gods. This potentiality is actualized when the lover engenders true virtue, and as a consequence gains the gods’ active friendship. Since the gods are immortal, the lover’s friendship with the gods is everlasting as well. Sappho and Solon stave off mortality by virtue of being remembered by successive generations of mortal admirers. But that admiration eventually will come to an end. Since the gods are immortal, however, the friendship they bestow on the favored lover might last forever. If any human being should be considered immortal, the virtuous lover of true Beauty has the best claim to that status.

(4.25) Component (C) Continued: Individual and Community

The Christian narrative overall consists of three major components. The first two, components (A) and (B), take place in the past, and are further divided into distinct parts.

Component (A) consists primarily of (i) the creation of heaven and earth, (ii) the fall of humankind in the Garden of Eden and (iii) the long sequence of efforts on the part of the Israelites to redeem themselves in submission to the Lord's harsh discipline. The time sequence in which part (iii) takes place is largely irregular, both in that the order of succession among events is not always apparent and in that intervals between events often are not specific. Apart from various apparent anticipations of Christ's mission found in (A), the first two major components of the Christian narrative lack temporal continuity.

Unlike its predecessor, component (B) consists of parts clearly ordered in time. Key parts of (B) in order are (i) Christ's birth, (ii) his crucifixion, (iii) his resurrection, and (iv) his ascension. Between birth and crucifixion come 33 years of mortal life, roughly 30 years of which are passed over by the narrative. Apart from this extended gap, however, the temporal intervals between these several parts are distinct. Christ's 40 days in the wilderness comprise the same interval of time as the 40 days between his resurrection and his ascension into heaven. Unlike the temporal gap between (A) and (B), the time in which the events of (B) occur is continuous with the time of component (C).

Component (C) is the journey along the path to eternal life pursued by human individuals whose life-stories have been merged with the Christian narrative. One consequence of such a merger is that the time in which component (C) takes place is keyed to the times incorporated in the life-stories of the individual persons concerned. As with human time generally, this time can be divided into past, present, and future. But these divisions are constantly in flux, and do not enable a division of component (C) into specific fixed parts.

Before merger with the life-story of a given person N, the storyline of component (C) retains temporal coherence in other life-stories joined with the narrative previously. Since these other life-stories themselves proceed in human time, component (C) already has a human timeline before N becomes involved. When the life-story of N merges with the narrative, the timeline of N's particular life-story joins the timeline of a narrative already in progress. From the point of merger onward, the particular life-story of N and the ongoing Christian narrative progress together in ordinary human time.

There comes a point, however, at which this joint progression in human time is interrupted. Part and parcel of the merger in the case of person N is the acceptance on N's part of a projected goal in life. In keeping with the Christian narrative, this goal is a timeless (i.e., eternal) state of existence. Regardless of N's ultimate success in achieving this goal, his or her death marks the end of that particular merger. The life-story of that person ceases, while the narrative continues in the lives of other people.

Our previous interest in this regard was that of making the concept of eternal life intelligible. Continuing our discussion of Component (C), we turn now to the task of tracing the journey of an individual person toward this projected end.

(4.251) Community, Individual, and the Christian Narrative

Christian communities are essential to Christian life. There are no Christian individuals apart from fellow Christians. If Christ had left only one disciple, that disciple would have had no successors. A plurality of believers was necessary for Christianity to get underway. This is in accord with *Matthew* 18:20, which reads: "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, I am there among them" (*hou gar eisin duo ē treis*

sunēgmenoi eis to emon onoma, ekei eimi en mesō autōn). As here interpreted, this passage might have continued by saying that a single person unaccompanied by others cannot count on Christ's presence.

Without a plurality of participants, there would be no Christian narrative with which individual life-stories could be merged. In our previous discussion of these matters, it was emphasized that whereas an individual life-story is private, the Christian narrative is communal. The Christian narrative is communal in that it can be merged with the life-stories of numerous individuals. We need to look more carefully at what it is about this narrative that enables a plurality of mergers to take place.

An individual's life-story, we recall, takes shape within the purview of his or her subject-self. The individual subject-self sustains the life-story within its field of subjective experience. We referred to this field previously as the subject's "field of internal awareness" (FIA), understanding this to include everything that might be presented to the subject-self when its attention is directed inward. The FIA of a given person N, of course, includes N's object-self and N's episodic memories. But it also includes N's individual life-story. Put figuratively, a person's FIA is the medium on which that person's life-story is written.

A person's life-story develops through time within the context of that person's memory. Although events in a person's memory retain their previous sequence in public time, their occurrence in the memory of that person is inevitably private. This means that the time in which these events take place is private as well. Occurring as it does within an individual's FIA, that person's life-story unfolds within an interior array of time to which no one else has access.

Since the Christian narrative is communal, on the other hand, the time progression in which it takes place must be accessible to numerous people. Given that an individual's life-story (figuratively) is written on the medium of that person's FIA, there arises the question of the medium underlying the Christian narrative in turn. What corresponds in this narrative to the FIA underlying the individual life-story? One possible answer might come with the postulation of a "communal field of awareness" with its own communal time progression. But this would implicate a highly implausible "communal subjective self" without a person in whom that self resides.

A more plausible answer incorporates the concept of a mutable (or dynamic) class. Consider the case of a person with a fixed number of ancestors and a positive number of descendants still capable of procreation. The class of that person's ancestors never changes membership, and in that respect is fixed and immutable. The class of that person's descendants, however, might change with time, which amounts to its being dynamic and mutable. Other mutable classes include presidents of the United States and graduates of the University of Notre Dame. A class by definition is a collection of things that have a specific characteristic in common. When the defining characteristic of a given class excludes change in membership (e.g., a person's ancestors), the class is immutable. In the absence of such exclusion, the class is mutable instead.

Think now of a community whose members recognize each other as participants in the Christian narrative. By and large, these people profess Christian beliefs, abide by Christian norms of conduct, and encourage each other to persist in a shared way of life. Members of this community constitute a mutable class. Let us refer to it as class \mathfrak{X} . The defining characteristic of this class, briefly put, is that of conducting one's life in accord

with the Christian narrative. Taken together, members of \mathfrak{X} form a community of Christian individuals. This is a community in which individual members support each other and help each other flourish as Christians.

At risk of belaboring the obvious, let us elaborate respects in which class \mathfrak{X} is mutable. Changes in membership can occur under at least three different circumstances. One is the assimilation of new members into the community. This can happen, among other ways, by confirmation of children and by conversion of adults. Changes of another sort occur when a member is excommunicated or voluntarily leaves the community. A third occasion for change arises when the membership of an individual in \mathfrak{X} is terminated by death. Changes of all three sorts keep the membership of \mathfrak{X} in constant flux.

In point of fact, the defining characteristics of \mathfrak{X} tend to promote change in the direction of increasing rather than decreasing membership. With mutable classes like personal descendants and U. S. presidents, the defining characteristics in question permit increase in membership but do not actively encourage it. In the case of \mathfrak{X} , however, the features that govern membership in the class tend to be self-propagating. For one thing, the promise of eternal life inherent in the Christian narrative has attracted many converts. As with the Samaritan woman at the well, when one receives an offer of “water welling up to eternal life” (*hudatos hallomenou eis zōēn aiōnion*, *John 4:14*) that one considers credible, one is likely to ask for a drink.

Another attractive feature of the Christian narrative is its emphasis on love. A frequently heard expression in spiritual circles is “Love begets love.” Although no exact equivalent of this expression appears in the NT, its content is often illustrated in the lives of subsequent Christians. A well-known recent example is Mother Teresa of Calcutta.

Mother Teresa has been quoted as saying “Intense love does not measure [judge], it just gives.” This may be paraphrased as saying, in part, that genuine love gives of itself. Mother Teresa’s loving care for the poor has inspired many followers imbued with a similar love. Affiliated with the Missionaries of Charity, an order she founded in 1950, are numerous groups of priests, brothers, and lay people throughout the world. The term ‘charity’ in the title comes from the Latin *caritas*, which means universal love.

With class \mathfrak{X} now at hand, we return to the question posed above. What is it about the Christian narrative that enables its merger with many different life-stories? The question stems from differences in status between the individual life-story and the overall narrative. An individual’s life-story is recorded on that person’s FIA. Like a person’s field of awareness itself, the person’s life-story is inevitably private. The Christian narrative, on the other hand, is communal by nature. Not only can it be merged with an indefinite number of life-stories, but it also can be discussed in common language by many different people. Although not public in the sense of being recorded in writing, it is public in the sense of being widespread among members of mutable class \mathfrak{X} .

The Christian narrative is public as well in the sense of containing events that take place within public time. The time span of a personal life-story is private in that it cannot be subjected to public measurement. Events in the Christian narrative, on the other hand, are commonly measured in public time. It might be said, for instance, that persons N and M participated together in the Christian narrative for thirty years before N’s death.

In this case, the Christian narrative is present within N’s FIA during the same time as its presence in the FIA of M. During the time of mutual compresence, N and M are both members of mutable class \mathfrak{X} . By definition, class \mathfrak{X} contains all and only

individuals who conduct their lives in accord with the Christian narrative. Conducting one's life in accord with the Christian narrative is tantamount to having joined one's life-story with that narrative. At any given moment of public time, the Christian narrative is present within the respective FIAs of all current members of \mathfrak{X} .

To repeat, the Christian narrative is public in being available for merger with the life-story of anyone who chooses to join it. Anyone who chooses is eligible for membership in class \mathfrak{X} . The narrative is public as well in that members of \mathfrak{X} can correlate its impacts on their respective life-stories within the context of a shared public time. In effect, the Christian narrative is temporally structured in a manner that enables members of \mathfrak{X} to interact with each other as parts of a broader Christian community. The Christian narrative is public both in its general availability and in its participation in public time.

Despite its public features, however, the status of the Christian narrative within class \mathfrak{X} is bound up with the private awareness of \mathfrak{X} 's individual members. If \mathfrak{X} were without membership at a given time, the Christian narrative itself would cease to exist. The narrative has no standing apart from the FIAs of individuals who have merged it with their individual life-stories. The narrative is kept alive, so to speak, by inclusion within the private awareness of the individuals who participate in it. The individuals involved change with the changing membership of class \mathfrak{X} . But as long as \mathfrak{X} contains members, the Christian narrative itself continues in existence.

In brief, the Christian narrative is sustained in existence in tandem with the life-stories joined with it in the private awareness of individual Christians. Given the mutable character of class \mathfrak{X} , the individuals involved are constantly changing. But as long as \mathfrak{X} retains membership, the Christian narrative remains active within it. When a given

individual N departs from \mathfrak{X} , the presence of the narrative in that person's private awareness departs as well. Nonetheless, the narrative remains present in the self-awareness of other members of \mathfrak{X} , where it resides as long as \mathfrak{X} retains membership.

The question posed above concerns the temporal status of the Christian narrative that enables it to be accessible by different people at different times. The answer comes with recognition that the Christian narrative is sustained by its presence in the private FIAs of individuals whose life-stories have been merged with it previously. In upshot, the Christian narrative is available for merger with the life-stories of other individuals because of its continued presence in the awareness of current members of class \mathfrak{X} .

This is another respect in which Christian communities are essential for individual Christian lives. Without an ongoing community \mathfrak{X} , there would be no Christian narrative with which individual Christians could merge their individual life-stories.

(4.2511) The Church as the Body of Christ

In his first letter to the Corinthians, Paul refers to its recipients as members of the body of Christ. In his words: "You are the body of Christ and individually members of it"

(*Humeis de este sōma Christou kai melē ek merous*, 12:27). The same characterization is found at *Romans* 12:5, where Paul includes himself in saying: "We, though many, are one body of Christ" (*houtōs hoi polloi hen sōma esmen en Christō*), adding that they "individually are members of one another" (*heis allēlōn melē*). Other verses in which Christ's followers are referred to collectively as his body include *1 Corinthians* 12:13, *Ephesians* 5:30, and *Colossians* 3:15.

The body of Christ referred to in these several passages clearly is not the same as the body constituted by the bread in the Lord's Supper. The body of Christ Paul refers to in these passages is the then-current membership of class \mathfrak{X} .

There are several passages as well in which Paul equates the body of Christ with the (fledgling and already troubled) Christian church. *Ephesians* 5:23, *Colossians* 1:18 and *Colossians* 1:24 all refer to Christ's body and to his church in apposition, in effect treating them as identical. In *Colossians* 1:24, for example, Paul speaks of undergoing affliction "for the sake of his [Christ's] body, which is the church" (*huper tou sōmatos autou, ho estin hē ekklēsia*). God's role in making Christ the head of this body is cited in *Ephesians* 1:22-23, again with reference to "the church, which is his body" (*tē ekklēsia, hētis estin to sōma autou*). *Ephesians* 1:23 goes on to describe Christ's body (the church) as "the fullness of him [Christ] who fills all things overall" (*to plērōma tou ta panta en pasin plēroumenou*).

Given the equivalence of Christ's church both with the membership of class \mathfrak{X} , as defined above, and with his body, as affirmed by Paul, it follows that Christ's body also should be equated with the membership of \mathfrak{X} . Class \mathfrak{X} is both Christ's church and Christ's body under another description.

(4.2512) The Identity of Christ's Church

By definition, \mathfrak{X} is the class of individuals who conduct their lives in accord with the Christian narrative. As emphasized previously, there might well be other versions of the Christian narrative than the one portrayed in these pages. There is a certain feature, nonetheless, that any portrayal must treat as central to count as a version of the Christian

narrative. This is the commandment Jesus gives his disciples at *John* 13:34. Immediately after Judas left the room to betray him, Jesus says: “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; just as I have loved you, so you are to love one another” (*entolēn kainēn didōmi humin, hina agapate allēlous, kathōs ēgapēsa humas hina kai humeis agapate allēlous*). Jesus then goes on to identify brotherly love as the defining mark of a Christian: “By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another” (*en toutō gnōsontai pantes hoti emoi mathētai este, ean agapēn echēte en allēlois*, 13:35).

In *John* 13:35, Jesus says in effect that love for each other is the litmus test for counting among his followers. Since following Jesus is the theme on which any version of the Christian narrative should be based, love of neighbor also is the litmus test for being such a narrative. And since \mathfrak{X} by definition is the class of all whose life-stories are merged with the Christian narrative, love of neighbor is the definitive test for membership in class \mathfrak{X} as well. Inasmuch as class \mathfrak{X} and Christ’s church share the same membership, moreover, this gives us a plausible criterion of identity for a purportedly Christian church. A given church is genuinely Christian only if it stresses love of neighbor among its core beliefs.

There have been concerns about the integrity of the church since the days of the original disciples. Jesus himself warned against false prophets (*pseudoprophētōn*) in *Matthew* 7:15, and against false christs (*pseudochristoi*) in *Matthew* 24:24. In *Acts* 20:30, Paul cautioned the Ephesian elders about men with perverse (*diestrammena*) voices arising among them who will lead the other disciples astray. A similar warning is conveyed in *2 Peter* 2:1, telling the letter’s recipients to be on their guard against false

teachers (*pseudodidaskaloi*). And in his letter to Titus, whom he had left in Crete, Paul goes so far as to instruct Titus to rebuke the Cretans for devoting themselves to “Jewish myths” (*Ioudaïkois muthois, Titus 1:14*) and for submitting to the commands of “people who turn away from the truth” (*anthrōpōn apostrephomenōn tēn alētheian, 1:14*).

[Another problem with the Cretans, Paul reports one of them saying, is that “Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, gluttonous idlers” (*Krētes aei pseustai, kaka thēria, gasteres argai. 1:12*). Philosophers sometimes quote this disparaging self-reference as an illustration of the so-called “liars paradox.”]

The identity of Christ’s church is far more elusive today, some two millennia after its origin. This is due in part to sheer number of Christian denominations. According to various sources, the number of denominations worldwide (individuated by country) expanded from about 2000 at the beginning of the last century to about 33,000 at century’s end. Broken down by ecclesiastical tradition, there are about 300 major Christian groups today identified by distinctive beliefs and practices. Within the Catholic Church alone, there are two-dozen or so ethnic rites in full communion with Rome.

Many of these major groups are prepared to defend their own authenticity against competitors. Both the Anglican and the Roman Catholic Churches, for instance, root their beliefs in texts they consider divinely inspired, and rely on the Holy Spirit for guidance of their developing traditions. Differences between these two churches are largely theological, having to do basically with the locus of authority. The Roman church holds that ultimate authority in faith and morals resides with the bishop of Rome, a claim rejected by Anglican theologians. Other theological disagreements concern the succession of bishops, the ordination of clergy, and the role of women in the church.

The more Christian denominations become dependent on theological doctrine to distinguish them from each other, the harder it becomes to pin down the membership of class \mathfrak{X} . As previously defined, class \mathfrak{X} includes everyone whose life-story is actively engaged with the Christian narrative. But theologians representing different denominations will tend to endorse different versions of the narrative in question. They will tend to read their own distinctive doctrines into the Christian narrative, thereby throwing doubt on versions favored by competing groups. Theologically inclined members of different denominations, accordingly, will tend to differ on the memberships of class \mathfrak{X} .

The harder it is to determine the membership of class \mathfrak{X} , in turn, the harder it becomes to pin down the identity of Christ's church. A prominent illustration, discussed at length above, is the schism between the eastern and western branches of Christianity in 1054. According to Rome, the Holy Spirit proceeds from both Father and Son, whereas for Constantinople the Holy Spirit comes from God alone. Although politics were involved as well, both sides were vehement in defense of their theological positions. Prior to 1054, Pope Nicholas 1 of Rome had excommunicated Photios, the Patriarch of Constantinople, and Michael Cerulius, Patriarch of Constantinople, had excommunicated Pope Leo IX of Rome. In effect, Nicholas 1 had ordained that followers of Photios were excluded from Christ's church, whereas Cerulius responded in kind for the followers of Leo IX.

There is something amiss when partisan theologians can exercise such an influence on membership of the church of Christ. Inasmuch as membership in Christ's church is tantamount to membership in class \mathfrak{X} , which in turn comprises individuals

whose life-stories are merged with the Christian narrative, this anomaly is sufficient incentive by itself to keep the Christian narrative free from theological influence. On balance, the Christian narrative is what Christian believers make of it in community with each other. Individual theologians are included in that community. But partisan theologians should not have the authority to dictate requirements for community membership.

Among theologians, there may be some who tend to overrate the importance of their contributions to the life of faith. People usually do not join religious communities as a matter of theological preference. People typically associate themselves with particular communities because of a fellow-feeling with others who are already members. In the ideal case, people join and retain membership in a Christian community because of the mutual love its members show for one another. This is another respect in which community is central to Christian life.

(4.252) Communal Practices

Christian communities attract new members by their display of brotherly love. As new members arrive and former members depart, such communities sustain the Christian narrative in existence. The membership of class \mathfrak{X} constitutes a community identified in scripture as the body of Christ. In these several respects, all discussed previously, Christian communities are essential to Christian life.

There is yet another way in which the lives of individual Christians depend upon a community of fellow believers. It has to do with various rituals and practices that one normally would not engage in by oneself. Consider, for example, the practice of singing

hymns. This practice is of particular interest to me as an active member of church choirs over a period of perhaps seventy years. One of my favorite hymns is “On Eagle’s Wings,” based on *Psalms* 91 and *Isaiah* 40:31, and composed by Michael Joncas. The refrain of the hymn is:

And He will raise you up on eagle’s wings,
bear you on the breath of dawn,
make you to shine like the sun,
and hold you in the palm of his hand.

The words and music of this refrain soar through my mind at every mention of the title. I once sang it in the company of the composer himself.

This hymn, like many others, might be sung under at least four different circumstances. One is during choir practice before the worship service begins. Another is when the singer is preparing for choir practice, perhaps putting words to music for the first time. A third is when the singer is already familiar with the song and is singing it for sheer enjoyment. Factored in here somewhere is my singing the song to myself without actually vocalizing it. In none of these circumstances, normally understood, does singing the song constitute an act of worship. The fourth circumstance is when the hymn is sung as an integral part of a worship service. In this context, my singing the words of the hymn with the rest of the choir is an act of worship we perform together.

The difference between singing in practice and singing in worship is similar to the difference between practice and performance in athletic events. A runner might achieve record time while preparing for the race. But the time would count as an official record only when achieved in competition with other runners. Other people must be involved in

an appropriate manner for the performance to produce that particular effect. In like fashion, other people must be involved in an appropriate manner for a sung performance of “On Eagle’s Wings” to count as an act of worship. The other people here are members of the Christian community gathered together in celebration on some relevant occasion. This illustrates the further way, alluded to previously, in which the lives of individual Christians depend upon a community of fellow believers.

It should be noted in passing that singing a hymn is not a profession of belief. When I sing “[He will] hold you in the palm of his hand,” I certainly am not expressing belief of any sort that the Lord has a hand in which people can be held. Similarly, when I join others in singing “Soon and very soon, I’m going to see the King,” another of my favorites, I’m not making a prediction about when anybody will see the King. And when I sing the words “I know that my Redeemer lives,” regardless of circumstances, I am not making a statement about the epistemological status of my thoughts regarding the life of my Redeemer. Singing hymns is a form of worship, not a way of taking a stance on matters of knowledge or belief.

The Ordinary of Anglican and Roman Catholic Masses consists of parts performed on a regular basis without taking special days of the liturgical year into account. In standard form, the Ordinary includes the Kyrie (Lord have mercy), the Gloria, the Credo, the Sanctus, the Agnus Dei, and the Benedictus. These parts may be either recited or sung. In High Masses they are sung by choirs or by trained congregations, often to music of their own choice. They are frequently sung as well in concert performances, to music by classical composers. Well-known Mass composers include Palestrina, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, and Fauré. Performances of Mozart’s

Coronation Mass are often visceral in intensity, capable of leaving an attentive audience speechless.

As a standard part of the Ordinary, the Credo is often sung in the setting of a High Mass. In our previous discussion of Christian creeds, it was noted that the Latin term *symbolum* in their titles ('Symbolum Apostolicum', 'Symbolum Nicaenum') carries the meanings of "token" or "proof of identity." Like coin halves shared by two mutually committed persons, it was argued, reciting the Creed is a token of shared Christian identity. The question now arises of when singing the Credo serves the same function as reciting it.

As with hymns, the Credo can be sung under different circumstances. It can be sung in rehearsal, in preparation for rehearsal, or in random moments of individual piety. Only in the context of an actual worship service, however, does singing the Credo serve as a symbol of solidarity with other committed Christians. Whether spoken sotto voce or sung to glorious music, the Credo is an expression of shared Christian faith only in the context of a group assembled for worship.

Particularly noteworthy in this regard is that performance of the Credo in a public concert is generally devoid of religious significance. A chorus performing the Coronation Mass, for instance, very likely will include members of various religious persuasions, ranging from Christians to self-professed atheists. When they come to the Credo, Christians will sing in the same manner as all the rest, with little thought of what it means in a religious context. If they sang it in a different way from the others, they probably would be removed from the choir. As far as the audience is concerned, it likely will have a variegated religious makeup as well. It is of course possible that a religious community

would hire a chorus to perform Mozart's Mass as part of some extraordinary worship service. For the most part, however, neither performers nor audience of a Mass sung in concert will attach religious significance to the performance itself.

Only in the company of fellow worshippers does a sung Credo count as a profession of Christian faith. Like singing hymns, singing the liturgy is a performance of individual Christians that owes its religious significance to a community of fellow believers.

Other communal practices that individuals normally would not engage in by themselves include genuflecting, bowing at the altar, and offering a sign of peace. Such practices are typically observed by members of the congregation and by leaders of the service alike. Celebrants of Anglican and Roman Masses have practices of their own that usually are enacted only in front of a congregation. Enactment without a congregation can produce strange results. I once witnessed a priest's impromptu dance around an unlit altar, playfully brandishing an empty censor. Presumably intended as a display of impatience with pomp and ceremony, the performance struck me as curious and slightly irreverent.

(4.253) Art and Christianity

Despite its limited role in liturgy, Mozart's Coronation Mass plays an important part in Component (C) of the Christian narrative. Component (C), we recall, is the individual journey along Christ's path toward eternal life. It stands as obvious that an individual embarked on that path needs help along the way. From a theological perspective, providing help is the function of the Holy Spirit. As Jesus tells the disciples in *John*

16:13: “the Spirit of truth will guide you into all truth” (*to pneuma tēs alētheias, hodēgēsei humas en tē alētheia pasē*) and “will declare to you things that are to come” (*ta erchomena anangelei humin*). Jesus assures the disciples that the Holy Spirit is a source of power as well, saying to them: “you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you” (*lēmψεsthe dunamin epelthontos tou hagiou pneumatos eph’ humas, Acts 1:8*). But guidance and power received in transit do not serve as incentive to set forth on the way initially. As a practical matter, theology aside, the questing individual needs encouragement to embark on the journey.

Practical incentive can come from various quarters. Several sources have been noted already. In the early days of the church, converts were attracted by the prospect of eternal life. This prospect remains attractive to many people today, despite uncertainty about what eternal life actually amounts to. Another factor noted previously is the Christian narrative’s emphasis on love. It not only feels good to be loved by other people, but it can feel even better to love other people oneself. However this plays out in individual cases, people often embark on the journey because of encouragement they receive from others they love and admire.

Receiving individual encouragement of this sort is a transaction that occurs in real time. That is to say, it is an interaction among people who are still alive. There are other sources of encouragement, however, that death does not stanch. Mozart’s Coronation Mass is a ready example. From Kyrie, to Sanctus, to Agnus Dei, listening to the Mass is an immersion in Christian sensibility. The words are Christian, the music reflects the words, and the progression of words and music reflects the trajectory of the Christian journey. Seen from one perspective, at least, this is a progression from awareness of

personal failing (“Lord have mercy”), to praise of God who offers absolution (“Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts”), to a sense of the peace that follows when the failing is rectified (“Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, grant us peace”).

Although Mozart is long dead, his Mass lives on as an incentive to embrace the Christian narrative. Before he died, Mozart had composed dozens of religious works, including several other Masses, with similar religious effect.

Although Mozart remains one of my favorite composers, the Mass setting that has affected me most is the Requiem by Gabriel Fauré. A Requiem is a Mass offered for the souls of the dead, often performed (in whole or part) at the funeral of a recently deceased person. Standard parts of a Requiem Mass are the Introit, the Kyrie, the Dies Irae, the Offertory, the Sanctus, the Agnus Dei, the Pie Jesu, the Libera Me, and the In Paradisum. The Kyrie and the Sanctus are shared with the Ordinary of ordinary Masses; the other parts are unique to the Requiem. In keeping with its generally serene character, Fauré’s Requiem skips the foreboding Dies Irae (Day of Wrath).

Fauré has been quoted as saying that his Requiem “is dominated from beginning to end by a very human feeling of faith in eternal rest.” This faith, however, is not particularly Christian. The same source quotes him as saying that everything “I managed to entertain by way of religious illusion I put into my Requiem.” For Fauré himself, the Requiem was a sentimental rendition of religious motifs he found inspiring but couldn’t assimilate into his personal life. In a general way, this hesitant attitude coincided with my own feelings about religion as a student at Grinnell College. When I first encountered Fauré’s Requiem as a member of Grinnell’s Mixed Chorus, I was a lukewarm Presbyterian in search of a more invigorating religious outlook.

Grinnell's Mixed Chorus was a talented and dedicated group. We had a gifted conductor and some excellent soloists. The newly installed Skinner organ was both flexible and sonorous, and the resonance of the performance space (Herrick Chapel) encouraged full-bodied sound. Rehearsing Fauré's Requiem was a memorable experience in itself. But when everything came together on the evening of performance, the sounds that emerged from the stage took on a life of their own. I don't know how they impressed people at the back of the chapel. Given my place at the source, however, the music came to dominate my entire field of awareness. Beginning as something I heard from outside, it soon became the exclusive occupant of my inner awareness. From there it migrated into my episodic memory, where it has settled ever since.

Fauré's Requiem lodged in my memory to such a degree that I sometimes hear it internally without external prompting. What I hear is the rich-toned performance in Herrick Chapel, rather than the tinny sounds typical of Internet recordings. I even remember some of the phonetic devices the conductor (David Scoular) introduced to shape the sound properly, like the 'm' before the 'et' in "et lux perpetua" of the Introit. Different parts of the Requiem run through my mind on different occasions. Besides the Introit, what I hear most frequently are the Agnes Dei, the Libera Me, and the In Paradisum. What comes to mind spontaneously, of course, is not the entire performance, which can take as much as 40 minutes, but rather the initial phrases of the several parts. Even now, while writing these lines, I hear "Libera me, Domine, de morte aeterna" and the music that goes with them.

My personal experience with Fauré's Requiem illustrates a point to be made about sacred music of this scope and caliber generally. Sacred works by Palestrina, Mozart,

Beethoven, and the like, provide concentrated stores of Christian sensibility from which individuals can draw for personal enrichment. Various analogies come to mind. The format of a choral Mass is like a storage battery, charged by the creative Christian energy of the great composers. This energy is renewed with every performance of the work, as the creativity of the performers is guided by the genius of the composer. With every performance, the listener receives a portion of this energy, for whatever effect it may have on his or her life. In my case, the energy imparted by Fauré's Requiem has kept me alert to the power of the Christian narrative.

Again, a choral Mass is like a big-screen video projector. The Christian sentiment of the period in which the composer worked (e.g., Palestrina in the 16th century) is consolidated in the format of the Mass and passed on to later eras with increased intensity. A consequence of Palestrina's Pope Marcellus Mass is that people can respond more readily today to Christian influences of t

his period than could many others in Italy during the composer's lifetime. Yet again, a choral Mass is like a magnifying glass. By looking backwards through the lens of the Pope Marcellus Mass, we can gain appreciation of the religious ambiance that led to its composition. This makes it easier for someone so inclined to assimilate that ambiance into his or her life-story. In my case, while a student at Grinnell, Fauré's Requiem both intensified my awareness of the Christian message and increased my appreciation of the difference it can make in one's life.

(4.2531) Music and other Performing Arts

Palestrina's Pope Marcellus Mass, Mozart's Coronation Mass, and Fauré's Requiem represent the best of the musical performing arts. Other performing arts include theater, opera, and ballet, to name just a few. Theater involves both action (bodily movement) and speaking, along with stage settings that are mainly visual and special effects that are mainly auditory. Opera is a combination of acting and singing, which means that it too engages the senses both of seeing and of hearing. Ballet also involves seeing and listening, but differs from opera in what happens on stage. Unlike performers of opera who both act and sing, dancers as a rule do not double as singers. For the most part (although not exclusively), the music of ballet is played offstage. In brief, theater, opera, and ballet all engage their audiences visually, but play to their hearing in different ways. Although exceptions abound, theater audiences listen mostly to spoken dialogue, opera audiences mostly to singing onstage, and ballet audiences mostly to background music to which performers on stage do not contribute.

The point of these cursory comparisons is to highlight a feature of concert music not shared by other performing arts. The audience of concert music is an audience in the basic sense of the term. It is an assembly that comes to listen and only incidentally to see. A blind person attending a theater, or an opera, or a ballet performance, would lack access to essential aspects of what was happening on stage. A blind member of a concert audience, however, might have access to the performance that is largely unimpeded. A person with sight but no hearing, on the other hand, would find nothing artful in a concert performance. Yet that person might find abundant enjoyment in watching a ballet on a

well-lit stage. Of the several genres we have been considering, concert music comes closest to being wholly auditory, whereas ballet comes closest to being wholly visual.

For the most part, I want to argue, concert music encourages a closer bond between performers and audience than do the other performing arts. Theater, opera, and ballet all have curtain calls, allowing for applause and other kudos when the performance is over. With ballet in particular, the audience often shows appreciation as well while the performance is underway. But for the most part the audience sits back and watches, while the performers do their thing on stage. In a concert of choral music, however, an appreciative audience can actually enhance the performance. So at least it seems to me, on the basis of many dozen choral performances in which I have actually taken part.

A practical reason for this may be that vocal concert halls, unlike venues for the other performing arts, are usually lit in a way making it relatively easy for performers to see their audience. When you see your audience reacting favorably, you try harder to do your best on stage. The interaction is such between performer and audience that each can bring out the best in the other.

In this respect, a well-attended choral concert is like a non-zero-sum game. Simply put, a non-zero-sum game is an interaction in which players can benefit without disadvantage to other players. Most favorably, it is an interaction in which benefit to individual players brings benefit to others as well. An example is the give-and-take of academic education. Students are rewarded by the success of their teachers, and teachers are rewarded by the success of their students. In similar manner, the audience's enjoyment of a well-performed choral concert tends to elicit an enhanced performance, which in turn enhances the audience's enjoyment. In other performing arts, however, the

sharp visual divide between stage and audience makes mutual enhancement of this sort an infrequent occurrence.

Difference in visual divide may not be the only factor that makes vocal performance superior to visual performance as far as receptivity by the audience is concerned. Another factor may be the process of natural selection. Through long-term adaptation to changing living conditions, human hearing has developed sensitivity to sound over a frequency range of approximately 20 to 20,000 hertz. Sound produced by a (male) human voice varies from about 100 hertz to about 8 kilohertz. When these frequency ranges are depicted on a logarithmic graph, the range of the human voice falls squarely in the middle of the range of human aural sensitivity. Given that ultrasound in nature can approach as much as 100 times the sensitivity of the human ear, it seems obvious that human hearing did not adapt to sounds in nature at large. Human hearing adapted to the sound of the human voice instead.

Through parallel long-term adaptation, human sight has developed sensitivity to wavelengths between approximately 450 and 650 nanometers. Optimum sensitivity is in the neighborhood of 550 nanometers, which is close to the point at which chlorophyll in plants best absorbs solar energy. This latter is the point on the electromagnetic spectrum around which activity in the plant kingdom tends to concentrate. In effect, human vision has adapted to maximize detection of natural processes on which life in earth's food chain (including human life) depends. Although sight obviously is an important sense faculty, the adaptive process of its development seemingly had little to do with specific interactions among human beings.

At the present stage of evolution, hearing and sight both serve purposes of human communication. As the considerations above suggest, however, sight developed primarily as a means to track happenings in nature, whereas hearing developed primarily as a means enabling people to talk with each other. Helen Keller (both deaf and blind) is often quoted as remarking that blindness cuts us off from things, whereas deafness cuts us off from people. A result, she said (in an often quoted interview, June 1955), is that deafness is a much worse misfortune than blindness. In his popular book *Seeing Voices*, neurophysiologist Oliver Sacks agrees. For a child first developing social skills, he observes, it unquestionably is better to be blind. The main reason for this, according to Sacks, is that hearing is the primary channel through which people receive language. This accords with the evolutionary development of hearing to peak within the frequency range of the human voice.

The evolutionary development of hearing also helps explain why concert music tends to connect performer and audience more closely than do visually oriented arts such as theater, opera, and ballet. Music is composed primarily to be heard. And hearing evolved as a means enabling humans to communicate with each other. The sense faculty relating performer and audience in a choral concert, accordingly, is the faculty specifically adapted to enhance communication among humans. As Helen Keller observed, on the other hand, vision connects people with nature at large no less readily than with other human beings. Inasmuch as ballet is created primarily to be seen, the sense faculty that relates performer to audience in ballet was not adapted specifically to enhance such interactions. As far as their visual aspects are concerned, the same may be said of theater, opera, and other visual arts.

(4.2532) Painting, Sculpture, Studio Arts

Studio art is commonly characterized as art enjoyed by vision primarily. Included among studio arts are painting, drawing, printmaking, sculpture, pottery, and photography.

Unlike performing arts such as theater and opera, which also invite visual appreciation, studio arts by nature lack auditory appeal. If a viewer tried to get sound from a painting or piece of sculpture, he or she promptly would be removed from the scene.

Again unlike the performing arts, studio art is not a community endeavor. Apart from apprentices and other studio ancillaries, painters and sculptors work entirely by themselves. Moreover, the artist almost never interacts with potential or actual viewers. Even if artist and viewer happened to interact (say, in a business setting), their interaction would be incidental to the artist's craft. As far as viewers themselves are concerned, attending an art show is a solitary venture. With occasional exceptions, the typical viewer proceeds at his or her own pace. There might be guided tours, or synchronized recordings; but even then seasoned viewers generally know enough to avoid burdening others with their impressions.

In the case of vocal music, as noted previously, there is room for non-zero-sum interactions in which performers and audience benefit each other. Nothing remotely like this happens with studio arts. Apart from considerations of pride or material gain, the artist receives no inspiration from anonymous future viewers. And with the obvious exception of the work of art itself, future viewers receive no benefit from anything else the artist does. Artist and viewer are separated by both time and space, such that neither can interact directly with the other.

Yet other differences between studio and performing arts add depth to this comparison. In the case of Mozart's Coronation Mass, there is a three-tiered division between composer, performer, and audience. The composer and the performer are both artists, so related that the art of the latter is guided by that of the former. Of these two roles, however, only the latter is that of a performing artist. Composition is not a kind of performance. As with Mozart, a composer might sometimes give public recitals. But in the role of composer, the artist has no direct interaction with any specific audience. The interactive effects we have been examining, such as non-zero-sum mutual benefit, pertain only to the relation between performer and listener.

With studio arts, on the other hand, there is no intermediary between artist and viewer. There is no performer to share non-zero-sum benefits with intended spectators of the art. In the case of El Greco and his painting *The Assumption of the Virgin*, for instance, there is no intermediary between the long-dead artist and contemporary viewers of this work (currently on display at the Art Institute of Chicago). The only thing connecting artist and viewer is the painting itself. And the painting clearly is not a performer with whom viewers can interact personally. Like the deceased artist himself, the inanimate painting is incapable of acting on its own. Neither painting nor artist exists in a form that would enable personal interaction with an actual viewer.

Even when both parties are still alive, studio artists and their viewers live in different worlds. Alive or dead, that is to say, the artist's personal life is largely unconnected with the lives of his or her viewers. I remember being enamored by the works of Picasso long before he died in 1973. I was aware of his despicable sexual life at the time, but that did not diminish the aesthetic value I found in his paintings. The Old

Guitarist has long been one of my favorites, and his Guernica is the most powerful painting I recall ever seeing. As far as three-dimensional work is concerned, I consider Picasso's massive "horse" in Chicago's Daley Plaza an unexcelled paradigm of public art. Picasso's personal life has never affected my appreciation of his work. This is my own estimation of my own experience, of course, but it seems likely that many other viewers of Picasso's work would say the same.

Another artist that comes to mind in this regard is Paul Gauguin, an expertly-curated exhibit of whose work has recently been on display in Chicago's Art Institute. Gauguin left his wife and five children about a decade after marriage and moved to French Polynesia, where he married three other wives (in Tahiti) and infected innumerable young women with syphilis. He named his house on Hiva Oa "Maison du Jouis," where 'jouis' means sexual enjoyment (as the curator makes clear). Seemingly at odds with his lascivious lifestyle, Gauguin was attracted to religious themes in his later painting. Among relevant works I found appealing in the recent exhibit are Eve, Nativity, and several Crucifixion scenes in shades of green and yellow. (It is worth noting that Picasso also painted Crucifixion scenes, the best known being that of 1930 where Christ is depicted spiritlike in faint blue-grey.)

Once again, studio artists live worlds-apart from their potential viewers in that there is no interaction between their respective personal lives. This applies to painters, sculptors, potters, and photographers alike. A possible exception, however, might come with the case of lithographers and printmakers generally. Although prints today can be produced mechanically, printmaking at its classical best has the artist both inscribing the plate (or carving the block) and printing off a number of copies. The endproduct of the art

is the individual print, which the artist has created personally from scratch. Since numerous prints are usually made from a given plate, there are numerous recipients who can relate to their prints as their own personal possessions. The artist personally made the print, and now it is in the recipient's personal care.

This quasi-personal interaction between artist and recipient is illustrated by an etching my wife owns by Käthe Kollwitz. The etching portrays a care-worn face, that of a presumably working-class woman. When we saw the etching for sale on a gallery wall, my wife recognized it immediately as a work of an artist she knew from a previous context. It is now hanging on one of our walls instead, surrounded by some of my wife's own more recent paintings. Just as I recognize my wife in the works that she created, so I recognize Käthe Kollwitz when I look at the care-worn face. I recognize this beautiful object on the wall as something the artist once handled personally, and as something she prepared for a series of interchanges that resulted in our being able to handle it personally as well. My wife's ownership of this particular etching establishes us in a person-to-person relationship with the artist.

There undoubtedly are owners of other copies who find themselves in similar relationships. Käthe Kollwitz created the original plate (or plates), from which I assume she printed numerous copies. This led to her becoming personally related to numerous people who subsequently acquired these several prints. The artist was the personal source of the prints that linked her subsequently with these several persons.

In a way, the relation between master plate and its numerous copies is like the relation between Platonic Forms and the particular objects that participate in them. Whatever their ultimate source, Forms are responsible for properties found in their

participants. The Form Beauty, according to Plato, is responsible for the beauty found in many sensible objects. Beautiful objects are copies of the Form Beauty in much the way that the etching on our wall is a copy of the master plate created by Käthe Kollwitz. In other respects, of course, there are substantial differences. Most interpreters of Plato consider Forms to be eternal and not created by an artist (cf. *Timaeus* 29A, 38B). Another major difference is that there is nothing personal in the relation between Forms and their many copies. In the case of Forms and their participants, nothing corresponds to the personal relation between Kollwitz and the people who acquire her prints.

In another way, the relation between master plate and copies is also like the relation of the five loaves and two fish (in the Gospel story of *Mark* 6:38-44 and *Luke* 9:13-17), and the ample supply of food that fed 5,000 men with several baskets left over. In the story of Käthe Kollwitz above, the artist took her master plate in hand and from it produced an indefinite number of copies. In the Gospel story, Jesus took the five loaves and two fish in hand, said a blessing, and produced more than enough food to feed 5,000 people. The five loaves and two fish are analogous to the master plate of Kollwitz, and the large amounts of food are analogous to the numerous copies printed by the artist from the master plate. Again, of course, there are differences as well as similarities. One obvious disanalogy is that, unlike the production of the copies from the master plate, the multiplication of bread and fish was not an entirely physical process. No less obvious is that Jesus was compresent with the crowd both in space and in time, whereas Kollwitz had died before many of her print-owners were born. Closely analogous, on the other hand, is that the coexistence of Jesus with the crowd that he fed makes the interaction between them immediately personal.

These various observations bear on the relevance of the various arts to the Christian narrative. Two points of relevance have been broached thus far. Mozart's Coronation Mass and Fauré's Requiem can serve as storehouses of concentrated Christian energy, capable of motivating receptive individuals in the course of integrating the Christian narrative into their respective life-stories. To a limited extent, other performing arts can serve this function as well, as long as they provide an avenue of communication between performer and audience. Almost without exception, however, studio arts are excluded from this function. This follows from a lack of communication between viewer and artist. A possible exception, we have noted, is the studio art of printmaking. An etching by Käthe Kollwitz can convey personal feelings in a way not unlike that in which Jesus' feeding of the hungry 5,000 conveyed his compassion for those in his care.

Apropos a second point of relevance, studio arts are often engaged in the depiction of key episodes in the Christian narrative from a perspective outside the narrative itself. Examples mentioned previously include El Greco's *The Assumption of the Virgin*, Gauguin's *Nativity*, and Picasso's *Crucifixion*. Other ready examples among my personal favorites are Dali's *The Sacrament of the Last Supper*, Chagal's *White Crucifixion*, Michelangelo's *Pieta*, and Mestrovic's *Pieta*. Regardless of the artist's religious orientation, none of these occupies a place in the Christian narrative itself. They represent prominent aspects of that narrative, but from an external perspective. Similar examples can be found within the performing arts as well, ranging from traditional *Passion Plays* to the rock opera *Jesus Christ Superstar*.

A third point of relevance has to do with the use of icons in Christian worship. Like works by El Greco, Dali, and Chagal mentioned above, icons are human artifacts with an intended religious significance. Unlike such masterworks, however, religious icons generally have distinct roles both in worship and in daily life. These roles earn them a potential place within the Christian narrative, in contrast with the masterworks mentioned above that fall mostly outside. Whether this potentiality becomes active, however, depends upon particular circumstances. The following section expands on this topic.

(4.2533) Religious Icons

The term *eikōn* appears nearly 10 times more often in the Septuagint than in the NT. Its first appearance is at *Genesis* 1:26, where God says: “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness” (*poiēsōmen anthrōpon kat’ eikona hēmeteran kai kath’ homiōsin*). A close synonym of *eikōn* is *eidōlon*, which occurs nearly 20 times more often in the Septuagint. The most prominent OT use of this term is probably at *Exodus* 20:4, where the Lord gives Moses the command: “You shall not make for yourself a [graven] image, nor likeness of anything ... in the heaven above ... in the earth beneath ... or in the water under the earth” (*Ou poiēseis seautō eidōlon oude pantos homiōma ... en tō ouranō anō... en tē gē katō ... en tois hudasin hupokatō tēs gēs*). All-inclusive as it seems, this passage is often read as an injunction ruling out images or icons of any sort whatever.

If that reading captures its intended meaning, this injunction was violated before the Israelites left the slopes of Mt. Sinai. Following a more specific command of the Lord (*Exodus* 25:17-21), the Israelites made a cover for the arc of the covenant featuring two

cherubim crafted of hammered gold. As reported in *1 Kings* 6:23-28, moreover, two olivewood cherubim were also installed in the temple Solomon built after being named king by his father David. These creatures were ten cubits high, with wingspread also of ten cubits, and overlaid with gold leaf. Other images became standard features of Jewish synagogues in later years (scenes of Moses and the Burning Bush, of Ezekiel's Valley of Dry Bones, etc.).

In all of its NT occurrences, the term *eidōlon* refers to idols, that is, to human artifacts made for worship. The term *eikōn*, on the other hand, has an interesting variety of NT meanings. In *Matthew* 22:20, *Mark* 12:16, and *Luke* 20:24, it refers to the likeness of Caesar cast on a denarius. *Romans* 1:23 is the only passage where it bears the meaning of an artifact made for worship. In numerous other occurrences, *eikōn* is used to designate a representation of something symbolic or abstract. *Hebrews* 10:1 speaks of the image of good things to come. And there are several passages in *Revelation* (e.g., 13:14, 14:9) that refer to "the image of the beast" (*eikona tō thēriō*).

Most interesting for present purposes, however, is the use of *eikōn* in several letters written by Paul. All of these have to do with imaging relationships among God the Father, Christ the Son, and individual human beings. *Romans* 8:29 speaks of those whom God ordained to bear "the image of his Son" (*tēs eikonos tou huiou autou*), and *1 Corinthians* 15:49 of those who will bear "the image of the heavenly [man]" (*tēn eikona tou epouraniou*). Other passages describe Christ as the image of God. Thus in *2 Corinthians* 4:4, we read about "the glory of Christ, who is the image of God" (*tēs doxēs tou Christou, hos estin eikōn tou theou*), and in *Colossians* 1:15 about Christ the "image of the invisible God" (*eikōn tou theou tou aoratou*). In the former pair of passages,

humans image Christ, whereas in the latter pair Christ images God. The image relation here appears to be transitive: human beings are images of God through Christ.

Yet other passages speak of human beings as imaging God directly. Having put off the old self, the new self of *Colossians* 3:10 is renewed “after the image of its creator” (*kat’ eikona tou ktisantos auton*). In *2 Corinthians* 3:18, Paul assures his audience that, upon beholding the glory of God, their glory will be increased “in his very image” (*tēn autēn eikona*). In a currently more contentious vein, *1 Corinthians* 11:7 puts forward advice on who should cover their head while praying. A man (*anēr*) ought not do so because he is the “image and glory of God” (*eikōn kai doxa theou*). A woman (*gunē*) should, however, because she “is the glory of man” (*doxa andros estin*). This is another version of the God-Christ-man-woman hierarchy at *1 Corinthians* 11:3, which many committed Christians today consider outrageous. According to this latter passage, “the head of every man is Christ” (*pantos andros hē kephalē ho Christos*), and “the head of Christ is God” (*kephalē de tou Christou ho theos*). But the fate of the woman, in Paul’s way of thinking, is that “the head of a wife is her husband” (*kephalē de gunaikos ho anēr*).

Be that as it may, these passages from *1 Corinthians* echo *Genesis* 1:26 in depicting human beings as participating in God’s image. Humans are images of God by virtue of being created in his likeness originally. Christ likewise is an image of God by virtue of becoming man, in addition to being like him as Son is like Father. As man, Christ laid out a path by which other human beings can become more like God. Negotiating this path requires taking Christ as exemplar, which means attempting to become more like Christ as well. This is what makes the passages from *Colossians* and *1*

and *2 Corinthians* directly relevant to the Christian narrative. As indicated previously, component (C) of the Christian narrative is the individual journey along the path laid out by Christ. It is not integral to the narrative that images of Caesar were stamped on denarii, nor even that people from time to time constructed idols to worship. But it is an integral part of the narrative that an aspiring Christian do the best he or she can to become like Christ. To become like Christ is to become Christlike, which is nothing other than becoming an image of Christ.

Unlike the OT, the NT says nothing about icons employed in worship or in daily life. Early Christians had symbols representing their faith, of course, such as the cross, the fish, and the dove. But very little is known about the role of icons in the early Christian churches. The earliest surviving mention of a Christian icon may be that in Book 7, chapter 18, of Eusebius' *Church History*, written in the 4th century. Eusebius claims to have seen with his own eyes a bronze statue of the woman Jesus cured from a hemorrhage (*Luke* 8:43) outside her still-standing house in Caesarea Philippi.

During the 6th century, Pope Gregory the Great (after whom Gregorian chants are thought to be named) recorded some often-quoted reflections on the role of icons in Church life. His general view was that icons serve in place of scripture for children and others who cannot read. In his Letter to Bishop Serenus of Marseilles (*Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers*, Series 2, Vol. 13), Gregory wrote: "what a writing presents to readers, ... a picture presents to the unlearned who behold [it]" The sentence quoted ends: "in it [an icon] the illiterate read." During the 8th century, the Second Council of Nicaea concurred, proclaiming that: "in the case of the ignorant and simple [an icon] will ... bring compunction and benefit" (*Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers*, series 2, Vol.14).

The Second Council of Nicaea resolved a heated controversy between the iconoclasts, who believed that religious art in orthodox churches should be destroyed, and the iconophiles, who believed that icons have a privileged role in Christian worship. In favoring the latter, the council drew a firm distinction between veneration and worship. Holy icons are to be venerated, the council proclaimed, because they will cause viewers “to commemorate and love their prototypes.” But worship should be reserved for “Him who is the subject of our faith.” The council went so far as to pronounce anathema on “those who call the sacred images idols.” As far as the commandment prohibiting graven images at *Exodus 20:4* is concerned, the Second Council of Nicaea also anathematized “those who apply words of Holy Scripture which were spoken against idols, to the venerable images” of the Church.

In the Orthodox Church at large, painting icons has long been recognized as a fine art. Before setting to work, an Orthodox iconographer is expected to prepare himself both mentally and spiritually, and the result can be an object of genuine beauty. Over the centuries, iconographers in Russia and Greece typically have been men. Within the last several decades, however, nuns in the Gradac monastery of Serbia have gained recognition as icon painters as well. According to their mother superior, these artists do not feel bound “to copy ancient icons as many religious painters do” (*Independent*, 25 June 2011). As expressions of her own “God-given talent,” she believes, her paintings “reflect the mysterious communion between the artist and the silhouette of the saint” as it appears slowly under her hand.

With respect to its production and use of religious icons, the Catholic Church in Europe and America is less concerned with artistic merit than is its Orthodox counterpart.

While there are always exceptions, Catholic religious images tend to be tasteless and poorly made. Vendors near prominent shrines (Fatima, Lourdes, Medugorje) do a brisk business in cheap religious artifacts. And Catholic churches in the U.S. have long shown a preference for plaster statues and garish paintings.

There is an oblique reference to Jesus' heart at *Matthew* 11:29, where Jesus describes himself as "gentle and lowly in heart" (*praus ... kai tapeinos tē kardia*). This is the only mention of Jesus' heart in the entire Bible. Yet there are countless images in Catholic churches of the "Sacred Heart of Jesus," in which a domineering figure with shoulder-length hair points to an inoperative organ mounted on his chest. A magisterial Jesus with a nonfunctional heart bears little resemblance to the Jesus described in *Matthew* 11:29.

Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus began as a local cult in 17th century France. It gained Vatican recognition in the 18th century under Pope Clement XIII. In 1856, Pope Pius IX established the Feast of the Sacred Heart as a day of obligation for the Church worldwide. In 1888, the University of Notre Dame consecrated its Sacred Heart Church, now the Basilica of the Sacred Heart. A statue of Jesus with an exposed heart on his chest was installed in front of the Main Building in 1893. This statue is made of cast iron. Despite its painted surface, the statue rusted badly and was shipped off for repairs in 2013. Given its proximity to Mestrovic's Pieta in the Basilica, this iron figure attracts little attention as a work of art.

In his opening remarks to the Philippians, Paul tells how he yearns for them "in the bowels of Jesus Christ" (*en splanchnois Christou 'Iēsou, Philippians* 1:8). The point is that he yearns for them with a Christlike affection. We can be grateful that no cult has

yet emerged that inspires images of an affectionate Jesus pointing to intestines exposed on his stomach.

(4.254) Beauty and the Christian Narrative

In their own distinctive way, icons of the Orthodox Church are often beautiful. Icons of the Roman Catholic Church generally are not. The aesthetic virtues of the former, however, do not automatically earn them a place in the Christian narrative. Beautiful as they may be, icons are extraneous to the narrative itself. As in the case of the Serbian nuns, icons can play a role in the religious lives of individuals engaged in the narrative. But the beauty of the Serbian nun's icons does not itself qualify them for that role.

In the previous account of my early experience with Fauré's Requiem, I mentioned that this choral work has kept me aware of the power of the Christian narrative. Although Fauré's Requiem is a beautiful composition, this effect was not due to the beauty of the music. What kept me aware of the narrative's power is the Latin text of the Requiem Mass. The progression from Kyrie, to Sanctus, then to Agnus Dei, reflects the sequence of stages in the Christian journey. In my case at least, this particular Requiem was an integral part of narrative with which my life-story was in process of being joined. Fauré's Requiem became part of this story, not because of its inherent beauty, but because of the message its words convey.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, aesthetic beauty as such is not a factor in the NT. More specifically, there is no consequential occurrence in the NT of terms bearing the sense of aesthetic beauty. While the adjective *kalos* occurs frequently, it almost always means "good" rather than "beautiful." And the noun *kallos* for "beauty" is not even used in the

NT. Another Koine term that could be translated “beautiful” is *hōraios*. This term is used sparingly in the NT, but never in a sense suggesting aesthetic worth. At *Matthew* 23:27, for example, it refers to whitewashed tombs, and at *Romans* 10:15 it applies to the feet of those who preach the good news. There are descriptions of things we often consider beautiful, to be sure, like the birds of the air in *Matthew* 6:26 and the lilies of the field in *Matthew* 6:28. But the birds and the lilies are not cited as objects of beauty, but rather as beneficiaries of the heavenly Father’s magnanimity.

This paucity of aesthetic beauty in the NT is highlighted in contrast with the prominent use of both *hōraios* and *kallos* in the Septuagint. In its roughly three-dozen occurrences there, *hōraios* applies both to objects (e. g., fruit at *Genesis* 2:9, an olive tree at *Jeremiah* 11:16) and to people. Its general sense is in the neighborhood of “attractive,” “comely,” and “lovely.” Regarding people, it applies to men and women alike. Rachel is referred to as beautiful in *Genesis* 29:17, and Joseph as handsome in *Genesis* 39:6. The term *kallos*, in turn, occurs roughly six dozen times in the Septuagint, in most of which cases “beautiful” seems a fitting translation. We read of beautiful fawns at *Genesis* 49:21, of the beautiful tree in the Garden of Eden at *Ezekiel* 31:9, and of the beauty of knowledge at *Ezekiel* 28:7. Among women, Queen Vashti is deemed beautiful at *Esther* 1:11; among men, the sons of Korah are named “most handsome” (*Hōraios kallei*) in *Psalms* 45:2.

Beauty is often depicted in the OT as a cause of pride and corruption. In *Ezekiel* 16:15, the Lord chastises Israel for trusting in its beauty (*kallei*) and “playing the harlot” (*eporneusas*) with impressed passers-by. In *Ezekiel* chapter 27 we hear a lament for Tyre, whose builders made it “perfect in beauty” (*periethēkan ... kallos*, 27:4) but which as a

consequence was “silenced in the midst of the sea: (*sunetribēs en thalassē*, 27:34). There are hazards in the beauty of knowledge as well. Again with reference to Tyre, the Lord warns that he will bring foreign nations to bear who shall draw swords “against the beauty of your knowledge” (*epi to kallos tēs epistēmēs sou*, Ezekiel 28:7) and “shall cast you down [into the pit]” (*katabibasousin se*, 28:8).

Although the term *kallos* does not appear in the NT, there is an OT occurrence at *Isaiah* 53:2 that may pertain to a key happening in the NT storyline. Chapter 53 of *Isaiah* is a discourse by someone speaking in the plural (*hēmōn*, 53:1, 53:6) about a single person who is not identified in the text. Except for a few passages at the end that purport to speak for the Lord, discourse in chapter 53 is cast exclusively in the past tense. Chapter 53, accordingly, is about what this unidentified person has already done. Despite this, Christian commentators often read this chapter as alluding to Christ and to his coming mission under the New Covenant.

The term *kallos* comes into play in the description of this unidentified person at 53:2. Lacking the glory (*doxa*) of a comely figure (*eidōs*), this person had “neither form nor beauty that we should desire him” (*ouk eichen eidōs oude kallos*). Instead, this person was “a man of suffering, acquainted with infirmity” (*anthrōpos en plēgē ōn kai eidōs pherein malakian*, 53:3). “He was despised, of no account” (*ētimesthē kai ouk elogisthē*, 53:3), and one from whom men hid their faces.

Yet surely “he has borne our sins, and suffered our distress” (*tas hamartias hēmōn pherei kai peri hēmōn odunatai*, 53:4). Although “he was pierced for our sins, and crushed for our iniquities” (*etraumatisthē dia tas anomias hēmōn kai memalakistai dia tas hamartias hēmōn*, 53:5), it was the chastisement he suffered that “brought us peace”

(*eirēnēs hēmōn*, 53:5). In upshot, it was “by his wounds that we are healed” (*tō mōlōpi autou hēmeis iathēmen*, 53:5).

Chapter 53 of *Isaiah* ends with the following words: *paredothē eis thanaton hē psuchē autou kai en tois anomois elogisthē kai autos hamartias pollōn anēnenken kai diatas hamartias autōn paredothē* (he poured out his soul to death, and was numbered among the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors). If indeed these passages amount to an anticipation of Christ, they portray him as someone notably lacking in physical beauty.

(5) Synopsis of the Christian Narrative, with Addenda

The term ‘synopsis’ traces back to the Greek *sunoraō*, meaning to see together in a comprehensive overview. What follows is an attempt to provide a comprehensive overview of the Christian narrative. In this regard, it should be repeated that other versions of the Christian narrative might be formulated that other people would find preferable. The synopsis that follows pertains only to the particular version developed earlier in this study.

Regarding content, it should be emphasized again that the Christian narrative is not merely a subset of episodes in the NT. The narrative relies heavily on the NT, of course, but it includes many episodes from the OT as well. It also includes events from the lives of indefinitely many individuals who lived long after the NT had been fixed canonically. The Christian narrative is an open-ended story extending indefinitely into the future. It is perpetuated by successive generations of people who make it part of their individual life-stories.

Being open-ended, the Christian narrative is not a historical account. One obvious reason is that historical accounts do not extend into the future. The main reason, however, is that historical accounts as such are not suitable for integration into individual life-stories. Historical accounts are compilations of past events put together by trained historians. And the integration of the Christian narrative into one's personal life-story is far from taking a stance on matters of historical fact. Accepting a historical account as factual is a matter of evidence, whereas integrating the Christian narrative into one's life-story is a matter of faith.

Following the breakdown of the narrative introduced previously, this synopsis is divided into three major components. The first deals with (i) God's creation of the world, (ii) Adam's original sin, and (iii) the faltering efforts of the Jewish people to find reconciliation with God within the confines of the Old Covenant. The second component features (i) the earthly life of Jesus Christ, (ii) his crucifixion, which brought the Old Covenant to an end, and (iii) the groundwork he laid for a subsequent New Covenant. The final component covers (i) the inauguration of the New Covenant, which provided a way for Christ's followers to gain eternal life, and (ii) the progression of individual Christians along that way. In the synopsis that follows, these several topics will be treated in sequence, but without further indication of the major components in which they occur.

In the synopsis that follows, furthermore, remarks like "as mentioned previously" and "as noted above" generally will be avoided. Further details, however, may occasionally be added, along with supplementary comments to enhance the overall account. When previously quoted biblical passages are quoted again in the synopsis, their original Greek versions usually will not be repeated.

(5.1) The OT Background

A typical Christian Bible contains two parts, a longer OT and a shorter NT. Both were written by numerous authors, the identities of whom in many cases remain unknown. Despite uncertain authorship, however, we know that the two parts were addressed to entirely different groups of readers. The OT was addressed to Jews, and the NT to Christians.

This difference in readership is more than a matter of labels. The OT was addressed to a Jewish audience that had achieved ethnic identity long before any of its constituent books were written. The NT, on the other hand, was written for an audience whose Christian identity was established by occurrences recorded in the document itself. The intended audience of the NT did not yet exist when the OT was written.

Christians thus were not part of the readership for which the OT was written. When the compilers of the Christian Bible included an OT along with their NT, a consequence was that approximately three-fourths of the resulting Bible was not written for Christian readers. By making it part of their sacred text, Christians appropriated the OT for their own religious purposes.

There is another respect in which the OT was appropriated for Christian purposes. This has to do with altered readings of the text. Christians assign readings to certain OT passages that almost certainly were not shared by their original authors. An example is *Psalms* 45:6-7, which begins “Your throne, O God, is forever and ever” (*ho thronos sou ho theos eis ton aiōna tou aiōnos*), and ends “God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions” (*ho theos ho theos sou elaion agalliaseōs para*

tous metochous sou). With a minor grammatical change in one line, this entire passage is repeated verbatim at *Hebrews* 1:8-9, which presents it as spoken by God. In *Psalms* 45, these are words spoken *to* God by the sons of Korah, whereas in *Hebrews* 1 they are words allegedly spoken *by* God with reference to the Son. Words intended as praise of God in *Psalms* 45 are redirected in *Hebrews* chapter 1 as praise of the Son instead. This surely is not what the sons of Korah had in mind originally. Other cases of OT passages being appropriated for NT purposes will be discussed in due course.

The author of *Hebrews* 1:8-9 presents the words in question as having been spoken by God, as distinct from representing God as having spoken them himself. There are other passages in the NT, however, that contain words represented as being spoken by God directly. These other passages occur in contexts dealing with Jesus' baptism or with his transfiguration. In *Matthew* 3:17, for example, we are told that Jesus heard a "voice from heaven" (*phōnē ek tōn ouranōn*) saying "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased" (Greek above; see also *Mark* 1:11 and *Luke* 3:22). In the context of the transfiguration, similarly, "a voice from the cloud" (*phōnē ek tēs nephelēs*, *Matthew* 17:5) was heard speaking the same words as at *Matthew* 3:17 (see also *Mark* 9:7 and *Luke* 9:35).

Several aspects of God's role in these contexts are particularly noteworthy. One is that, although his voice was heard from above, God is not represented by any of the authors as having been present in person. This contrasts with the burning-bush episode in *Exodus* chapter 3, where God appeared to Moses, first as an angel (*angelos*, 3:2) in the midst of the bush, and then directly face-to-face. The face-to-face encounter was such

that “Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God” (*Mōusēs to prosōpon autou eulabeito gar katemplepsai enōpion tou theou*, 3:6).

A second noteworthy thing about God’s role in these contexts is that he never takes part in a two-way conversation. In the burning-bush episode, again by contrast, there are several junctures at which God addresses Moses and answers his questions. The most memorable of these is probably when Moses asks God’s name (*Exodus* 3:13) and God responds with the words “I am who I am” (3:14). But there is no two-party exchange like this with God in the entire NT. The closest approximation comes at *Acts* 11:4-10, where Peter tells of a verbal interchange he had with God while “in a trance” (*en ekstasei*, 11:5). But what happened in Peter’s trance is not a credible example of a direct conversation with God.

On balance, it might be said that God does not have an onstage role to play in the NT. If a list of actors were drawn up for the episodes in question, God’s name would not be included. God himself is not a NT character. The “voice from heaven” at Jesus’ baptism would come from offstage, as would the “voice from a cloud” in his transfiguration. This is a major departure from God’s role in the OT, where he is a direct participant in the events there unfolding.

As part of the transition from OT to NT, the role of divinity has been rewritten. In particular, the onstage role of the Father has been taken over by the Son. Given the identity of Father and Son from the Christian perspective, this change might be viewed as little more than giving the main character another costume and another name. But there are differences involved that are more than cosmetic. One major difference is that divinity in the NT shares in humanity as well. A consequence is that when the Son speaks

with other humans, he often speaks with fellow feeling and shared concern.. Another is that the Son speaks the language of ordinary humans. This makes it natural for him to teach in parables, rather than echo the OT God by thundering commands from on high.

Incorporating the OT into the sacred text of Christianity not only altered the reading of certain key passages. It called into question the accuracy of the OT account. In particular, it raised a question about the extent to which the OT account is divinely inspired. Following is a conjectured explanation of how that came about.

The OT has a certain momentum that the NT lacks. Although precise dates of its composition are unknown, the traditions and cultural practices recorded in the OT (especially the Pentateuch) clearly were underway long before the relevant documents were written. The impetus of those cultural currents was retained when they found their way into writing. In this respect, key books of the OT have an inherent vitality for which their authors were not solely responsible. The NT, on the other hand, deals with practices and social interactions that were completely unknown until only a few decades before being recorded in writing. These practices lacked any antecedent momentum that could be transferred to the documents in which they were recorded. The way of life portrayed in the NT, as it were, had to start from scratch.

Put otherwise, the way of life portrayed in the NT was still being shaped when the documents describing it first gained currency. This contrasts markedly with the way of life portrayed in the early books of the OT, which was solidly established well before those documents were written.

Among the various Christian communities that began to develop soon after Jesus' death, to be sure, there were competing views about how a life dedicated to Christ should

be conducted. One reason for this was that Christian enclaves sprang up in a wide variety of ethnic and cultural settings. Different versions of Christianity emerged in Antioch, in Egypt, and in Samaria. Paul carried Christianity into Asia Minor, Macedonia, and Greece. *Romans* 1:8-11 indicates that there was a well-known Christian community in Rome that Paul had not founded. In the process of cultural adaptation, each of these distinct communities was evolving its own version of Christianity.

On some topics, disagreement among these several versions of Christianity appeared to be quite substantial. One such topic was the requirement of circumcision for non-Jewish converts. When Peter commanded that the Gentiles be baptized in *Acts* 10:48, this astonished “the believers from among the circumcised” (*hoi ek peritomēs pistoi*, 10:45) who accompanied him. In *Acts* 15:1-2, Paul and Barnabas are represented as contending with men who maintain: “Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved” (*Ean mē peritmēthēte tō ethei tō Mōuseōs, ou dunasthe sōthēnai*, 15:1). Dissension of some such sort between Peter and Paul is indicated in *Galatians* chapter 2. Paul speaks poorly of Peter because he had retreated from his work with the Gentiles “fearing those of circumcision [persuasion]” (*phoboumenos tous ek peritomēs*, 2:12). In Paul’s view, he and Barnabas were qualified to proselytize among the Gentiles, while Peter should stick with those already circumcised (2:9).

A more subtle point of contention concerns the major lessons to be drawn from Christ’s mission on earth. The two main alternatives, apparently, were (1) to emphasize his teachings and (2) to focus on his death and resurrection. These at least seem to be the alternatives intimated by Paul in chapter 1 of *1 Corinthians*. To emphasize Christ’s teachings would be tantamount to stressing the wisdom these teachings convey. And Paul

is explicit in maintaining that the purpose of Christ's mission was not that "the world know God through its wisdom" (*egnō ho kosmos dia tēs sophias ton theon*, 1:21). Speaking for himself (in the "royal we"?), Paul says emphatically: "we preach Christ crucified" (*hēmeis de kērussomen Christon estaurōmenon*, 1:23). Although Paul's view is "folly to the Gentiles" (*ethnesin de mōrian*, 1:23), he maintains that the redemption achieved by Christ's death on the cross is more important than the wisdom contained in his teachings.

Apart from honest differences like these among fledgling communities, there were serious dangers to Christian unity posed by false pretenders. In *Romans* 16:17, Paul posts a warning against "those who cause divisions and create obstacles" (*tas dichostasias kai ta skandala*) contrary to genuine doctrine. These imposters, Paul cautions, serve only "their own belly" (*tē heautōn koilia*, 16:18), and "deceive the hearts of the innocent by smooth talk and flattery" (*dia tēs chrēstologias kai eulogias exapatōsin tas kardias tōn akakōn*, 16:18). The second letter of Peter contains a similar warning. "There will be false teachers among you" (*en humin esontai pseudodidaskaloi*, *2 Peter* 2:1), the author says, "who will secretly bring in destructive heresies" (*hoitines pareisaxousin haireseis*, 2:1), and "who in their greed will exploit you with counterfeit words" (*en pleonexia plastois logois humas emporeusontai*, 2:3). Other passages to similar effect include *2 Corinthians* 11:3-4, *1 Timothy* 6:3-5, and *Titus* 1:9.

Paul found these threats so unsettling that he took several opportunities to plea for Christian unity. In the opening verses of *1 Corinthians*, he writes: "I appeal to you, brothers . . . that you all speak the same, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and in the same judgment" (*Parakalō de humas*,

adelphoi ... hina to auto legēte pantes kai mē ē en humin schismata, ēte de katērtismenoi en tō autō noi kai en tē autē gnōmē, 1:10). And in *Ephesians* 4:13-14, he attests to “a unity of faith and knowledge of the Son of God” (*tēn henotēta tēs pisteōs kai tēs epignōseōs tou huiou tou theou, 4:13*), enabling “us no longer to be children, tossed to and fro and blown about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes” (*mēketi ōmen nēpioi, kludōnizomenoi kai peripheromenoi panti anemō tēs didaskalias en tē kubeia tōn anthrōpōn, en panourgia pros tēn methodeian tēs planēs, 4:14*).

Let us suppose that Paul’s eagerness for unity of Christian doctrine was shared by his successors, especially those who molded the NT into canonical form. More specifically, it seems reasonable to surmise that these people were guided by the assumption that God was overseeing their project and would not let it go seriously astray. An associated surmise is that the evolution of the NT into canonical form was accompanied by an evolving conception of God’s role in the process. Before the story of Christ’s mission was committed to writing, God had played the complex role of Creator, of loving Father, and of Son engendered as an expression of the Father’s love. As part of the process of putting the story into writing, God was assigned an additional role. This new role was one of inspiring the written document and of assuring that the written version was basically accurate. Paul’s eagerness for Christian unity thus became embodied in the assumption that God would insure the document he inspired against the possibility of serious error.

This brings us back to the question of how incorporation of the OT into the Christian Bible raised issues about the accuracy of its account. Before being appropriated

for Christian purposes, what Christians call the OT served its Jewish readership as a record of their interaction with the deity who had made them his chosen people. It also served as a documentation of laws to be observed by way of keeping that interaction current. Specially endowed Jewish authorities (scribes, Pharisees, chief priests) were in charge of bringing tradition to bear in interpreting these laws and in applying them to everyday situations. But by and large, these authorities had no reason to question the accuracy of the documents and traditions they administered. The documents and traditions in question were an integral part of Jewish life. With regard to their sacred writings in particular, accuracy was not an issue for the Jewish authorities.

When the OT was made part of the Christian Bible, however, it became subject to a substantially different set of concerns. In its newly established Christian context, the document in question no longer functioned as part of its original culture. This means that it lost the de facto legitimacy imparted by its previous role in Jewish religious life. Once appropriated by Christianity, the OT became subject to the same concern for doctrinal unity that had influenced the compilers of the NT itself. According to the conjecture above, the compilers who rendered the NT in canonical form were operating under the assumption that God would protect the document they produced from serious error.

Those responsible for making the OT part of the Christian Bible, in turn, presumably had similar concerns regarding the status of that older account as well. At stake was whether this once exclusively Jewish document was sufficiently reliable to serve as basis for the new Christian religion. The issue presumably was resolved, in that regard at least, by the assumption that the OT, like its NT counterpart, was divinely protected in those parts that deal with Christianity.

Assumption of divine oversight in the composition of the OT, needless to say, did not render that ancient document infallible. The point to be made here is that appropriation of the OT for Christian use opened up the issue of its reliability for that purpose. In its traditional role, the relevant document was so deeply embedded in Jewish practice that the question of its accuracy remained irrelevant. OT accuracy became a relevant issue only with its incorporation in the Christian Bible. The preceding considerations, I suggest, though unavoidably speculative, provide a plausible explanation of how adding the OT to the Christian Bible raised issues about the accuracy of its account.

In point of fact, few scholars of that document today believe that the OT is accurate in every relevant respect. Passionate pastors speaking from pulpits aside, people who study the OT carefully, with modern tools of exegesis, generally find both fact and fable among its contents. Our synopsis of the Christian narrative continues with an episode that clearly counts as fable.

(5.11) The Creation Story

In the Christian narrative overall, some parts are obviously figurative (fabulous, mythical), some obviously literal (factual), and some such that their status as figurative or literal is indeterminate. The part dealing with the behavior of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden is clearly figurative, as is the creation story that precedes it.

The creation story has God creating something (heaven and earth) out of nothing. There are at least two reasons why this story cannot be literal. One is that God is portrayed as existing before the beginning (*Genesis* 1:1). This means that the “no-thing”

out of which “some-thing” purportedly was created contained something (God) that already existed, which is incoherent. A second reason is that there is no intelligible state of affairs (SOA) consisting of nothing whatsoever existing. A SOA is intelligible only if circumstances can be specified the occurrence of which constitutes its being the case. And there is no way of specifying circumstances under which nothing whatsoever exists.

The story of Adam and Eve, in turn, is an allegory for the plight of human beings with character traits that are pernicious and unavoidably lead to trouble. According to one reading, the character trait most at fault in the Eden story is disobedience. Adam and Eve disobeyed God by eating from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. As punishment, they were evicted from the garden and denied access to the Tree of (Eternal) Life.

According to an alternative reading, the two protohumans were overcome by pride, and sought to become like God by gaining godlike knowledge of good and evil. Their punishment was the same in either case. They were excluded by God from immortality, and assigned to lives that end in death.

These two readings set up different expectations for the two covenants made with God in the storyline following. The Old Covenant of the OT was an agreement between the Israelites and God, based on divine imperatives beyond the command disobeyed in Eden. In line with the first reading, God’s initial commandment was disobeyed with far-reaching consequences for humankind. The Old Covenant responded to this disobedience with additional commandments, conveyed to the Israelites through Moses on Mt. Sinai. These subsequent commandments were disobeyed in turn, leading a wrathful God to impose further retribution on his people. As long as the Old Covenant remained in force, the “stiff-necked” Israelites continued to resist. From a Christian perspective, a

consequence was that redemption from Adam's sin remained elusive. The Israelites' predicament provided an illustration of why human disobedience cannot be redeemed by the imposition of further commandments.

According to the second reading, Adam's transgression was an act of pride. Recently created from dust by God, Adam had the hubris to reach for godlike status by gaining knowledge of good and evil. The price paid for this hubris was human mortality, both for Adam and for his descendants. Redemption from this transgression is conditional upon overcoming pride, which became humanly achievable under the New Covenant. In line with this reading, Christ's earthly mission was to earn redemption from Adam's sin, and then to establish a new bond between God and his people that reopens the gate to eternal life. In place of the Old Covenant's emphasis on command, this New Covenant is founded on universal love. Whereas pride is a state of mind directed inwardly toward oneself, love overcomes the selfishness of pride with its outward direction toward other people. So powerful is the force of love that it can accomplish what sheer command failed to achieve under the Old Covenant. Enabled by the New Covenant, and no longer burdened with pride, the individual believer finds an open pathway to eternal life.

So powerful is the force of love that it brings an individual person into compliance with the commands of the Old Covenant as well. As Paul testifies in *Galatians* 5:14: "the whole law is completed in one saying; 'you shall love your neighbor as yourself'" (*ho gar pas nomos en heni logō peplērōtai, en tō Agapēseis ton plēsion sou hōs seauton*). Thus also Jesus reassures a crowd of followers: "Do not think I come to abolish the law of the prophets; I come not to abolish but to fulfill" (*Mē nomisēte hoti*

ēlthon katalusai ton nomon ē tous prophētas` ouk ēlthon katalusai alla plērōsai, Matthew 5:17).

(5.12) Establishment of the Old Covenant

Negotiated by Moses on Mount Sinai, the Old Covenant was (not the first but) the principle agreement between God and his people in the OT. It was a two-way agreement, in that both parties were bound by its terms. The people of Israel agreed to keep the Ten Commandments that the Lord had dictated to Moses (*Exodus 24:3*). And the Lord, in turn, promised that the Israelites would be his people and that he would be their God (*Deuteronomy 29:13*). The agreement was ratified by a burnt offering of oxen (*Exodus 24:5*).

Life under the Old Covenant was never easy for the Jewish people. Their characteristic recalcitrance came to the fore while Moses was still with God on the mountain. Moses invited the Lord to come into the midst of the Israelites, despite their being “a stiff-necked people” (*ho laos ... sklērotrachēlos, Exodus 34: 9*). The Lord acknowledged this feature in saying to Moses: “I have seen this people, and behold, it is a stiff-necked people” (*Exodus 32:9*; not included in the Septuagint). Interaction between the two parties of the covenant, moreover, was marked with violence on both sides. Following the Lord’s instructions (*Numbers 31:1-2*), the Israelites took vengeance against the Midianites, killing all the men, all the male children, and all women other than virgin (31:17). On other occasions, the Lord exercised violence against factions of his own people. When 250 dissident priests challenged the authority of Moses and Aaron, the Lord caused the earth to swallow them and their households, and then sent out fire to

consume them (*Numbers* 16:31-35). In response to the people's complaints about this harsh treatment, the Lord sent a plague among them that claimed another 14,700 lives (16:49).

There are numerous occasions as well on which the Lord threatens his people with disaster but doesn't follow through. In *Leviticus* 26:15-25, the Lord says that if the Israelites break their covenant with him, he will deliver them into the hands of their enemy; and if that doesn't work, he will make them eat the flesh of their sons and daughters (26:27-29). A threat relevant to the fate of Jesus centuries later is recorded in *Jeremiah* 17:27, where the Lord says that he will burn the temple of Jerusalem if Judah fails to keep the Sabbath holy. The final OT book of *Malachi* ends with the Lord's threat to "come and smite the land utterly" (*elthō kai pataxō tēn gēn ardēn*, 4:6) if the people do not remember his laws and statutes.

In the context of the Old Covenant, the pattern of interaction between the Lord and his people consists of the Lord's issuing commands, the Israelites disobeying, and the Lord's punishing them for their disobedience. This pattern prevails from the enactment of the Old Covenant on Mount Sinai to the end of the (Septuagint) OT with the passage just quoted from *Malachi*. From a Christian perspective, the Old Covenant is sequel to the original disobedience of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. What the persistent pattern of "command, disobedience, and punishment" shows is that redemption from Adam's sin cannot be gained by the imposition of further commands.

As far as the OT itself is concerned, however, there is little apparent connection between the Garden of Eden story and the sufferings of the people under the Old Covenant. In particular, there is no apparent reason to think that an inherited sin of any

sort stands in the way of full acceptance by God of his chosen people. The Israelites had their problems with stubbornness, to be sure, which led to transgressions against God for which they themselves were to blame. But there was no ancient sin to be rectified before they could gain favor with God under the provisions of the Old Covenant.

A consequence is that there was no salvific role for Jesus, or anyone else, to play in the Old Covenant. And if there was no ancient sin to be rectified, there was no task of redemption for Jesus Christ to accomplish. In the context of the Old Covenant, Jesus was only a renegade rabbi who committed the fatal sin of healing on the Sabbath. When Jesus died on the cross, his death amounted to nothing more than punishment for his own transgression. A new relation between God and his people was needed to connect the sacrifice of Jesus with the ancient sin of Adam.

(5.13) OT Anticipations of Jesus

The observation above that Jesus had no specific role to play within the Old Covenant is compatible with the presence of various passages in the OT that seem to anticipate his coming. Among hundreds of alleged cases, there are passages of at least five sorts that plausibly meet this description. Most plausible of all are OT passages (1) that Jesus identifies specifically as referring to himself.

In *Luke 4:18-19*, for instance, we hear of Jesus reading *Isaiah 61:1-2* to the congregation in the synagogue. As Jesus quotes it, this passage from *Isaiah* begins: “The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor” (*Pneuma kuriou ep’ eme hou heineken echrisen me euangelisasthai ptōchois*). After finishing the passage, Jesus gave the scroll back to an attendant and sat down. With

all eyes fixed on him, Jesus proclaimed: “Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing” (*Sēmeron peplērōtai hē graphē hautē en tois ōsin humōn, Luke 4:21*). *Isaiah 61:1-2* may be the clearest case we have of an OT passage that anticipates Jesus.

A similar case is found at *John 13:18*. After Jesus washed his disciples’ feet during their last meal together, he remarked that not all of them are blessed (referring to Judas), and said: “I know whom I have chosen; but in order that the scripture may be fulfilled, he who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me” (*egō oida tinas exelexamēn’ all’ hina hē graphē plērōthē, ho trōgōn mou ton arton epēren ep’ eme tēn pternan autou*). The scripture in question is *Psalms 41:9*, which reads: “Even my close friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted his heel against me” (*Kai gar ho anthrōpos tēs eirēnēs mou eph’ hon ēlpisa ho esthiōn artous mou emegalunen ep’ eme pternismon*).

There is another OT passage to which Jesus alludes as relevant to his lineage. In the first verse of *Matthew*, the author identifies Jesus as the son of David, on the grounds that Mary’s husband, Joseph, was among David’s descendents (*Matthew 1:16*). Several other passages in *Matthew* contain references to Jesus as the son of David, including 9:27 where two blind men ask him for healing, and 12:23 where the crowd expresses amazement at his healing of the man possessed by a demon. The author must have been aware of this popular conception of Jesus’ identity when he formulated *Matthew 22:42*, the passage in which Jesus asks the Pharisees whom they thought was the father of Christ. The Pharisees reply that Christ is “the son of David” (*[huios] ... Tou David*). Although the Pharisees of course did not think that Jesus was the Christ, Jesus himself understood their reply as a (false) claim that he was born of mortal man.

In arguing against this claim of his mortal parentage at *Matthew* 22:42, Jesus invokes *Psalms* 110:1, attributing that passage to David. *Psalms* 110:1 says: “The Lord said to my Lord, sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet” (*Eipen ho kurios tō kuriō mou kathou ek dexiōn mou heōs an thō tous echthrous sou hupopodion tōn podōn sou*). Jesus apparently read this as the Lord God bidding David’s Lord to sit at his right hand, and argued that David would not refer to his son as his Lord. Somewhat surprisingly, perhaps, the Pharisees were silenced by this argument. A slightly different version of this sequence is found at *Luke* 20:41-44, which comes closer than *Matthew* 22:44 to reproducing the Septuagint Greek of *Psalms* 110:1 verbatim. In either case, it is evident that Jesus understood David’s words “my Lord” as referring to himself. This is sufficient warrant for grouping *Psalms* 110:1, along with *Isaiah* 61:1-2 and *Psalms* 41:9, among a relatively small number of OT passages that clearly anticipate Christ and his mission. Also included in this group is *Malachi* 3:1, to which Jesus apparently refers in *Luke* 7:27.

Another group of OT passages (2) that probably anticipate Christ includes *Isaiah* 7:14 as a typical example. The relevant part of this passage reads: “Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and his name shall be called Immanuel” (*idou hē parthenos en gastri hexei kai texetai huion kai kaleseis to onoma autou Emmanouēl*). Because of its reference to a virgin birth, the author of *Matthew* links this passage to the angel’s assurance of Joseph that he should take the pregnant Mary as his wife. As the author puts it at *Matthew* 1:22: “All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken through the prophet” (*Touto de holon gegonen hina plērōthē to hrēthen hupo kuriou dia tou prophētou legontos*). *Isaiah*, of course, was the prophet in question, and *Isaiah* 7:14 the

place where the prophecy was recorded. It may be noted in passing that the part of the prophecy regarding the son's name went unfulfilled. The only appearance of the name 'Immanuel' in the NT is in the quotation corresponding to *Isaiah 7:14* at *Matthew 1:23* itself.

In the several cases discussed above, Jesus himself points to passages in the OT relevant to his identity in the NT. Jesus' own testimony provides the strongest warrant available for counting these previous passages as OT anticipations of Jesus and his mission. In the case of *Isaiah 7:14* and *Matthew 1:23*, however, it is the author of the NT passage who claims that the OT prophecy has been fulfilled, not Jesus himself. Although the author's judgment on the matter is certainly weighty, it falls short in comparison with Jesus' own judgment about fulfilled prophecies. Hence we say that *Isaiah 7:14 probably* anticipates Jesus, leaving open the possibility that the author's verdict was mistaken.

There are yet other OT passages (3) with a plausible claim to anticipating Jesus, but not in the form of prophecy. One is *Psalms 8:4-6*, beginning with David's famous query to the Lord: "What is man that you are mindful of him, or the son of man that you care for him?" (*Ti estin anthrōpos hoti mimnēskē autou ē huios anthrōpou hoti episkeptē autou*). This query is repeated verbatim (with different punctuation), along with several additional lines, at *Hebrews 2:6-8*. Another is *Psalms 45:6-7*, which is repeated at *Hebrews 1:8-9* and identified there by the author as pertaining to the Son of God. The *Hebrews* version of this passage begins: "Your throne, O God, is forever and forever" (*Ho thronos sou ho theos eis ton aiōna tou aiōnos*).

A category (4) distinct from these three includes OT passages that are repeated in the NT, but with no apparent reference to Jesus specifically. In any given case, the

passage in question presumably reminded its NT author of Jesus and his mission. But this is not enough to qualify the passage as a genuine anticipation of Jesus. The author might have considered it relevant to Jesus, but without direct textual evidence to support his judgment. *Psalm* 104:4, for one example, is repeated in *Hebrews* 1:7. In its NT version, the passage reads: “He makes his angels winds, and his ministers a flame of fire” (*Ho poiōn tous angelous autou pneumata kai tous leitourgous autou puros phloga*). But since the passage pertains to God’s angels specifically (1:7), it does not count as an anticipation of Christ. Another example is *Isaiah* 40:3-4, which is repeated with alterations at *Luke* 3:4. The OT version is perhaps more familiar, one line of which is: “make straight in the desert a highway for our God” (*en tē erēmō ... eutheias poieite tas tribous tou theou hēmōn*). In the absence of a direct connection, however, once again this passage is not an anticipation of Christ.

A final category (5) germane to this topic includes OT passages that some have considered relevant to Christ’s mission but that have no NT counterparts to establish such relevance. Thinking of Jesus as salve for human woes, some Christian apologists lay emphasis on *Jeremiah* 8:22, with its soulful lament: “is there no balm In Gilead, is there no physician there?” (*mē hrētinē ouk estin en Galaad ē iatros ouk estin ekei*). Yet there is no reference either to Gilead or to *hrētinē* (balm, resin) of any sort in the NT. Another case of this sort is *2 Samuel* 7: 13, in which Nathan tells David that the Lord will “establish the throne of his kingdom forever” (*anorthōsō ton thronon autou heōs eis ton aiōna*). Apologists who read this as foretelling the reign of Jesus Christ (the “Son of David”) mistake the distinctly otherworldly dominion of Jesus with the earthly throne of which Nathan apparently was speaking.

There is a distinction between anticipations of Jesus in the OT and practices depicted in the OT that were essential precursors of Jesus' life and mission. Among the latter was the predilection of the Jewish people to interact with the Lord through the medium of blood sacrifice.

(5.14) OT Practices of Blood Sacrifice

The Lord shows himself partial to blood sacrifice throughout the OT. In *Genesis* 4:4-5, we hear that the Lord preferred Abel's meat offering over the grain offered by Cain, which resulted in Abel's murder by his jealous brother. Following the Lord's instructions, Noah brought sacrificial animals with him on the arc. *Genesis* 8:21 tells us that God was pleased by the smell of Noah's sacrifice when he reached dry land, and vowed never to purge the earth of living creatures again. The best-known blood sacrifice of the OT is probably that of the Passover, details of which are given in *Exodus* 12:3-13. Each Israelite household sacrificed an unblemished lamb, and spread its blood on the house's doorframe. That night the Lord killed the firstborn of every Egyptian family, passing over the houses marked with blood. This led to the release of the Israelites after 430 years of captivity.

The Old Covenant was enacted at Sinai after the escape from Egypt, at which point the Lord gave Moses instructions for conducting blood sacrifices. Details occupy the first seven chapters of *Leviticus* (save chapter 2 which deals with grain sacrifices). Different procedures are prescribed for different purposes. There are "peace offerings" aimed at pleasing God, offerings to atone for unintentional sins (one for priests, another

for ordinary people), and offerings to expiate a variety of transgressions including swearing vain oaths and touching unclean things.

Certain sins were unforgeivable and required punishment by death. Paramount among these was working on the Sabbath (*Exodus* 31:14). (*Numbers* 15:32-36 tells of a man who was stoned to death, by the Lord's command, for gathering sticks on the Sabbath.) The NT depicts Jesus as healing on the Sabbath on at least four separate occasions. On each occasion, scribes and Pharisees were either present at the healing or heard about it immediately afterward. There could have been no doubt in Jesus' mind how these Jewish officials would react to what they perceived as a capital sin.

(5.15) The Jews' Animus toward Jesus for Healing on the Sabbath

Jesus' healing of the man with the withered hand is recorded at *Matthew* 12:10-14, *Mark* 3:1-6, and *Luke* 6:6-11. According to *Matthew* 12:14, after the Pharisees witnessed the healing they "held council against him [Jesus] regarding how to destroy him" (*sumboulion elabon kat' autou hopōs auton apolesōsin*). Essentially the same reaction on the part of the Pharisees is recorded at *Mark* 3:6.

Further details are added at *Luke* 6:7, which tells us that the Pharisees had come "hoping to find an accusation against him" (*hina heurōsin katēgorein autou*). After the healing they "were filled with fury" (*eplēsthēsan anoias*, 6:11), and debated with each other regarding "what they might do with Jesus" (*ti an poiēsaiēn tō 'Iēsou*, 6:11).

Two other healings on the Sabbath, recorded at *Luke* 13:11-17 and *Luke* 14:1-6, occurred in the presence of Jewish officials who appear confused and hesitant. In 13:11-17, Jesus heals the woman who had been bent over for eighteen years. After the healing,

the ruler of the synagogue complained to the company at large (not to Jesus directly) about working on the Sabbath. In response, Jesus called him a hypocrite, shamed him into silence, and launched into the parable of the mustard seed. The episode at *Luke* 14:1-6 occurred on a subsequent Sabbath when Jesus was dining with one of the Pharisees who had set a trap for him. Out of the blue, a man with dropsy appeared on the scene waiting to be healed. Before addressing the man, Jesus asked the lawyers and Pharisees present whether healing on the Sabbath was lawful. When the officials refused to answer, Jesus healed the man, sent him on his way, and addressed the group with the parable concerning appropriate seating at a wedding feast.

One further healing on the Sabbath is recorded in *John* 7:1-7. This healing took place toward the end of the weeklong Feast of Tabernacles (or Booths), which celebrated the time in the desert when the Israelites lived in temporary shelters (booths) after their deliverance from Egypt. During Jesus' lifetime, the feast was held in Jerusalem, and all adult males were expected to attend. The dominant themes of the feast were water (symbolizing life) and light (symbolizing watchful anticipation). On each day of the festival, priests would draw water from the Pool of Siloam and carry it ceremoniously to the temple. Filling a basin hued from rock, this pool was fashioned to provide life-giving water to the city in the event of siege. Then on the evening of each day, four huge menorahs would be lit in the courtyard of the temple, and numerous bowls of oil atop enormous candlesicks would be set aflame in the Court of the Women. Ancient reports say that illumination from the temple spread to all courtyards in the city, moving all Jerusalem to anticipate the coming dawn.

Although attendance at the Feast of Tabernacles was mandatory for both Jesus and his brothers, Jesus stayed behind in Galilee while his brothers went ahead (*John* 7:8-9). Jesus soon followed, but remained incognito when he arrived . In the words of *John* 7:10, he went “not publicly but as if in private” (*ou phanerōs alla [hōs] en kruptō*). Whatever this might mean, the text is clear about the reason for evasion: “the Jews were looking for him at the feast” (*hoi oun 'Ioudaioi ezētoun auton en tē heortē, John* 7:11). This is the first time in the Tabernacles sequence that Jesus takes extraordinary steps to elude capture by Jewish authorities.

Toward the middle of the feast, Jesus regained visibility and began teaching in the temple. He spoke of his teaching as deriving from God, and mentioned a previous (otherwise unspecified) case in which he had healed a man on the Sabbath. Upon hearing this, some of his audience marveled out loud that he was speaking openly and had not yet been apprehended. At this point, the author (presumably John the beloved disciple) interjects that no one yet had laid a hand on Jesus because “his hour had not yet come” (*oupō elēluthei hē hōra autou, 7:30*). When the Pharisees heard this stirring of the crowd, however, they sent out officers to arrest Jesus. The officers did not report back until after Jesus had spoken on the final day of the feast.

On the last day of the feast, Jesus stood up and shouted (*ekraxen*) to the crowd: “If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink” (*'Ean tis dipsa erchesthō pros me kai pinetō, John* 7:37). Jesus continued in a loud voice: “Whoever believes in me, as the scripture said, out of his belly will flow rivers of living water” (*ho pisteuōn eis eme, kathōs eipen hē graphē, potamoi ek tēs koilias autou hreusousin hudatos zōntos, 7:38*) The OT reference here is unclear, but may be to *Isaiah* 12:3, which reads: “with joy you

will draw water from the well of salvation” (*antlēsete hudōr met’ euphrosunēs ek tōn pēgōn tou sōtēriou*). At any rate, the sense of *John* 7:38 in context is probably that Jesus was depicting himself as the well of salvation, from whose inner being flow rivers of living water to all those who believe in him. Because of words like these, the officers sent to arrest Jesus accepted his testimony and reported back empty-handed (7:45). The Pharisees, of course, were furious, and cursed the crowd that had received Jesus favorably (7:49).

Later the same day, Jesus again addressed a group of listeners in the temple treasury, saying: “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life” (*Egō eimi to phōs tou kosmou ho akolouthōn emoi ou mē peripatēsē en tē skotia, all’ hexei to phōs tēs zōēs, John* 8:12). Thus in two successive proclamations, Jesus taps into the two dominant themes of the Feast of Tabernacles. Jesus is both the source of living water (7:38) and the light of the world (8:12). This time the Pharisees began to argue with him directly, mainly regarding the truth of his testimony. Again no one arrested him, because (as the author explains at 8:20, repeating 7:30 verbatim) his hour had not yet come.

At *John* 8:21-59 there follows an interlude in which Jesus trades views on respective paternity with unspecified “Jews who had believed him” (*tous pepisteukotas autō Ioudaious, 8:31*). In the course of this interchange, Jesus insults these once sympathetic Jews by attributing their paternity to the devil (*humeis ek tou patros tou diabolou este, 8:44*). The Jews retaliate by asking Jesus whether he has a demon (*ei su ... daimonion echeis, 8:48*). After further unpleasantries, the Jews “picked up stones to throw at him” (*ēran oun lithous hina balōsin ep’ auton, 8:59*). But “Jesus hid himself and

went out of the temple” (*’Iēsous de ekrubē kai exēlthen ek tou hierou*, 8:59). This is the second time in the Tabernacles sequence that Jesus used extraordinary means to escape imminent danger.

Jesus’ healing of the blind man took place against this highly charged background. While still in Jerusalem, Jesus and his disciples encountered a beggar who had been blind from birth. The disciples were curious about the cause of his blindness, and were told by Jesus that he was blind “so that the works of God might be displayed in him” (*hina phanerōthē ta erga tou theou en autō*, 9:3). Referring to himself again as the light of the world, Jesus spit on the ground and made mud with the saliva. Then he anointed the man’s eyes with the mud and said to him: “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (*Hupage nipsai eis tēn kolumbēthran tou Silōam*, 9:7). The man went, washed, and came back seeing.

Now it so happened that this took place on the Sabbath. When previous acquaintances saw that the beggar had been healed, they took him to the Pharisees. At first doubting his story, the Pharisees brought in the man’s parents to confirm his previous blindness. His parents were afraid of the Pharisees, and said the man was old enough to speak for himself. Called again before the authorities, the man responded to their questions with sarcasm, and pointed out that if Jesus were not a man of God, he could not have healed someone blind from birth. The Pharisees castigated him for being insolent, called him an inveterate sinner, and threw him out.

Upon hearing about this, Jesus tracked the man down, secured a profession of belief, and said that he [Jesus] had come into the world “that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may become blind” (*hina hoi mē blepontes blepōsin kai hoi*

blepontes taphloi genōntai, 9:39). Some Pharisees who had been eavesdropping asked Jesus if he thought that *they* were blind. Jesus answered enigmatically, saying that they remain in guilt if they claim to see (9:41). Jesus then enters into a homily-like discourse contrasting a good shepherd who “lays down his life for the sheep” (*tēn psuchēn autou tithēsīn huper tōn probatōn*, 10:11) with the thief who “comes only to steal and kill and destroy” (*ouk erchetai ei mē hina klepsē kai thusē kai apolesē*, 10:10). Jesus then tells the Pharisees: “I am the good shepherd; I know my own and my own know me” (*Egō eimi ho poimēn ho kalos kai ginōskō ta ema kai ginōskousi me ta ema*, 10:14).

Knowing that the Pharisees sought to kill him, Jesus tells of his mission to bring other sheep into the fold, which will require laying down his life and taking it up again (10:17). Apropos the Pharisees’ intentions, he tells them that no one takes his life from him, but that he lays it down of his own accord (10:18). This authority over his own life, Jesus tells them, is a “charge I have received from my Father” (*tēn entolēn elabon para tou patros mou*, 10:18). Hearing this, some of the Pharisees said Jesus was possessed by a demon and insane (10:20), while others countered by asking whether a demon can open the eyes of the blind (10:21). Thus divided, the Pharisees let Jesus walk away unscathed.

A few weeks later, during the Feast of Dedication, Jesus was walking in the temple when the Jews surrounded him and demanded point-blank: “How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly” (*Heōs pote tēn psuchēn hēmōn aireis; ei su ei ho Christos, eipe hēmin parrēsia*, 10:24). Jesus answered that he had already told them, but that since they were not among his sheep they could not believe him. To the sheep of his flock who believe, however, he gives eternal life. Regarding these sheep, moreover, Jesus said “no one will snatch them out of my hand” (*ouch*

harpasei tis auta ek tēs cheiros mou, 10:28). He then says something the Jews considered the final straw. No one can snatch them from *his* hand, Jesus said, because no one can snatch them from the *Father's* hand (10:29). In Jesus' own words, this is the case because "I and the Father are one" (*egō kai ho patēr hen esmen*, 10:30).

To the Jews surrounding him, this was utter blasphemy, worse even than healing on the Sabbath. Again they picked up rocks to stone him. Jesus distracted them momentarily by telling them to believe his works if they couldn't believe him. But when he suggested that believing his works would lead them to know "that the Father is in me and I am in the Father" (*hoti en emoi ho patēr kagō en tō patri*, 10:38), they closed in to arrest him. Once again, unaccountably, Jesus "escaped from their hands" (*exēlthen ek tēs cheiros autōn*, 10:39). This is the third occasion, in the passages we have been considering, on which Jesus employed extraordinary means to escape imminent danger from the Jews.

Another occasion of extraordinary escape from imminent danger, previously mentioned, is recorded at *Luke* 4:30. After reading from *Isaiah* 61:1, Jesus said to the congregation in the synagoue: "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing" (*Luke* 4:21, Greek given above). Initially impressed, his listeners turned sour when Jesus pointed out limitations in the good works of the prophets Elijah and Elisha (4:25-27). The crowd then drove him to a cliff with the intent of throwing him over. But "passing through their midst" (*dielthōn dia mesou autōn*), we hear, "he went away" (*autos ... eporeueto*, 4:30).

(5.16) Jesus' Avoidance of Capture until his Hour had Come

The first three previously noted cases of extraordinary escape are reported in the book of *John*. At *John* 7:6-8, prior to telling his brothers to go to the Feast of Tabernacles without him, Jesus told them “My time has not yet come” (*Ho kairos ho emos oupō parestin*, 7:6; also 7:8). He soon followed them, but evaded the Jews waiting to apprehend him by arriving incognito. At *John* 7:30, the author remarks that none of the Jews seeking to arrest Jesus managed to lay hands on him because “his hour had not yet come” (*oupō elēluthēi hē hōra autou*). Verbatim the same explanation is given at *John* 8:20 for the Pharisee’s failure to capture Jesus after he referred to himself as the light of the world.

With regard to his hour not yet coming, the sense of these three episodes is that the timing of Jesus’ earthly mission in its final phases was not under the control of his Jewish adversaries. This accords with Jesus’ remark to the Pharisees at *John* 10:18 that no one takes his life from him, but instead that “I lay it down of my own accord” (*egō tithēmi autēn ap’ emautou*). Whether other human persons determined the timing of earlier phases of Jesus’ mission is more ambiguous. At the wedding feast described in *John* 2:1-11, Jesus’ mother tells him that the hosts have run out of wine. Jesus responded impatiently, saying: “What is that to you and me, woman? My hour has not yet come” (*Ti emoi kai soi, gunai; oupō hēkei hē hōra mou*, 2:4). Mary responded to her son’s seemingly dismissive remark by telling the servants: “Do whatever he tells you” (*Ho ti an legē humin poiēsate*, 2:5). Mary’s prompting was enough to induce Jesus to begin his mission by making wine out of water, described at 2:11 as the first miracle (*sēmeiōn*, sign) performed by him personally.

Jesus hour finally comes, of course, with the onset of events that led directly to his death on the cross. Preparing to enter the city for his final meal, Jesus instructed some disciples to seek out a certain man and tell him “The teacher says, my time is at hand” (*Ho didaskalos legei, Ho kairos mou engus estin, Matthew 26:18*), and that they would keep their Passover in his house. Other passages in *John* where Jesus affirms that his hour has come include 12:23 and 13:1. In *John 12:23*, Jesus says to Andrew and Philip: “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified” (*Elēluthen hē hōra hina doxasthē ho huios tou anthōpou*). Then in *John 13:1*, the author describes Jesus as knowing that “his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father” (*ēlthen autou hē hōra hina metabē ek tou kosmou toutou pros ton patera*). And Jesus begins his impassioned final prayer to the Father in chapter 17 with the words: “Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you” (*Pater, elēluthen hē hōra doxason sou ton huion, hina ho huios doxasē se, John 17:1*).

The several episodes regarding his hour not being at hand indicate that, in some respects at least, the course of Jesus’ life from Cana onward was being guided by other than natural influences. Exemplified by his avoidance of the Pharisees up to his final hours, Jesus’ mission itself transcended the realm of nature. There is a parallel of sorts between his presence during the time leading up to his crucifixion and his presence during the forty days after his resurrection. At *Acts 10:40-41*, Peter explained to Cornelius how God raised Jesus on the third day and “rendered him visible” (*edōken auton emphanē genesthai*), “not to all the people, but to us who had been chosen by God as witnesses” (Greek above), which is to say those “who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead” (Greek above). As God himself determined in advance who would

see Jesus after his resurrection, so God presumably determined when Jesus' mission would begin and when the Pharisees would finally apprehend him. The parallel at hand is that events both before the crucifixion and after the resurrection were shaped by divine rather than human agency.

There are even parallels in the extraordinary powers exercised by Jesus during these periods of before and after. His going incognito to the Feast of the Tabernacles seems to anticipate his being unrecognized by the disciples on the road to Emmaus. And his escape though the crowd intent in pushing him over the cliff is not unlike his entering the room with the locked doors on the eve of his resurrection.

Despite substantial differences, Jesus' presence in the waning days of the Old Covenant, leading up to his crucifixion, was no more worldly than his presence during the days after the resurrection when the New Covenant was being established. His presence under both covenants was distinctly otherworldly.

(5.17) Termination of the Old Covenant: an OT Perspective

The only distinction in the OT between an old and a new covenant comes at *Jeremiah* 31:31, following which the Lord says that the new covenant will not be like the one made when he brought his people out of Egypt. This latter, the Lord says, was one the people broke, even though "I was a husband to them" (*egō ēmelēsa autōn*, 31:32). The new covenant he will make with Israel is one such that: "I will put my law in their inward parts [Hebrew *bə-qir-bām*], and I will write it on their hearts" (*didous dōsō nomous mou eis tēn dianoian [sic] autōn kai epi kardias autōn grapsō autous*, 31:33). Moreover, said

the Lord: “I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more” (*hileōs esomai tais adikiais autōn kai tōn amartiōn autōn ou mē mnēsthō eti*, 31:34).

The Lord’s words at *Jeremiah* 31:34, however, leave unclear the circumstances under which sin would be forgiven. Also unclear is whether forgiveness would come at a price, and if so how that price would be exacted. It might be presumed that forgiveness of sin would involve transition from the Old into the New Covenant. For if sins were to be forgiven under the covenant then in effect, there would be no need for a different covenant. To replace the covenant then in effect, however, would require bringing that existing covenant to an end. And the OT has nothing to say about the Old Covenant being terminated.

As matters stand, it is only from a NT perspective that the Old Covenant can be brought to an end. And it is only from that perspective as well that details of the New Covenant can be elaborated.

(5.2) Jesus’ Life as Juncture between the Two Covenants

Narratives typically are divided into beginning, middle, and end. The middle section of the Christian narrative opens with the divine birth of Jesus, proceeds with his public mission, and terminates with his death on the cross. Jesus’ death constitutes the end of the Old Covenant. In effect, the man Jesus and the Old Covenant with the Lord expire together. The group of disciples recruited during Jesus’ lifetime survives his death, and forms the nucleus around which a fellowship of new followers takes shape. The expansion of this fellowship into an indefinite future makes up the final component of the

Christian narrative. Jesus' initial disciples are the first human participants in the agreement with God that constitutes the New Covenant.

Jesus' virgin birth sets the stage for these later developments. On one hand, his divine paternity renders Jesus an unblemished victim qualified for the sacrifice required to complete the Old Covenant. On the other, his birth from a human womb prepares him to implement the New Covenant that God is about to establish with humankind. Himself both divine and human, Jesus is uniquely suited to serve as mediator of this forthcoming covenant. His unique status in these respects is noted in *Hebrews* 9:15, which reads: "For he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant" (*Kai dia touto diathēkēs kainēs mesitēs estin, hopōs thanatou genomenou eis apolutrōsin tōn epi tē prōtē diathēkē parabaseōn tēn epangelian labōsin hoi keklēmēnoi tēs aiōniou klēronomias*).

(5.211) Termination of the Old Covenant: a NT Perspective

Under the Old Covenant, sin was expiated by blood sacrifice. Blood was drawn from the sacrificial victim to bring about atonement for human transgression. As detailed in *Leviticus* 4:32, an appropriate victim to atone for a sin of an ordinary person was a lamb without blemish. Sin offerings for the congregation (*sunagōgē*, 4:13) of Israel at large were more complicated, involving a bull as victim and elaborate observances by the priest (4:13-21). Under the Old Covenant, there were no sin offerings for humankind generally.

From the NT perspective, Jesus died to atone for the sins of humankind generally. Perforce, to understand Jesus' death as achieving this more general effect requires a conception of blood sacrifice not found in the OT. This new conception of blood sacrifice can be thought of as a generalized version of the OT sin offering for ordinary people. In these terms, Jesus is the sacrificial lamb whose death atones for the sins of ordinary people at large.

If Jesus had shared the sins of those he died for, he could not have served as a sacrificial lamb without blemish. To serve in this role, Jesus himself must have been born without sin. Given that everyone born of man shares the original sin of Adam, it came about that Jesus was born the Son of God. From the perspective of the NT, the Son of God died by crucifixion to expiate the sin inherited by sons of Adam. Speaking of Adam and Christ respectively, Paul writes in *Romans 5:19*: "For as by one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by one man's obedience the many will be made righteous" (*hōsper gar dia tēs parakoēs tou henos anthrōpou amartōloi katestathēsan hoi polloi, houtōs kai dia tēs hupakoēs tou henos dikaioi katastathēsontai hoi polloi*).

In the context of the OT, Jesus' death was his own misfortune. He brought it on himself by disobeying the Jewish law prohibiting work on the Sabbath. From this perspective, Jesus' death bears no relation to the sin of Adam, and is indifferent to the wellbeing of humanity at large. In the NT, by contrast, Jesus' death bears on the wellbeing of humanity in a way that is wholly essential. The primary accomplishment of Jesus' death on the cross is its expiation of the sin stemming from Adam's misdeed in Eden. This is accomplished in obedience to his heavenly Father, and completes the first part of mission for which he was sent to earth.

The first part of Jesus' mission, to say it again, was to regain access to eternal life for humankind at large. This had been denied when the gates of Eden were closed following Adam's expulsion. By expiating the sin of Adam, Jesus renewed access to the Tree of Life from which Adam had been excluded.

(5.212) Implementation of the New Covenant

The second part of Jesus' mission was to establish a new contract with God that would enable individual people to find their way to the fabled Tree of Life. This New Covenant was to provide a pathway by which individual people could come to know God personally. In Jesus' own words, addressed to God and reported in *John 17:3*, eternal life is "that people know you the only true God" (Greek above). The way to achieve that, Jesus goes on to say, is "[their knowing] Jesus Christ whom you have sent" (Greek above). Under the New Covenant, following the path laid out by Jesus is the way to eternal life.

A prerequisite of establishing the New Covenant was the enlistment of a loyal group of followers. These followers would be trained in the way to eternal life, and after Jesus' death would pass this training on to others who had not known Jesus personally. Successive generations of followers will come to constitute Christ's church, which would make his way available to yet further generations. Christ's church is the context in which the New Covenant operates. The main purpose of the New Covenant, one might say, is to make Christ's way accessible to all who chose to follow it. This also is the purpose of the church established by Jesus' disciples. Without the church to support it, the New Covenant would become otiose.

Christ's church is the framework within which the New Covenant operates. God's interaction with the individual believer occurs within that framework. The focal point of that interaction is the Lord's Supper. By partaking of the Lord's Supper, the individual believer enters into a personal relation with God. Although an individual might interact personally with God under other circumstances as well, the Lord's Supper provides occasion for the most intimate interaction of all. By partaking in the Lord's Supper, the individual believer takes part in Christ's death on the cross.

There are eight explicit references to the New Covenant (*kainē diathēke*) in the NT. One, at *Hebrews* 8:8, is contained in a direct quotation of *Jeremiah* 31:31, where the Lord announces that he will make a new covenant with Israel and Judah. Another comes at *2 Corinthians* 3:6, where Paul associates himself with his audience as "ministers of a new covenant" (*diakonous kainēs diathēkēs*). Two more are found at *Hebrews* 9:15 and 12:24, where Paul speaks of Jesus as "the mediator of a new covenant" (*diathēkēs kainēs mesitēs*, 9:15). The other four are quoted as words spoken by Jesus himself. In each of these four cases, Jesus describes the wine of the Lord's Supper as his blood of the New Covenant. At *Like* 22:20, for instance, Jesus is quoted as saying "This cup is the new covenant of my blood poured out for you" (Greek above). The other passages where Jesus is quoted to this effect are *Matthew* 26:28, *Mark* 14:24, and *1 Corinthians* 11:25.

The point of these observations is that Jesus himself portrays the Lord's Supper as an integral part of the New Covenant. In the context of the Christian narrative, at least, the New Covenant provides a pathway to eternal life. The Lord's Supper enables progress along that way.

(5.22) Jesus' Virgin Birth

A prerequisite of atoning for Adam's sin is that Jesus himself be sinless. Only a sacrificial victim without blemish would be fit to meet that requirement. Jesus himself could not participate in the generic sin of Adam. To be completely sinless, Jesus must circumvent the lineage of Adam, and instead be born the Son of God. Jesus was prepared for the propitiatory part of his mission by being conceived by the Holy Spirit. As the angel Gabriel tells Mary in *Luke* 1:35: "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God" (*Pneuma hagion epeleusetai epi se kai dunamis hupsistou episkiasei soi` dio kai to gennōmenon hagion klēthēsetai huios theou*).

Many world religions tell of births that are extraordinary in some manner. In the lore of Hinduism, the deity Vishnu entered the womb of Devaki, who then gave birth to the deity Krishna. Devaki was not a virgin, having given natural birth to several offspring previously. According to Buddhist tradition, Queen Maya had a dream in which a bull elephant with a white lotus on its trunk struck her in the side and entered her womb. Ten months later, she gave birth to Gautama Buddha.

Islam shares with Judaism the story of the extraordinary birth of Issac. Abraham was 100 years old when Issac was born, and his wife Sarah was 90 (*Genesis* 17:17). In accord with an earlier promise to Sarah that nations would flow from her (17:16), the Lord renewed Sarah and Abraham's powers of procreation (21:1). Their son was named Issac ("laughter"), reflecting his elderly parent's joy at having a child.

It is noteworthy that Islam also recognizes the birth of Jesus by the Virgin Mary. According to the Quran, the angel Gabriel visited Mary and told her that she would give

birth to a prophet named Jesus. When Mary asked how that could happen, the angel responded that God is able to make anything happen by willing it. Also according to the Quran, Jesus could speak from time of birth. When Mary presented her infant son to her family, he announced that his mission was to serve God, to pray, to give alms, and to protect his mother against calumny for his virgin birth.

In the context of the Christian narrative, on the other hand, Jesus' mission was to bring the Old Covenant to an end and to initiate a New Covenant. The Old Covenant came to an end with the sacrifice of Jesus as an unblemished victim. As far as the New Covenant is concerned, inasmuch as all human progeny are inherently blemished by Adam's sin, Jesus' mission required that he be of divine rather than human parentage. Thus, according to the account in *Luke*, the Holy Spirit came upon Mary, the Most High overshadowed her, and she gave birth to the Son of God (1:35).

In announcing Mary's forthcoming virgin birth, the angel Gabriel also disclosed that her elderly kinswoman, Elizabeth, was already pregnant with a child to be named John. In the manner of Sarah and Abraham, Elizabeth and Zechariah, her husband, had been rendered fertile well past their ordinary procreative years. In contrast with the divine paternity of Jesus, John's father was the man Zechariah himself. John was "filled with the Holy Spirit even from his mother's womb" (*pneumatōs hagiou plēsthesetai eti ek kolias mētros autou, Luke 1:15*). But the Holy Spirit was not the source of Elizabeth's pregnancy.

Bringing the Old Covenant to a close required an unblemished sacrifice. The divine Fatherhood of Jesus met part of that requirement. But Mary also was a descendent of Adam, and hence an avenue through which Adam's sin might be passed on to her

offspring. To forestall the possibility of Jesus' inheriting this blemish, Mary herself must have been inherently sinless. As far as residual sin is concerned, that is to say, Mary herself must have been "immaculate." While the NT is silent on this matter, the need for Mary's unblemished innocence was recognized by the proclamation of the Doctrine of the Immaculate Conception in 1854 under Pope Pius IX. Although encumbered by theological verbiage, the gist of this doctrine is that Mary, from the moment of her conception, was free from all stain of original sin.

(5.23) His Baptism

The NT word for baptism is *baptizō*, with a range of meanings including "to wash" and "to immerse," as well as "to baptize" specifically. This particular word occurs just four times in the Septuagint, only one of which (at *2 Kings* 5:14) has anything to do with immersion in water. In the Septuagint, washing with water is conveyed instead by the term *plunō*, which occurs only once in the NT (at *Revelation* 7:14).

There are numerous passages in the OT, nonetheless, where washing takes on a ritualistic significance that approaches the significance of baptism in the NT. In *Ezekiel* 36:24-25, the prophet tells of the Lord's promise to the people of Israel that he will bring them into their own land, where he will sprinkle them with clean water that will cleanse them from the uncleanness of their idols. At *Exodus* 40:2-8, the Lord gives Moses detailed instructions for erecting a tabernacle, including a basin of water placed before the altar. The Lord then instructs Moses to wash Aaron with water from the basin, and "to anoint him and consecrate him that he may serve me as priest" (*chriseis auton kai hagiaseis auton kai hierateusei moi*, 40:13).

By the time of Jesus, procedures of ritual purification apparently had evolved to require large amounts of water. On the scene of the marriage at Cana, there were six stone water jars, each holding 20 to 30 gallons, for use “according to the Jewish custom of purification” (*kata ton katharismōn tōn 'Ioudaiōn, John 2:6*). Jesus instructed the attendants to fill them with water, which he then turned into wine. As far as the wedding feast was concerned, the result was well over 100 gallons of good wine for the guests to consume. (How many gallons per person?) As far as the emerging Christian narrative is concerned, the wine in the vessels used for purification may anticipate the wine of the Last Supper, the wine that is the blood of the crucified Jesus that purified mankind from the generic sin of Adam.

As far as baptism in particular is concerned, Jewish rites of purification had solidified to a point enabling comparison with the practice of John the Baptist himself. Thus we are told at *John 3:25* that one of John’s disciples was questioning “a Jew about purification” (*'Ioudaiou peri katharismou*). Although no report is given of how the comparison went, three differences at least might have emerged. One is that, whereas Jewish law prescribed specific rituals of purification for specific transgressions, the form of purification practiced by John was not legally regulated. A second difference is that Jewish rituals of purification might be repeated with recurring offenses, whereas the purification practised by John presumably was considered permanent. The reasons John’s purification probably was considered permanent have to do with its third difference from purification under Jewish law. This third difference has to do with the nature of repentance in turn.

The first mention of John the Baptist in the NT comes at *Matthew* 3:1-2, where he is quoted as proclaiming: “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (*Metanoēite ēngiken gar hē basileia tōn ouranōn*). In response, people came from territories all around the River Jordan, in order “to confess their sins” (*exomologoumenoi tas hamartias autōn*, 3:6) and to receive his baptism. Jesus repeats John’s proclamation verbatim at *Matthew* 4:17, using it as a clarion call to begin his mission.

The verb *metanoēite* at *Matthew* 3:2 and 4:17 is a form of *metanoēō*, meaning to change one’s mind or purpose. In the Septuagint, the term often means changing one’s mind in the sense of relenting. At *Jeremiah* 18:8, for example, the Lord says that if Israel will turn from its evil, he would relent (*metanoēsō*) from the harm he had intended to do it. Other instances of this usage occur at *1 Samuel* 15:29, *Proverbs* 20:25, and *Jeremiah* 4:28, 8:6. Relenting in these passages is changing one’s mind about something, in effect a matter of having second thoughts.

In *Matthew* 3:2 and 4:17, however, the term carries the stronger sense of undergoing a change in heart. The repentance John the Baptist calls for in 3:2 is a matter of changing the purposes that guide one’s life. This is quite different from having second thoughts about one’s intentions or misdeeds on a particular occasion (as at *1 Samuel* 15:29). One might relent a misdeed on a past occasion, but then repeat it under other circumstances. Under Jewish law, one might receive ritual purification for the first misdeed, and then undergo a second round of purification for the second occurrence. But the metanoia preached by John the Baptist is not a change that normally bears repetition. This is the third major difference between purification under Jewish law and the

purification offered by John the Baptist. The latter is a permanent change of heart, effecting a change in the purposes that guide one's life.

This also is the *metanoia* preached by Jesus at the start of his mission. At *Matthew* 4:17, Jesus is quoted as saying: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (*Metanoetei ēngiken gar hē basileia tōn ouranōn*). As the author of *Matthew* perceives it, this proclamation of Jesus signals the fulfillment of *Isaiah* 9:2, where the prophet exults: "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light" (*ho laos ho poreuomenos en skotei idete phōs mega*); those dwelling in the shadow of death, "on them a light has dawned" (*phōs lampsei eph' humas*).

We turn now to John's baptism of Jesus Christ. In response to John's proclamation "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Greek above), we recall, people came from all around to confess their sins and be baptised. A number of Pharisees and Sadducees came with them (*Matthew* 3:7), presumably as observers. John chastised these onlookers, calling them "a brood of vipers" (*Gennēmata echidnōn*, 3:7). Speaking for all to hear, John then declared that he baptizes "with water for repentance" (*en hudati eis metanoian*, 3:11). But one will come, he goes on to say, whose sandals he is not worthy to touch (3:11). Obviously referring to Jesus, John predicted that this person "will baptize you with the holy spirit and fire" (*humas baptisei en pneumati hagiō kai puri*, 3:11).

Then Jesus came from Galilee and presented himself for baptism. John at first demurred, but finally consented. Immediately after arising from the water, the author tells us, Jesus "saw the spirit of God descending like a dove" (*eiden [to] pneuma [tou] theou katabainon hōsei peristeran*, 3:16) and coming to rest on him. A voice from heaven then

pronounced: “This is my beloved son, with whom I am well pleased” (3:17, Greek above). Similar accounts, with varying details, are given in the other three Gospels. All tell of John’s prediction that Jesus will baptize with the Holy Spirit (*Mark* 1:8, *Luke* 3:16, *John* 1:33); and *Luke* 3:16 joins with *Matthew* 3:11 in mentioning baptism with fire as well.

Now as matters stand, there is no unambiguous record in the NT of Jesus baptizing in any manner whatever, either with water or with fire or with the Holy Spirit. There of course is the story of Pentacost in *Acts* 2:1-13, where the Holy Spirit comes in tongues of flame, bringing the gift of tongues to everyone in the house where the disciples were staying. There is nothing in the rich imagery of this story, however, to suggest that the coming of flames at Pentacost was a form of baptism. Quite to the contrary, if the people in the house had already been baptized with fire, what Peter says to them subsequently in *Acts* 2:38 would make no sense. What Peter says there is that all his listeners (including those who had been visited by flame) should repent and “be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins” (*baptisthētō ... epi tō onomati ’Iēsou Christou eis aphen sin tōn hamartiōn humōn*). If they had already been baptized, no further baptism in the name of Jesus would be appropriate.

There are three passages in *John* that bear on the question whether Jesus himself engaged in baptism. According to *John* 3:22, Jesus and his disciples went into the Judean countryside, where “he baptized” (*ebaptizen*). Likewise, we read at *John* 3: 26 that John the Baptist was told that Jesus was baptizing (*baptizei*) across the Jordan, and that everyone was going to him. This message seemingly is reinforced a few passages later, where Jesus learns that the Pharisees had been told that he was baptizing (*baptizei*, 4:1-2)

more disciples than John. In each of these passages, the operative term is 3rd person singular, suggesting that Jesus himself was doing the baptizing. Also included in *John* 4:1-2, however, is the parenthetical remark that “Jesus himself did not baptize, but only his disciples” (*‘Iēsous autos ouk ebaptizen all’ hoi mathētai autou*). The sense of the singular verb at 3:22 and 3:26 may be that Jesus and his disciples are treated as a single group, which as a group is engaged in baptism. These passages are discussed in more detail above.

(5.24) His Three Temptations

The setting of Jesus’ earthly mission might be viewed as a running battle with the devil. The first mention of the devil in the NT is at *Matthew* 4:1, in the context of Jesus’ three temptations. These temptations have been subject to indefinitely many interpretations, by Christians and non-Christians alike. A typical characteristic of these interpretations is that the three temptations are treated each as standing on its own, and with little attention to subsequent interactions with the devil. The interpretation that follows differs from these in reading all three together, and in attempting to relate Jesus’ initial temptations to events toward the end of his earthly mission.

According to the present interpretation, the three temptations were an effort by Satan to thwart Jesus’ mission before it began. Immediately after his baptism, by way of context, the Holy Spirit took Jesus into the wilderness, where he fasted for forty consecutive days and nights. At the end of that period, the devil came to confront him with three seemingly quite attractive offers. Had Jesus accepted the Devil’s offers, his mission would have failed before it actually got underway.

An obvious feature of the first temptation is that it was calculated to take advantage of Jesus' hunger. The tempter said to Jesus: "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become bread" (*Ei huios ei tou theou, eipe hina hoi lithoi houtoi artoi genōntai, Matthew 4:3*). Jesus responded by quoting *Deuteronomy 8:3*, which affirms: "man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God" (*ouk ep' artō monō zēsetai ho anthrōpos, all' epi panti hrēmati tō ekporeuomenō dia stomatos theou*). Readers of this passage might well be reminded of *John 21:15-17*, where the resurrected Jesus instructs Peter repeatedly to feed his sheep. Before this post-resurrection interchange, Peter had been designated the rock on which Jesus' church was founded, and presumably was as well versed as any of Jesus' followers in what "comes from the mouth of God."

For the second temptation (third in the sequence at *Luke 4:3-12*), the devil took Jesus to the pinnacle of the temple and said to him: "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down" (*Ei huios ei tou theou, bale seauton katō, Matthew 4: 6*). This time the devil himself provides context by quoting parts of *Psalms 91:11-12*, in almost the same words as the Septuagint, saying of God: "He will command his angels concerning you" (*Tois angelois autou enteleitai peri sou, Matthew 4:6*), and "on their hands they will bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone" (*epe cheirōn arousin se, mēpote proskopsēs pros lithon ton poda sou, 4:6*).

Jesus responds by quoting *Deuteronomy 6:16*, again almost verbatim: "To the contrary, it is written 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test'" (*Palin gegraptai, Ouk ekpeiraseis kurion ton theon sou, Matthew 4:7*). *Deuteronomy 6:16* goes on to explain what that means by referring to the well-known incident at Massah. This incident

in turn is explained at *Exodus* 17:5-7. Moses had struck a rock, producing water for the people to drink on their flight out of Egypt. The elders could not agree on what to make of it, questioning “whether the Lord is among us or not” (*ei estin kurios en hēmin hē ou*, *Exodus* 17:7). Moses considered this to be “testing the Lord” (*to peirazein kurion*, 17:7) and named the place “Massah and Meribah,” which translates “testing and quarreling.” The sense is that the Lord had been tested by doubts calling his support of Israel into question.

The point of Jesus’ response, in part, is that he will not cooperate with the devil in calling God’s support of his [Jesus’] wellbeing into question. But this cannot be the whole point, because the time will come when Jesus’ wellbeing in God’s care is very much in question. Jesus presumably already can foresee the occasion on which he will ask the Father to “remove this cup [his crucifixion] from me” (*parenenke to potērion touto ap’ emou*, *Mark* 14:36), and the Father will remain silent. There is another manner in which a person might be tested, however, that amounts to someone audaciously presuming another person’s support in pursuing one’s own purposes. Thus one might presume the financial support of one’s parents for a given project (say starting a business) without their express agreement. This would amount to testing one’s parents in this second, potentially more far-reaching, manner. If Jesus had thrown himself off the pinnacle, relying on the angels to save him, he would have presumed the Father’s support for purposes not the Father’s own, but rather purposes devised by Jesus in league with the devil.

Looking ahead to the days leading up to Jesus’ crucifixion, we find Peter testing the Lord in what appears to be this more egregious manner. The stage is set at *Matthew*

16:21, which has Jesus telling his disciples how he must suffer at the hands of the Jewish authorities, be killed, and then on the third day be raised from the dead. Essentially the same forewarning is recorded at *Mark* 8:31. *Mark* 8:32 stresses that Jesus “expressed this message plainly” (*parrēsia ton logon elalei*). In response, Peter took Jesus aside and began to rebuke him, saying: “Far be it from you, Lord; this will never happen to you” (*Hileōs soi, kurie` ou mē estai soi touto, Matthew* 16:22). In saying “this will never happen to you,” Peter conveys an intention to protect Jesus from physical harm. This intention becomes active later in Gethsemane, when Peter cuts off the ear of a soldier (Malcus) sent to arrest Jesus (*John* 18:10). In signaling his intention to protect Jesus by physical means, Peter presumes that God will cooperate by enabling Peter to achieve this purpose. In effect, Peter presumes that God will set aside his own purposes in making Jesus incarnate, deferring to the intention of Peter instead.

Understandably, Peter’s reponse elicited a sharp reaction from Jesus, who turned on Peter with the words: “Get behind me, Satan. You are a hindrance to me” (*Hupage opisō mou, Satana` skandalon ei emou, Matthew* 16:23). You are a hindrance, Jesus said pointedly, because “your mind is not set on things of God, but rather on things of man” (*ou phroneis ta tou theou alla ta tōn anthrōpōn, 16:23*). The same rebuke could be added to Jesus’ response to the devil’s second temptation at *Matthew* 4:7.

To implement the third temptation, the devil took Jesus “to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory” (*eis oros hupsēlon lian kai deiknusin autō pasas tas basileias tou kosmou kai tēn doxan autōn, Matthew* 4:8). The devil then promised he would give all this to Jesus if only Jesus would “fall down and worship” (*pesōn proskunēsēs, 4:9*) him. Several things should be noted about this offer

before we turn to Jesus' response. The first two temptations are hypothetical in form, beginning with the conditional "if" (*ei*). They are challenges to Jesus' status as the Son of God, daring him to prove it by performing certain miracles. This final temptation is not hypothetical. The devil takes Jesus for what he is, and tries to corrupt him with an extravagant offer of worldly goods. The major hitch, of course, is that to obtain these goods, Jesus must prostrate himself and worship the devil. Another noteworthy feature of the devil's offer is that he is depicted as having all these goods in his possession, and as being able to transfer them to someone else at will. The devil speaks as someone who already is lord of the earth (as described at *2 Corinthians* 4:4), and who wants to gain sovereignty over the Son of God as well. Yet another thing to note about the offer is that it includes not only all kingdoms on earth but all glory to be had on earth as well. If Jesus were to transfer his allegiance from God to the devil, he would gain immeasurably in the possession of earthly goods and earthly glory, but at the expense of goods laid up in heaven.

Jesus' response is an emphatic rejection of the devil's offer. "Begone, Satan" (*Hupage, Satana, Matthew* 4:10), he says; for it is written "You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve" (*Kurion ton theon sou proskunēseis kai autō monō latreuseis, 4:10*). This is close to the wording of *Deuteronomy* 6:13 in the Septuagint, save that the latter has *phobēthēsē* (fear) instead of *proskunēseis* (worship). *Deuteronomy* 6:14 continues with: "You shall not go after other gods ... of the nations round about you" (*Ou poreusesthe opisō theōn heterōn ... tōn ethnōn tōn perikuklō humōn*). Given Satan's lordship over all the earth, these other deities would count as the devil's helpers in the context of Jesus' third temptation.

After Jesus' command "Begone, Satan," the devil left him. And angels came to minister to him. Apart from occasional mention during the interim, the devil's next appearance as featured actor is in the context of Jesus' betrayal.

(5.25) Building His Church

Although the book of *John* has relatively little to say about Jesus' baptism as such, it tells us more than the other Gospels about the mission into which Jesus is being baptized. At *John* 1:29, we hear that John (the Baptist) called out, just before Jesus was baptized: "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (*Ide ho amnos tou theou ho airōn tēn hamartian tou kosmou*). Jesus' mission was to take away the sin of the world.

His mission had two major components. One component was to relieve humankind from the burden of Adam's primeval transgression. This was accomplished by the sacrifice of the Unblemished Lamb on the cross. Relief from original sin restored access to the Tree of Life that had been sealed off when Adam and Eve were expelled from Paradise. Christ's crucifixion reopened the gateway to eternal life.

Renewed access to eternal life, however, does not guarantee success in reaching that end. Help is required along the way. The second major component of Jesus' mission was to realign the relation between God and humankind. This realignment resulted in a new covenant, in the context of which the needed help could be provided. The New Covenant was established as a means of assisting the individual believer in his or her journey toward eternal life.

The New Covenant brings the individual believer into a community of fellow believers who assist each other in the course of the journey. By the time of Christ's death, various communities of this sort had already begun to take shape. Collectively, these communities would soon come to be recognized as Christ's church. The New Covenant and Christ's church go hand in hand. Without the Church, the New Covenant could not be implemented. Without the New Covenant, the Church would lack purpose and clear identity.

According to the author of *John*, Jesus began to form his church on the day after his baptism. John the Baptist was standing with two of his disciples when Jesus walked by. Within earshot of his disciples, John said: "Behold, the Lamb of God" (*Ide ho amnos tou theou, John 1:36*). Upon hearing this, the two disciples left John and followed Jesus to the place he was staying. One of these was Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter. Andrew told his brother that they had found Christ the Messiah.

Upon meeting Peter, the author continues, Jesus said: "You are Simon the son of John. You shall be called Cephas" (*Su ei Simōn ho huios 'Iōannou, su klēthēsē Kēphas, 1:42*), a name, the author adds, "that means Peter" (*ho hermēneuetai Petros*). What the author is saying, in effect, is that Jesus tells Peter, whose name *Petros* means rock in Greek, that he will henceforth will be known as *Cephas*, which means rock in Aramaic. This anticipates Jesus' later declaration to Peter: "you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church" (*su ei Petros, kai epi tautē tē petra oikodomēsō mou tēn ekklēsian, Matthew 16:18*).

With the rock that is Peter in place, Jesus began to assemble other parts of his church. Although preaching clearly was involved, the work of assemblage consisted

largely of miraculous healing, not only by Jesus but by his disciples as well. The Synoptic Gospels all tell of Jesus dispatching his twelve disciples on missions of healing. According to *Matthew* 10:1, he called them and “gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every disease and every weakness” (*edōken autois exousian pneumatōn akathartōn hōste ekballein auta kai therapeuein pasan noson kai pasan malakian*). *Mark* 6:7 adds that the disciples were “sent out two by two” (*apostellein duo duo*), repeating that Jesus gave them authority over unclean spirits. *Luke* 9:1 puts it in somewhat different terms, saying the disciples were given “power and authority over all demons and [power] to cure diseases” (*dunamin kai exousian epi panta ta daimonia kai nosous therapeuein*).

Luke 10:1 reports a further step in Jesus’ church-building efforts, involving seventy-two followers (6 times the original 12) other than the disciples. Jesus sent these others before him, in pairs, to places he planned to visit. When two of these come to a town that would receive them, they were to “heal the sick in it and tell them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near you’” (*therapeuete tous en autē astheneis kai legete autois, Hngiken eph’ humas hē basileia tou theou*, 10:9). When the seventy-two returned, they reported: “Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name” (*Kurie, kai ta daimonia hupotassetai hēmin en tō onomati sou*, 10:17). In the cases both of the twelve disciples and of the seventy-two others, miraculous healings fueled the growth of Jesus’ Church.

In the book of *Acts*, well over a dozen miraculous healings are attributed to several of the apostles by name. Most frequently cited are Peter and Paul. One dramatic case involving Peter is recorded in *Acts* 5:15-16. Crowds of believers would assemble in

Solomon's Portico, taking their sick to places in the street where Peter's shadow might fall when he passed by. According to the report, "all these were healed" (*hoitines etherapeuonto hapantes*, 5:16). Because of Peter's healing, we are told at 5:14, "more believers than ever were added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women" (*mallon de prosetithento pisteuontes tō kuriō, plēthē andrōn te kai gunaikōn*). Other miraculous healings are attributed to Peter in *Acts* 3:7, 9:34, and 9:40.

An even more remarkable manner of healing is ascribed to Paul in *Acts* 19: 11-12. Speaking of Paul, the author tells us: "that even kerchiefs and aprons that had touched his skin were carried away to the sick; and their diseases left them and the evil spirits came out of them" (*hōste kai epi tous asthenountas apopheresthai apo tou chrōtos autou soudaria ē simikinthia kai apallassesthai ap' autōn tas nosous, ta te pneumata ta ponēra ekporeuesthai*, 19:12). Other healings attributed to Paul are cited in *Acts* 14:8-10, 20:9-12, and 28:7-9. As a result of such acts, the author informs us, "the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed" (*kratos tou kuriou ho logos ēuxanen kai ischuen*, 19:20).

Other wonderful acts are attributed to Stephen in *Acts* 6:8, to Philip in 8:6-7, to Ananias in 9:17-18, and to John and Peter jointly in 3:11 and 8:14-17. With contributions like these from several quarters, "the churches were strengthened in the faith, and they increased in numbers daily" (*hai ... ekklēsiai estereounto tē pistei kai eperisseuon tō arithmō kath' hēmeran*, 16:5). As Jesus initiated his mission with the miracle at Cana, so the apostles initiated his church with miracles like those just recounted.

The NT prominently employs two metaphors for the burgeoning church in its early phases. One, introduced by Jesus himself, is that of a building undergoing construction. In *Matthew* 16:18, Jesus says to Peter: "you are Peter, and on this rock I

will build my church” (Greek above). By quoting *Psalm* 118:22 at *Matthew* 21:42, furthermore, Jesus depicts himself as part of the building. *Psalm* 118:22 reads: “The stone that the builders rejected has become the corner stone” (*Lithon hon apedokimasan hoi oikodomountes houtos egenēthē eis kephalēn gōnias*). The same passage is quoted verbatim at *1 Peter* 2:7, following the author’s introduction of the image as that of a “living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious” (*lithon zōnta hupo anthrōpōn men apodedokimasmēnon para de theō eklekton entimon*, 2:4).

Paul takes up the image in his first letter to the Corinthians, although the way he handles it is puzzling. After describing himself at *1 Corinthians* 3:10 as a “skilled master builder [who] laid a foundation” (*sophos architektōn themelion ethēka*) for other workers to build on, he goes on in the next verse to claim that Jesus Christ is the only foundation a builder could lay {for the emerging church}. The seeming implication is that Paul, the master builder, laid Jesus Christ as a foundation. This borders on incoherence. The confusion is compounded at *Ephesians* 2:20 by Paul’s remarks about Jesus’ part in the structure of the church (*oikeioi tou theou*, “household of God,” 2:19). Here the foundation is not Jesus by himself, but rather “the apostles and prophets” (*tōn apostolōn kai prophētōn*, 2:20), whereas Jesus is the cornerstone (*akrogōniaiou*, 2:20) rather than the entire foundation. Regardless of the shifting imagery, however, the sense of these passages is reasonably clear. In Paul’s view, Jesus Christ is the structural basis of the emerging church.

The second metaphor of note portrays the church as the body of Christ. Unlike the first metaphor of a building under construction, which also appears in the Gospels, this second image is confined to the letters of Paul. It has application beyond the early church

as well, being applicable to the church in its later stages of development. The theme is struck in *Romans* 12:5, where Paul says to his audience of believers: “So we, though many, are one body in Christ” (*houtōs hoi polloi hen sōma esmen en Christō*).

In *1 Corinthians* 12:13, Paul notes that this body is formed by all its members being “baptized in one Spirit” (*en heni pneumati ... ebaptisthēmen*), and adds that the body includes “Jews or Greeks, slaves or free” (*’Ioudaioi eite Hellēnes eite douloi eite eleutheroi*) alike. *Ephesians* 3.6 assures his Gentile audience that they too are “united in one body” (*sussōma*), while *Ephesians* 5:23 goes on to identify this body as “the church [of which] Christ is the head” (*ho Christos kephalē tēs ekklēsias*). *Colossians* 1:18 concurs by affirming that Christ “is the head of the body, [namely] the church” (*estin hē kephalē tou sōmatos tēs ekklēsias*).

Other passages in Paul’s writings highlight various roles the Church plays in the lives of its members. One such role is cited in the first chapter of *Romans*, where Paul is speaking to “all those in Rome who are loved by God” (*pasin tois ousin en Hrōmē agapētois theou*, 1:7). Paul longs to be with these people, he says at 1:12, so that “we may be mutually encouraged by each other’s faith, both yours and mine” (*touto de estin sumparaklēthēnai en humin dia tēs en allēlois pisteōs humin te kai emou*). One’s own faith, he seems to be saying, is nourished by the faith of one’s companions in the church.

The company of other believers might have a disciplinary influence as well. Paul’s views in this regard show varying degrees of harshness. *Colossians* 3:16 is relatively moderate in recommending “teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom” (*en pasē sophia didaskontes kai nouthetountes heautous*). Paul’s instructions are more severe in *1 Timothy*, chapter 5, which deals with rebuke within the church. After

carefully narrowing down the class of widows who deserve help, he urges restraint in judging elders who have been accused of wrongdoing. As for those who persist in sin, however, “rebuke them in the presence of all, so that the rest may stand in fear” (*enōpion pantōn elenche, hina kai hoi loipoi phobon echōsin*, 5:20). According to *1 Timothy* 1:20, an especially harsh form of rebuke was exercised by Paul himself. By deviating from faith and good conscience, Paul charges, some have brought shipwreck to their faith. Among these, he says, are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom he has “turned over to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme” (*paredōka tō Satana, hina paideuthōsin mē blasphemēin*).

Paul’s views on the disciplinary role of the church, nonetheless, seem generally in accord with Jesus’ advice on resolving grievances expressed in *Matthew* 18:15-17. If your brother sins against you, Jesus says, you first should confront him with the fault in private. If that fails, the next step is to bring one or two others with you as witnesses. The next step is to “tell it to the church” (*eipe tē ekklēsia*, 18:17). If the wrongdoer remains unrepentant before the church, your final recourse is to treat him as you would “a Gentile and a tax collector” (*ho ethnikos kai ho telōnēs*, 18:17). At this point in Jesus’ ministry, if this report in *Matthew* deserves credit, being a Gentile or tax collector apparently was equivalent to being excluded from the fold.

Regardless of problems encountered in its early stages, the church provided an indispensable connection between God and individual believers. Immediately after his remarks about Gentiles and tax collectors, Jesus tells his disciples that if two of them agree in a request “it will be done for them by my Father in heaven” (*genēsetai autois para tou patros mou en ouranois*, *Matthew* 18:19). “For where two or three are gathered

in my name, I am there among them” (*hou gar eisin duo ē treis sunēgmenoi eis to emon onoma, ekei eimi en mesō autōn*, 18:20).

(5.26) Instituting the Lord’s Supper

The Old Covenant was terminated by Christ’s death on the cross. The New Covenant began at some unspecified time after his resurrection. In the brief period between his death and his resurrection, apparently, no covenant between God and humankind was in effect.

While the New Covenant did not begin until after his resurrection, however, the groundwork for this new contract between God and humanity was laid during Christ’s last meal with his disciples. On the occasion of this last meal, Jesus instituted the practice generally known as the Last Supper (or Eucharist). The Last Supper is an enactment by which believers share in Christ’s death on the cross. We should re-examine what this means and why it is so.

Accounts of the words and actions by which Jesus instituted the Lord’s Supper are found in each of the three Synoptic Gospels and in Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians. Paul’s account is most complete. According to this account, “the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and giving thanks broke it” (11:23-24, Greek above). Jesus then said: “This is my body which is for you. Do this in memory of me” (11:24, Greek above). After this, according to Paul, Jesus took the cup in the same way, saying: “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me” (11:25, Greek above). Christ then exclaims: “For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes” (11:26,

Greek above). This last passage clearly implies that the acts of eating the bread and drinking the cup can occur many times into the indefinite future, at least “until the Lord comes.”

This passage also states that eating the bread and drinking the cup are proclamations of the Lord’s death. To proclaim an event is to announce its occurrence. Since Jesus was still alive on the occasion of the last supper, eating the bread and drinking the cup on that particular occasion could not have been a proclamation of his death. When the disciples ate the bread and drank the cup offered by Jesus on that occasion, they were not proclaiming a death that had not yet occurred. Nor were they ingesting bread and wine that was equivalent in any way to Christ’s body and blood on the cross. This is because their eating and drinking on that singular occasion was not an enactment of the Lord’s Supper. It was instead part of a demonstration of how the Lord’s Supper should be enacted after Jesus’ death.

This has implications for Jesus’ involvement in the demonstration as well. In demonstrating the protocols of the Last Supper to his disciples, Jesus was not enacting those protocols himself. He rather was showing his disciples how to consecrate the bread and wine, and explaining to them the significance of that enactment. On this occasion, Jesus was instituting the Lord’s Supper, which is quite different from actually engaging in it. As argued previously, there is no explicit record of Jesus enacting the Lord’s Supper himself at any time in the NT.

Enactment of the Lord’s Supper involves two distinct procedures. One is consecrating the bread and wine. The other is partaking of these consecrated elements. Different branches of the Church have developed different procedures of consecration.

This is a consequence in part of there being no unambiguous illustrations of the consecration procedure in the NT. As far as the New Covenant itself is concerned, however, the manner in which bread and wine are consecrated seems secondary in importance. More important is the significance of partaking of the consecrated elements.

Partaking of the consecrated bread and wine is tantamount to participating in the body and blood of the crucified Christ. The language of participation figures in the description of the consecrated elements found in *1 Corinthians* 10:16. Here Paul asks, of “the cup of blessing that we bless” (*to potērion tēs eulogias ho eulougoumen*), whether it is not a participation (*koinōnia*) in the blood of Christ. He then asks similarly, of “the bread that we break” (*ton arton hon klōmen*), whether it is not a participation (*koinōnia*) in the body of Christ. The term *koinōneō*, of course, is often translated “to share” in English, and is commonly used by Plato to express the participation in Forms by sensible things.

In partaking of the consecrated bread and wine, the individual believer shares in the body and blood of Christ on the cross. The manner of sharing involves a relation between consecrated elements and Christ’s body and blood that is not unlike the relation of sensible objects to Platonic Forms in which they participate. In the case of a particular object that participates in the Form Red, for example, the object takes on the property red and hence becomes an instance of that specific Form. The object, we say, instantiates the Form. The consecrated bread and wine of the Eucharist, similarly, instantiate Christ’s body and blood on the cross. In this analogy, the red object corresponds to the bread and wine, and the Form Red corresponds to the body and blood of the crucified Christ.

One problem with the analogy as it stands, however, is that the Platonic Form Red is an abstract entity, whereas Christ’s body and blood on the cross are components of a

particular set of circumstances. Christ's body and the blood it shed on the cross were no less concrete than an apple that participates in the Form Red. A closely related problem has to do with spatial and temporal location. Christ's crucifixion was a single event in space and time, which imparted spatial and temporal properties to the body and blood involved. A consequence is that the bread and wine of the Eucharist cannot instantiate Christ's body and blood on the cross in the same way that a red apple instantiates the Platonic Form Red.

The Platonic analogy can be reinforced by distinguishing between Christ's actual death and its enduring significance. Compare the American declaration of independence from England on July 4, 1776, and our annual celebration of the Declaration of Independence (capital letters). Americans shoot off fireworks, stage parades, and have family picnics every 4th of July, in commemoration of the Declaration of Independence. Typically we do this with no thought whatever of the document signed originally by the Second Continental Congress (actually on July 2, 1776). What we commemorate is the document's significance, rather than the document itself. Similarly, what Christians commemorate by partaking of consecrated bread and wine is the significance of Christ's death on the cross, rather than the actual event itself (the exact date of which remains unknown). This is in line with *1 Corinthians* 11:26, quoted above, in which Christ tells his disciples: "as often as you you eat this beads and drink this cup, you proclaim (*katangellete*) the Lord's death until he comes" (Greek above). The term *katangellō* in this passage is sometimes translated "commemorate."

Christ's actual death on the cross was an event in space and time. Like Plato's Forms, however, the significance of his death has neither spatial nor temporal

dimensions. Given the obvious intent of *1 Corinthians* 11:26, it could not be otherwise. What this passage says, in effect, is that you engage the significance of Christ's death when you partake of the consecrated elements, no matter where or when that happens. In the context of the Lord's Supper, the body and blood of the crucified Christ have meaning on two different levels. There is the actual body on the cross and the actual blood shed during the crucifixion. Here the body and blood have both spatial and temporal dimensions. And then there is the atemporal significance of the body and blood of Christ on the cross in which a person might share by partaking of the elements of the Lord's Supper.

Let us count the several forms the body of Christ takes in the NT passages dealing with the institution of the Lord's Supper. First and fully obvious is the body(1) of Jesus seated at the table with the twelve disciples. The hands of this body offer the bread and wine to the disciples, and its mouth pronounces the words with which the practice of the Lord's Supper is inaugurated. Second, and equally obvious, is the body(2) that hung on the cross during that fateful morning on Golgatha. The hands and feet of this body were nailed to the cross, and a flow of blood and water issued from the gash in its side. These two were different forms of the same human body, one marked by physical health and the other by impending death.

Third is the body(3) implicated in the significance of the physical body on the cross. The significance of the physical body lies in the circumstances of its dying. The death of this physical body marks the end of the Old Covenant between God and the Israelites. In its role of unblemished lamb, death of this body completes the sacrifice by which the sins of Adam are forgiven. Death of this body also prepares humanity for

entry into the New Covenant. The significance of these happenings, and of what they entail, constitute Christ's body(3). Body(3) is a consequence of dying body(2).

Like Plato's Forms, the significance of Christ's death is temporally unlimited. Being thus eternal, it is capable of being instantiated by multiple enactments of the Lord's Supper in space and time. Put otherwise, body(3) is such as to impart significance to multiple instances of consecrated bread. Thus instantiated, body(3) is able to sustain multitudes of Christians in their journey toward eternal life.

The fourth form taken by Christ's body under the New Covenant is that of the consecrated bread of the Lord's Supper. This body(4) is what Jesus was referring to in *Matthew 26:26*, when he said of the bread in his hand: "Take, eat, this is my body" (Greek above). Christ's body, in the form of bread consecrated in the context of the Eucharist, takes on its bodily identity by participating in the significance of his death on the cross. Body(4), that is to say, becomes what it is by participating in body(3). By thus participating, the consecrated body(4) becomes an instance of Christ's eternal body on the cross. Because of this participation, and the identity it produces, partaking of body(4) constitutes a sharing in the travails of Christ's crucifixion.

Yet another form of Christ's body, not directly involved in the Lord's Supper, is that designated by Paul in *Romans 12:5*. In this passage, Paul says to an audience of fellow believers: "So we, though many, are one body in Christ" (Greek above). This metaphor of the Church as Christ's body is repeated in *Colossians 1:18*, which depicts Christ as "the head of the body, [namely] the church" (*hē kephalē tou sōmatos tēs ekklēsiās*). The body metaphorically identified with the church is the fifth form of Christ's body found in the NT.

The metaphor of body(5) invites extension by combining it with the previous four bodies. Members of body(5) are members of Christ's church, who regularly engage in the Lord's Supper (according to a common interpretation of *1 Corinthians* 11:33). Whenever members of the church partake of the consecrated bread and wine, Christ's body(5) shares in the significant sacrifice of body(3) on the cross. By this sharing, body(5) becomes a communal instantiation of body(3) in space and time. This happens whenever an individual member of body(5), acting as a representative of the community at large, partakes of consecrated bread and wine.

Members of body(5) partake of consecrated elements again and again as time progresses. This means that body(3), while itself timeless and eternal, is repeatedly being instantiated through time. Body(5) is continually present, albeit with changing membership, to exhibit the significance inherent in body(3). Christ's body(2) was crucified only once, and accordingly belongs to the past. But the significance of that crucified body is continually present in the communal practices of body(5). That significance is continually reinstated in the practice of the Eucharist that was instituted by Christ as the basis of the New Covenant between God and humankind.

In this manner, through repeated participation in body(3), Christ's metaphorical body(5) shares in the sacrifice to which its individual members owe their redemption from Adam's sin.

(5.27) His Betrayal

The betrayal of Jesus by Judas Iscariot is treated in all four Gospels. With the exception of *Mark*, each tells us something in this regard not found in the others. *Matthew* 10:4,

Mark 3:19, and *Luke* 6:16 list Judas Iscariot as one of the original twelve disciples. *John* 6:64 points out that “Jesus knew from the beginning who those were who did not believe, and who it was that would betray him “ (*ex archēs ho 'Iēsous tines eisin hoi mē pisteuontes kai tis estin ho paradōsōn auton*). This in itself suggests that Judas played an essential role in Jesus’ earthly mission.

Prior to the betrayal, Judas’ distinctive role among the disciples was that of money-keeper (*John* 13:29). He would buy food when necessary, and sometimes distribute alms to the poor. Judas was present at the dinner given for Jesus by Martha and Mary, sisters of Lazarus. When Mary anointed Jesus’ feet with fragrant ointment, and wiped them with her hair, Judas deceitfully objected, asking: “Why was this ointment not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?” (*Dia ti touto to muron ouk eprathē triakosiōn dēnariōn kai edothē ptōchois;*, *John* 12:5). The author of *John* goes on to say that Judas did not really care about the poor, but that he was a thief (*kleptēs*) and “as keeper of the moneybag, he would pilfer what was put in it” (*to glōssokomon echōn ta ballomena ebastazen*, 12:6).

In *Matthew* 6:24, Jesus is quoted as saying “You cannot serve god and mammon” (*ou dunasthe theō douleuein kai mamōna*). Mammon is sometimes personified as a Syrian god of material wealth. Jesus had experience to back up this saying, having rejected mammon in response to the devil’s third temptation. In Jesus’ response to this temptation, quoted at *Matthew* 4:10, he cites *Deuteronomy* 6:13 to the effect that you shall serve only the Lord your God. Judas, however, is clearly someone committed to serving Mammon instead. In the context of Jesus’ betrayal, Judas represents commitment to material goods. With Judas on the scene, the devil is ready to try again.

Scripture leaves it unclear when Satan entered Judas. According to *Luke* 22:3-4, it was before Judas contacted the Jewish officials with his offer of betrayal. According to *John* 13:27, it was after Jesus had indicated that Judas was the betrayer by giving him a bit of moist bread. *John* 6:70-71 conveys a different impression, with its account of Jesus referring to Judas explicitly as a devil when speaking to the disciples before the Feast of Booths. The timing of Judas' possession by the devil, however, makes little apparent difference as far as the overall story is concerned. It remains the case that the Judas who betrayed Jesus in the garden was a personification of the devil himself.

All four Gospels contain accounts of the betrayal. Each account has Jesus praying in the garden before Judas and the soldiers arrive. In *Matthew*, *Mark*, and *Luke*, Jesus prays that he might be spared the forthcoming agony, but only if the Father wills it. The phrasing at *Luke* 22:42 is typical: "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me; nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done" (*Pater, ei boulei parenenke touto to potērion ap' emou' plēn mē to thelēma mou alla to son ginesthō*). The gist of the prayer in chapter 17 of *John* is different. First Jesus prays that his forthcoming death may glorify the Father, and asks the Father to glorify him with the power to accomplish this (17:1). Then, turning in thought to his disciples, he prays "that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves" (*hina echōsin tēn charan tēn emēn peplērōmenēn en heautois*, 17:13). The prayer then is extended to include those who come to believe in him through the words of his disciples (17:20). In the final line of the prayer, Jesus petitions the Father in behalf of all who follow him, asking: "that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them" (*hina hē agapē hēn ēgapēsas me en autois ē kagō en autois*, 17:26). While

Jesus' prayer in the other three Gospels concerns his own predicament, the prayer in *John* is focused on his followers instead.

After the prayer, a crowd of soldiers led by Judas burst into the garden, sent by the chief priests and elders to capture Jesus. Judas identified Jesus with a kiss, whereupon the soldiers seized him. In a mindless attempt to save Jesus, Peter cut off an ear from one of the soldiers. Jesus replaced the ear (*Luke 22:51*) and reprimanded Peter, saying that his Father could send down more than twelve legions of angels to protect him upon request (*Matthew 26:53*). But his death was necessary, said Jesus (*Matthew 26:54*), to fulfill the scriptures. Among these scriptures, clearly, are several verses of *Psalms 22*, including: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (*Ho theos ho theos mou ... hina ti enkatelipes me;*, 22:1), "a company of evildoers have pierced my hands and feet" (*sunagōgē ponēreuomenōn perieschon me ōruxan cheiras mou kai podas*, 22:16), and "They divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots" (*diemerisanto ta himatia mou heautois kai epi ton himatismōn mou ebalon klēron*, 22:18). With Jesus in custody, "all the disciples left him and fled" (*hoi mathētai pantes aphentes auton ephugon*, *Matthew 26:56*).

Matthew and *Acts* both offer accounts of what happened to Judas afterwards. The account in *Acts* (1:18-19) says something about Judas acquiring a field, but is largely incoherent otherwise. The account in *Matthew*, however, is both coherent and informative. When Judas realized that Jesus had been condemned, he regretted what had happened, and brought the thirty pieces of silver back to the chief priests and elders, saying: "I have betrayed innocent blood" (*paradous haima athōon*, *Matthew 27:4*). They replied: "What is that to us? See to it yourself" (*Ti pros hēmas; su opsē*, 27:4). Judas then

threw the silver into the temple, and went off to hang himself (*apēnxato*, 27:5). Deeming the silver bloodmoney, not fit for the temple treasury, the officials used it to acquire the potter's field (*tou kerameōs*, 27:7) as a burial ground for strangers. The narrator of the story interprets this (very loosely) as fulfillment of *Zechariah* 11:13 (not *Jeremiah* as stated, 27:9), a verse in which Zechariah refers ironically to his being being paid thirty pieces of silver for his services by certain sheep traders, a price so ridiculously low that he cast the silver into a smelting furnace (*chōneutērion*, *Jechariah* 11:13) in the house of the Lord. There is no apparent connection between the potter's field at *Matthew* 27:7, a plot of ground in Jerusalem, and the melting pot at *Jechariah* 11:13.

Judas' role in Jesus' betrayal has prompted interpretations ranging from pity to admiration. Some commiserate with Judas for being the person designated to do the work of the devil. Pity of this sort should be blunted by the realization that Jesus recognized Judas as a villain from the beginning (*John* 6:64). Among early Gnostics, on the other hand, there were some who venerated Judas as someone who contributed to the redemption of humankind by helping to bring about Jesus' death on the cross. Apart from other problems of Gnosticism, this view should be tempered by the realization that Judas was acting in this role as the devil's agent.

Yet another attitude toward Judas is to wonder why he was part of the redemption story in the first place. The Jewish authorities had made several previous attempts to capture Jesus, such as the attempt following his healing of the man with the withered hand (*Matthew* 12:10-14, et al.) and that following his healing of the man with dropsy (*Luke* 14:1-6). If one or another of those attempts had succeeded, there would have been no occasion for the betrayal effected by Judas in the Garden of Gethsemane. In view of

these previous opportunities to capture Jesus, the question arises why a character like Judas was part of the salvation story in the first place.

An appropriate response to this question, it would seem, is that the question itself is misleading. The role Judas fills in the salvation story is not one to be enacted by a specific human person as such. Rather, the role is that of someone who has been possessed by the devil. The devil assumes the guise of a human person in order to effectuate the capture of Jesus by the Jewish authorities. The principle players are not Jesus and a former disciple, but rather Jesus and the devil himself. The betrayer of Jesus is none other than the one who tempted him after forty days in the desert.

In the third temptation, Satan tried to forestall Jesus' mission by making Jesus his subject. Satan now returns to thwart Jesus' mission by prompting his death. As lord of earthly affairs (*2 Corinthians 4:4*), the devil may not have fully understood the purposes of heaven. By succeeding in having Jesus killed, Satan triggers the events that bring Jesus' mission to completion. There is a sense in which the redemption of humankind from Adam's sin freed humanity from Satan's grip. In the heavenly scheme of things, this constitutes a victory over Satan. With Jesus' death on the cross, Satan is outfoxed. In effect, the very success of Satan's earthly purpose, which was to have Jesus killed, contributed essentially to the heavenly purpose of achieving Satan's defeat.

In *Matthew's* account of Jesus' final words to his disciples, spoken immediately before his capture by the Jewish authorities, Jesus said: "See, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Arise, we should go; see, my betrayer is at hand" (*idou ēngiken hē hōra kai ho huios tou anthrōpou paradidotai eis cheiras hamartōlōn. egeiresthe agōmen idou ēngiken ho paradidous me, Matthew 26:45-46*). As

if by freestanding bookends, Jesus' mission on earth is bracketed by crucial encounters (the three temptations and the betrayal) with the acknowledged lord of earthly affairs.

(5.28) His Trial

At daybreak, Jesus was bought before the council of the elders and high priests. They said to him: "If you are the Christ, tell us" (*Ei su ei ho Christos, eipon hēmin, Luke 22:67*). Jesus' answer was evasive, but included the claim that "the Son of Man" (*ho huios tou anthrōpou, 22:69*) henceforth will be seated at the right hand of God. In outrage, the Jews then asked "Are you then the Son of God?" (*Su oun ei ho huios tou theou, 22:70*), to which Jesus responded simply: "You say that I am" (*Humeis legeite hoti egō eimi, 22:70*). Taking this as evidence sufficient for his death, they sent him to the headquarters of Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor.

According to the identical accounts of *Matthew, Mark, and Luke*, Jesus spoke only two words in response to Pilate's questions. Pilate asked Jesus: "Are you the King of the Jews?" (*Su ei ho basileus tōn 'Ioudaiōn;*, *Matthew 27:11, Mark 15:2, Luke 23:3*). And without answering Pilate's question directly, Jesus merely stated: "You say I am" (*Su legeis*). Pilate asked Jesus whether he was aware of the many charges the Jews had brought against him, and was amazed when Jesus gave no answer (*Matthew 27:13-14*). Perhaps impatiently, Pilate then said to the chief priests and the crowds outside: "I find no guilt in this man" (*Ouden heuriskō aition en tō anthrōpō toutō, Luke 23:4*).

A more widely quoted version of this episode is found in the book of *John*. In this version, Jesus answered Pilate's question whether he is a king with a brief disquisition on truth, saying he was born into this world "to give witness to the truth" (*hina marturēsō tē*

alētheia, John 18:37) and that “everyone aligned with the truth listens to my voice” (*pas ho ōn ek tēs alētheias akouei mou tēs phōnēs*, 18:37). The worldly Pilate then posed his famous question, “What is truth?” (*Ti estin alētheia;*, 18:38), and reported his verdict to the crowd that Jesus was not guilty.

But the Jews were not satisfied. It was the morning before the Feast of the Passover (*John* 18:28), and on that occasion Pilate was accustomed to releasing a prisoner chosen by the Jews (*Matthew* 27:15). Realizing that the Jewish authorities had brought Jesus before him because they jealous of Jesus’ power (27:18), Pilate wanted to give Jesus the benefit of the doubt. He sought to swing the odds in Jesus’ favor by offering an alternative prisoner for release whom he thought the Jews would not accept. Whom do you want me to release, Pilate asked, the (innocent) “Jesus who is called Christ” (*’Iēsoun ton legomenon Christon*, 27:17), or the (dangerous) robber Barabbas (*John* 18:40) instead? Contrary to Pilate’s hopes, the Jewish leaders stirred up the crowd to insist that Barabbas be released (*Mark* 15:11). Pilate asked: “Then what shall I do with this man you call the king of the Jews?” (*Ti oun [thelete] poiēsō [hon legete] ton basilea tōn ’Ioudaiōn;*, *Mark* 15:12). The crowd shouted: “Crucify him” (*Staurōson auton*, 15:13). “But why?,” Pilate said defensively; “What evil has he done?” (*Ti gar epoiēsen kakon ;*, 15:14). The crowd shouted even louder: “Crucify him” (*Staurōson auton*, 15:14).

So Pilate, “wishing to satisfy the crowd” (*boulomenos tō ochlō to hikanon poiēsai*, *Mark* 15:15), released Barabbas. He then had Jesus scourged, as seemingly required by Roman law, and turned him over to the soldiers to be crucified.

(5.29) His Crucifixion

All four Gospels identify the site of the crucifixion as Golgotha, Aramaic for “Place of the Skull” (*John* 19:17). All four agree also that Jesus was crucified with two criminals, that the soldiers cast lots for his garments, and that there was an inscription on Jesus’ cross labeling him “The King of the Jews” (*Ho basileus tōn ’Ioudaiōn*, *Mark* 15:26). Regarding the latter, *John* 19:19-22 goes further in saying that Pilate was responsible for the inscription, and that when the chief priests challenged him on it, Pilate responded “What I have written I have written” (*Ho gegrapha, gegrapha*, 19:22).

The Synoptic Gospels (*Matthew*, *Mark*, and *Luke*) agree on a comparable range of details. One such is that Simon of Cyrene was commandeered to carry Jesus’ cross to Golgotha. Jesus was weak from scourging and probably unable to carry it himself (contrary to *John* 19:17). Another point of agreement is that these three Gospels all cite certain remarkable events that occurred when Jesus died. All three (*Matthew* 27:51, *Mark* 15:38, and *Luke* 23:45) report that the curtain of the temple was torn in two, *Mark* 15:33 and *Luke* 23:45 record a “darkness over the whole land” (*eph’ holēn tēn gēn*, *Mark* 15:33) several hours before his actual death, and *Matthew* 27:51-52 speaks additionally of quaking ground and opening graves. Inherently less credible is the further claim at *Matthew* 27:52-53 that bodies of holy people came out of these graves and appeared after his resurrection in Jerusalem. Reports of earthquakes, black skies, and torn temple curtains, nonetheless, are enough to establish that chaos reigned at the hour when Jesus died.

A comparably substantial concurrence is that the Synoptic Gospels all record the reaction of the Roman centurion to Jesus’ death. The centurion in question, presumably,

was commander of the soldiers who carried out the execution. According to *Matthew* 27:54, when the centurion witnessed the earthquakes and dark skies, he was filled with awe and said: “Truly this was the Son of God” (*Alēthōs theou huios ēn houtos*). The same words (with *hō anthrōpos* added) are ascribed to the centurion at *Mark* 15:39. A slightly different account is given at *Luke* 23:47, which has the centurion praising God and saying: “Certainly this was a righteous man” (*Ontōs ho anthrōpos houtos dikaios ēn*).

There is less agreement about the words ascribed to Jesus himself during his final hours. Particularly surprising is the extended discourse attributed to him at *Luke* 23:28-31. By this account, Jesus was on his way to Golgotha, accompanied by Simon who was carrying his cross. At some point, Jesus paused, turned to the crowd following him, and advised the women to weep, not for him, but “for yourselves and your children” (*eph’ heautas ... kai epi ta tekna humōn*, 23:28); for days are coming when they will say “Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bore, and the breasts that never nursed” (*Makariai hai steirai kai hai koiliai hai ouk egennēsan kai mastoi hoi ouk ethrepsan*, 23:29). Jesus’ lamentation for the women continued with a quotation from *Hosea* 10:8: “they will say to the mountains, ‘Fall on us’, and to the hills, ‘Cover us’” (*legein tois oresin, Pesete eph’ hēmas, kai tois bounois, Kalupsate hēmas*, 23:30).

Given that Jesus had been viciously scourged moments before, and was too weak to carry his own cross, it seems entirely unlikely that he would have been capable of such a speech. The scourging itself may have come close to killing him. More credible in that regard are the accounts of the other three Gospels, which have Jesus remaining silent all the way to Golgotha.

According to the Synoptic Gospels, Jesus died at 3:00 in the afternoon (the ninth hour), after at least three hour on the cross. *Matthew* 27:46 and *Mark* 15:34 record his last words as “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (*Ho theos mou ho theos mou, eis ti enkatelipes me; , Mark 15:34*). In the timeline of *Matthew* and *Mark*, these are the only words Jesus spoke between his scourging and his death.

As already suggested, the dying Jesus is more voluble in the account of *Luke*. After his voluminous remarks to the women about whom to weep for, and after actually being hung on the cross, he engages in conversation with the two criminals on the crosses nearby. With sarcasm unlikely from a dying man, one criminal challenged Jesus to save all three of them as the self-proclaimed Christ. The other criminal rebuked the first, saying that they were dying justly, whereas Jesus had done no wrong. The second then said: “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom” (*‘Iēsou, mnēsthēti mou hotan elthēs eis tēn basileian sou, 23:42*). Jesus responded: “Verily I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise” (*‘Amēn soi legō, sēmeron met’ emou esē en tō paradeisō, 23:43*).

Several things are notable about this interchange. One is that this use of the OT term *paradeisō* is its only appearance in the Gospels, suggesting that the author of *Luke* connected Jesus’ death (plausibly) with the Garden of Eden. Another is the theologically dubious implication that Jesus is headed to Paradise innmediately after death, from where supposedly he would have to return two nights later for bodily resurrection. Yet another is that men undergoing the agonizing pain of crucifixion are depicted as capable of rational communication.

The Gospel of *John* also attributes coherent discourse to the dying Jesus, but with quite different content. Although the disciples had all fled when he was captured (*Matthew* 26:56), Jesus saw the “disciple he loved” (*ton mathētēn ... hon ēgapa, John* 19:26) standing near the cross, along with his mother and two other Marys. Looking at the disciple, Jesus said to his mother: “Woman, behold your son” (*Gunai, ide ho huios sou, 19:26*). Then he said to the disciple: “Behold your mother” (*Ide hē mētēr sou, 19:27*). After Jesus died, the disciple took Mary into his own home.

Following that, according to *John*, Jesus uttered the words “I thirst” (*Dipsō, 19:28*), after which the soldiers filled a sponge with sour wine (*oxous*) and held it to his mouth. This, the author tells us, was to fulfill the Scripture (*Psalms* 69:21), which reads: “for my thirst they gave me sour wine to drink” (*eis tēn dipsan mou epotisan me oxos*). Jesus then said “It is finished” (*Tetelestai, John* 19:30), bowed his head, and “gave up his spirit” (*paredōken to pneuma, 19:30*).

The four Gospels all convey basically the same account of Jesus’ burial. Pontius Pilate gave Joseph of Arimathea permission to remove the body. Since the Jewish Sabbath was about to begin, burial had to proceed expeditiously. Joseph wrapped the body in a linen shroud and brought it to a nearby tomb (his own, according to *Matthew* 27:60), where it was anointed with a mixture of myrrh and aloe (either by the women of Galilee, *Luke* 23:55-56, or by Nicodemus, *John* 19:39). Joseph sealed the tomb with a heavy stone, and the mourners departed to observe the Sabbath.

(5.3) The Open-Ended Progression of the New Covenant

As understood presently, the Christian narrative consists of three major components. The dominant theme of the first component is the Old covenant established between God and the Jewish people on Mount Sinai, and the vicissitudes experienced by the people in their attempts to abide by that contract. The second major component is centered around Christ's death on the cross, which brings the Old Covenant to its end and sets the stage for the New Covenant. We turn now to the third major component, which features the journey of individual believers along the pathway to eternal life.

This third component itself has three distinct parts. These parts can be distinguished in terms of the time periods in which they take place. Like the first and second major components, the first part of the third component takes place in the past. This first part comprises Christ's resurrection and ascension. Occurring as they do in the past, these events are fixed in character. They progress only in the sense of becoming increasingly distant from the present. Everything we know about these events we learn from the more or less permanent record of the NT.

The second part of the third major component takes place in the present. This second part comprises the many individual journeys presently underway along the path to eternal life. Since the present is always changing, this second part itself is constantly in flux. It undergoes change in two notable respects. For one, the individual journeys included within it can change significantly from day to day. In each case, the individual involved encounters fresh opportunities and new challenges as a matter of course. The other change involves the many individuals who happen to be embarked on the journey at a given time. As time progresses, new people will set out on the journey, and people

previously embarked will reach their journey's end. In brief, the second part undergoes change both in the day-by-day lives of individual believers, and in the identity of the people involved.

The third part of the third major component has an ambiguous status in time. This third part features the end-states of the individual journeys making up the second part described above. Although individual, each of these journeys is directed toward the achievement of eternal life. This means that these journeys all share a common end. The ambiguity in question is that this end has both temporal and atemporal characteristics. From the perspective of any given journey in progress, its end is reached only in the future. No one achieves eternal life while still alive. By very nature, however, eternal life is a state outside of time. On one hand, the end can be reached only after the death of the individual involved, which is to say some time after present time for that person. On the other hand, the end is outside of time. We return to this ambiguity in the discussion following.

Complexities like these aside, it seems safe to say that an individual Christian's hope for eternal life is based on Christ's resurrection from the grave. Our synopsis of the third major component of the Christian narrative begins with the story of Christ's resurrection.

(5.31) Christ's Resurrection and Ascension

Accounts of Christ's resurrection are included in all four Gospels, specifically in *Matthew* 28:1-6, *Mark* 16:1-6, *Luke* 24:1-6, and *John* 20:1-8. The author of *Acts* (addressing Theophilus, as at *Luke* 1:1-3) refers to his previous account of things that

Jesus said and did “until the day he was taken up” (*achri hēs hēmeras ... anelēmphthē*, 1:2). He adds that Jesus “presented himself alive” (*parestēsen heauton zōnta*, 1:3) to his chosen apostles “for forty days” (*di’ hēmerōn tessarakonta*) between “his suffering” (*to pathein auton*) and his ascension. Christ’s resurrection is also mentioned in *1 Corinthians* 15:4, with Paul’s remark that after he died and was buried Christ “was raised on the third day in accord with the scriptures” (*egēgertai tē hēmera tē tritē kata tas graphas*). The OT reference presumably is to *Psalms* 16:10, where the psalmist addresses the Lord saying: “you will not let your holy one see corruption” (*oude dōseis ton hosion sou idein diaphthoran*).

None of these accounts, it might be noted, mentions human witnesses of Christ’s resurrection. To be sure, *Matthew* 28:2-7 describes a scene in which Mary Magdalene and another Mary encounter “an angel of the Lord” (*angelos ... kuriou*, 28:2) come down from heaven, accompanied by earthquake and lightning, to roll back the stone from Jesus’ tomb. The angel informs them that Jesus has risen, and instructs them to carry a message to the disciples about meeting him in Galilee. On their way to the disciples, the women met Jesus himself, grasped him by the feet, and worshipped him. An alternative version at *John* 20:11-17 has Mary encountering Jesus at his burial site by herself, but at first mistaking him for the gardener. In neither case is there a witness of Jesus actually arising from the dead.

That Jesus was raised without human witnesses is noteworthy, inasmuch as both his crucifixion and his ascension occurred in the presence of onlookers. In support of the latter, we learn at *Acts* 1:9 that Jesus, who had been speaking with the disciples, “was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud took him out of their sight” (*blepontōn*

autōn epērthē kai nephelē hupelaben auton apo tōn ophthalmōn autōn). As the disciples were gazing into heaven, two men in white robes appeared next to them and told them that Jesus “will come [again] in the same way as you saw him go into heaven” (*houtōs eleusetai hon tropon etheasasthe auton poreuomenon eis ton ouranon*, 1:11). In response to the quandary about how authors of the NT might have depicted Jesus’ resurrection, had they reason to do so, a possible answer is that they could have described him as returning to earth on a cloud like the one that carried him back to heaven forty days later.

Rather than portray Jesus’ resurrection as such, however, NT authors describe his interaction with his followers during the time between his resurrection and his ascension. Allowing for ambiguity, we can count seven such interactions in the Gospels and another three in *I Corinthians*. I shall attempt to list them in approximate order of occurrence.

- (1) According to *Matthew* 28:9-10 and *Mark* 16:1-9, Mary Magdalene and another Mary encounter an angel at the tomb, who instructs them to tell the disciples that Jesus will meet them in Galilee. The two Marys meet Jesus on the way and embrace his feet. In the version at *Luke* 24:1-12, Mary Magdalene is with other women who encounter two angels at the tomb, but do not actually see Jesus. According to *John* 20:11-18, Mary Magdalene is at the tomb by herself, sees Jesus, but initially mistakes him for the gardener.
- (2) Jesus joins Cleopas and a companion on their way to Emmaus (*Luke* 24:15-31, and presumably *Mark* 16:12).

- (3) The eleven disciples tell Cleopas and his companion that Jesus had appeared to Simon (*Luke 24:34*). This may be the appearance to Cephas recorded in *1 Corinthians 15:5*.
- (4) Jesus appeared to the eleven disciples and the two men from Emmaus, showed them his hands and feet, and ate a piece of broiled fish (*Luke 24: 36-43*). More details are given at *John 20:19-24*, including the locked door and Thomas' absence. A brief mention of this occasion also appears at *Mark 16:14-18*.
- (5) A second appearance of Jesus to the disciples in the locked room eight days later is recorded at *John 20:26-29*, this time with Thomas present. Jesus invited Thomas to touch his hands and side, but Thomas apparently declined.
- (6) An extended account of Jesus' interaction with a select group of disciples takes up most of *John* chapter 21. The disciples had been fishing all night on Lake Galilee without success, when Jesus appears on the shore incognito and tells them where to cast their nets. A catch of 153 large fish resulted. A long conversation with Simon Peter ensued, in which Jesus charged Peter with feeding his sheep (*21:15-17*). This is the only report of this occasion in the NT.
- (7) At *1 Corinthians 15:6*, Paul mentions a time when Jesus appeared to five hundred followers. No other mention of this occasion is found in the NT.
- (8) An appearance to James is mentioned at *1 Corinthians 15:7*.

(9) At *1 Corinthians* 15:7, Paul also mentions Jesus' appearance to all the apostles. There is no textual basis for correlating this with other appearances to the disciples.

(10) *Matthew* 28:16 records a meeting of the eleven disciples with Jesus on a mountain in Galilee (possibly Mount Tabor), pursuant to Jesus' instructions to the two Marys at 28:10 that they inform the disciples of this intended meeting. The mountainous part of Galilee is several days walk from Jerusalem, which makes this appearance hard to fit in sequentially with those listed above.

It should be noted that all these appearances are to previously committed followers of Jesus. There are no appearances to the public at large.

According to scripture, this limitation of the post-resurrection Jesus' appearances to his followers was preordained. Speaking in *Acts* 10:41, Peter affirms that Jesus did not appear to everyone after his resurrection, but only to those who "had been chosen by God in advance as witnesses" (*martusin tois prokecheirotonemenois hupo tou theou*). The same limitation is implied in *Acts* 13:31, where Paul states: "for many days he [Jesus] appeared to those who had come up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem" (*hos ophthē epi hēmeras pleious tois sunanabasin autō apo tēs Galilaias eis 'Ierousalēm*). Anticipation of this limitation is indicated by the question of Judas (not Iscariot) at *John* 14:22: "Lord, how is it that you will manifest yourself to us, and not to the world?" (*Kurie, [kai] ti gegonen hoti hēmin melleis emphanizein seauton kai ouchi tō kosmō*);).

Among the ramifications of this limitation is that there could be no public record of Christ's resurrection. In the domain of verifiable history, there is no evidence to

establish that it actually occurred. The NT itself, as argued previously, does not belong to that domain. The NT was written by believing Christians, for the instruction of believing Christians, on the basis of oral testimony by believing Christians. Although Christ's resurrection is the keystone of Christian faith, it has no standing in secular history.

Accepting Christ's resurrection as such is an act of faith.

Regarding the NT account of Christ's post-resurrection appearances in its own terms, we should consider respects in which the account itself lacks internal coherence. Its basic problem concerns the timeline between Christ's resurrection and his ascension. According to *Acts* 1:3, forty days elapsed between those two events. According to both *Mark* 16:19 and *Luke* 24:51, on the other hand, the time elapsed must have been considerably shorter. After his rebuke at *Mark* 16:14 of those who did not believe others who saw him after he had risen, an apparent generalization of his rebuke of Thomas during his second appearance in the locked room, Jesus "was taken up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God" (*anelēmphthē eis ton ouranon kai ekathisen ek dexiōn tou theou*, 16:19). In the timeline of appearances above, this rebuke was delivered during appearance (5), which occurred eight days after his resurrection. Whereas *Acts* 1:3 specifies forty days between resurrection and ascension, *Mark* 16:19 appears to allow only eight.

Luke 24:51, in turn, has Jesus parting from his disciples and being "carried up into heaven" (*anephereto eis ton ouranon*) after a two mile walk from Jerusalem to Bethany (*John* 11:18). *Luke* 24:36-43 indicates that the antecedent meeting with the disciples was appearance (4). Immediately after eating the broiled fish (*Luke* 24:42-43), Jesus told the disciples how his resurrection had fulfilled OT prophecy (24:44-48) and instructed them

to stay in the city until receiving more power from on high (24:49). And then (*de*, 24:50), he led them to Bethany and was carried up into heaven. According to *Luke*, that is to say, Jesus ascended within a day or two after his resurrection.

Not surprisingly, *Acts* 13:31 sides with *Acts* 1:3, against *Mark* 16:19 and *Luke* 24:51. In *Acts* 13:31, the author states that “for many days he [Jesus] appeared to those who had come up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are now his witnesses to the people” (*ōphthē epi hēmeras pleious tois sunanabasin autō apo tēs Galilaias eis Ierousalēm, hoitines [nun] eisin martures autou pros ton laon*). This disparity between *Acts* and *Luke* challenges the received view that both were written (exclusively) by the same author.

Mark and Luke each devote a single line to Jesus’ ascension. *Mark* 16:19 attests that Jesus, after addressing his disciples, “was taken up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God” (Greek above). *Luke* 24:51 reports that Jesus, after accompanying his disciples to Bethany, “parted from them and was carried up into heaven” (*autous diestē ap’ autōn kai anephereto eis ton ouranon*). These are the only reference to Jesus’ ascension in the Gospels.

The book of *Acts*, in turn, contains four such references, embedded in the most extensive account of the ascension found in the NT. First comes the author’s mention of his previous exposition of things Jesus said and did “before the day he was taken up” (*achri hēs hēmeras enteilamenos*, 1:2). The other three are included in 1:9-11, which tells of the disciples’ interaction with the two men in white who speak of Christ’s return. In 1:9 we are told that Jesus “was lifted up” (*epēρθē*) and carried away by a cloud in their presence. And in 1:11 the two men, speaking to the disciples, refer to Jesus, who “was

taken from you into heaven” (*analēmphtheis aph’ humōn eis ton ouranon*), and who will come “in the same way as you saw him going into heaven” (*hon tropon etheasathe auton poreuomenon eis ton ouranon*). One more (probable) reference is found in *1 Timothy* 3:16, which tells of the mystery of the living God who was manifested in the flesh and “taken up in glory” (*anelēmphthē en doxē*).

In short, there are seven references in the NT to the occurrence of Jesus’ ascension. In *John* 20:17 there is also a prediction of his forthcoming ascension articulated by Jesus himself. These several references to the ascension occupy an average of one line apiece. The author of *Acts* is alone in giving it more than perfunctory attention.

(5.32) The Pervasive Influence of Love in the NT

Christ’s resurrection and his ascension belong to what we have termed the first part of the third major component of the Christian narrative. As depicted in the NT, they are events that took place in the past. They have a fixed place in the timeline of the narrative, and do not change as chronological time progresses. There is another aspect of the narrative’s third component, however, that was active in the past and remains active in the present. This means that it has dual location in the narrative’s timeline. It has a place in both the first part (the past) and the second part (the present) of the narrative’s third component. This bilocated aspect is Christian love. Love was a major factor in Christian life as portrayed in the NT, and it remains a major factor in Christian life as practiced presently.

If a single word were chosen to sum up humankind’s prescribed relation to God in the OT, the most appropriate choice probably would be ‘obedience’. God issued orders

under the Old Covenant, and humans were expected to obey. If a corresponding word were chosen for the NT, ‘love’ would be the most likely choice. Love is the prevailing theme of Jesus’ brief mission on earth. Love is the organizing principle of the New Covenant Jesus initiated as part of that mission. And love is the hallmark of life under the New Covenant as we pursue it today.

With the notable exception of *Acts*, every book in the NT has something to say about love (*agapē*) or the active state of loving (*agapaō*). There is a well-known passage in *Matthew*, however, that typifies the significance of love in the New Covenant. In *Matthew 22: 36*, a lawyer asked Jesus: “Teacher, what is the great commandment in the law?” (*Didaskale, poia entolē megalē en tō nomō*); Jesus’ response should be quoted at length:

“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great [and] first commandment. And the second is like it; you shall love your neighbor as yourself” (*Agapēseis kurion to theon sou en holē tē kardia sou kai en holē tē psuchē sou kai en holē tē dianoia sou autē estin hē megalē kai prōtē entolē. deuthera de homoia autē, Agapēseis ton plēsion sou hōs seauton, 22:37-39*).

“On these two commandments,” Jesus goes on to say, “depend all the law and the prophets” (*en tautais tais dusin entolais holos ho nomos krematai kai hoi prophētai, 22:40*).

In the normal course of human events, what it means to love God may be more difficult to understand than what it means to love one’s neighbors. Help comes from *I*

John 5:3, which says: “For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments” (*hautē gar estin hē agapē tou theou, hina tas entolas autou tērōmen*). A question raised by this passage is what commandments the author of *1 John* has in mind. For God issues numerous commands to the Israelites in the OT, including but not exhausted by the Ten Commandments.

Paul provides an answer to this further question in his letter to the Romans. With obvious reference to the Ten Commandments, Paul says: “For [the commandments] ‘You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet’, and any other commandment, are summed up in this maxim, namely ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself’” (*to gar Ou moicheuseis, Ou phoneuseis, Ou klepseis, Ouk epithumēseis, kai ei tis hetera entolē, en tō logō toutō anakephalaioutai [ev tō] ’Agapēseis ton plēsion sou hōs seauton, 13:9*). By way of explanation, Paul continues: “Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law” (*hē agapē tō plēsion kakon ouk ergazetai plērōma oun nomou hē agapē, 13:10*).

Put concisely, *1 John* 5:3 tells us that to love God is to keep his commandments, and *Romans* 13:9 tells us that to keep God’s commandments is to love one’s neighbor as oneself. Thus, in the abstract, we have two great commandments that come down to the same thing. In practice, however, abiding by these two commandments involves different pursuits and different challenges. This means that they contribute to the Christian narrative in different ways. In the next section we revisit the topic of what it means to love God, saving a synopsis of neighborly love for the subsequent section.

(5.321) The First Great Commandment

In its version at *Matthew* 22:37, the first great commandment enjoins loving God with “all your heart” (*holē tē kardia*), “all your soul” (*holē tē psuchē*), and “all your mind” (*holē tē dianoia*). *Mark* 12:33 adds “with all your understanding” (*holēs tēs suneseōs*) and “with all your strength” (*holēs tēs ischuos*). This in itself indicates that the love enjoined by the first commandment is not an emotion, a fondness, or a feeling. For one does not feel with one’s mind, exercise fondness with one’s understanding, or experience emotion with one’s strength. But if love of God is not an emotion, a fondness, or some kind of feeling, then what is it? And what does it mean to engage in it with the entirety (*holē(s)*) of the faculties in question?

As a form of *agapē*, we know that love of God is an intentional relationship. The individual person is the lover, and God is the object loved. Like *philia*, the other mode of love in the NT, *agapē* is also a relation conveying positive appraisal. To love something is to regard it favorably, which is to hold it in some manner of high esteem. Unlike *philia*, on the other hand, *agapē* is unconditional. It is not subject to change with change in circumstances. Given these features of *agapē* generally, what can be said about love of God in particular?

The love enjoined by the first great commandment is the counterpart of the love shown by God in giving his Son as sacrifice for the salvation of the world. “For God so loved the world (*kosmon*),” we read at *John* 3:16, “as to give his only begotten Son, that all who believe in him should not perish but have everlasting life” (Greek above). The term *kosmon* here (as at *Matthew* 5:14) means humanity at large, which amounts to the totality of individual human beings. God loved humankind to such an extent that he sent

his Son “that the world might be saved through him” (*hina sōthē ho kosmos di’ autou, John 3:17*). The first commandment enjoins the world to return that love in comparable measure. For any given human individual, God’s love for that person is unconditional. The force of the first commandment is that the individual person is to return God’s love in the same unqualified manner.

Repeated use of the superlative term *holos* (whole, complete) suggests that the commandment in question is a counsel of perfection. Complete love of God is something one strives for, but is not easily achieved. The road to complete love of God, we may infer, can be a lifetime’s journey, with frequent challenges for those who follow it along the way.

It is helpful to think of the journey toward complete love of God as beginning with an overall change in perspective. As noted previously, the Greek term for change in perspective is *metanoia*. The first use of the term in the NT is at *Matthew 3:2*, in John the Baptist’s proclamation “Repent (*metanoete*), for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Greek above). According to *Matthew 4:17*, furthermore, Jesus began his mission with exactly the same words. With these words, John the Baptist and Jesus both were calling on their listeners to sustain a radical change in the way they perceived the world. This is a change, both verses add, that will prepare one’s way to enter “the kingdom of heaven [which] is at hand” (*ēngiken ... hē basileia tōn ouranōn*).

For purposes of explicating the NT formulation of the first great commandment, love of God may be conceived as stemming from a *metanoia* (same spelling in English) of this general sort. Generally speaking, this is a change in one’s perception of what is valuable in the world. More specifically, it is a shift in values that guide the course of

one's daily life. Before metanoia, one typically might place high value on possessions, reputation, and gratification, along with other "wordly goods." Before that point, one's life would be ordered by the values in question. After metanoia of the sort in question, however, one would place higher value on things that promote access to "the kingdom of heaven" (*Matthew* 3:2, 4:17). After metanoia, one's life would be ordered by these "heavenly-oriented" values instead.

In ordinary (non-religious) discourse, we often describe a person who places high value on possessions as someone who loves wealth and money. Similarly, we describe someone who places high value on reputation as a person who loves fame and good publicity. Love in such cases is a form of desire. The person who values possessions desires material wealth, and the person who values reputation desires favorable publicity.

Things are otherwise with the values induced by Christian metanoia. Among such values are humility and kindness. Thus in *Colossians* 3:12, Paul lists attributes befitting "God's chosen ones" (*hōs eklektoi tou theou*), with "kindness and humility" (*chrēstotēta tapeinophrosunēn*) prominent among them. A person who places high value on humility might be described as someone who loves feeding the hungry (e.g., in soup kitchens) or defending the rights of needy people (e.g., in pro bono legal work). Similarly, someone who places high value on kindness might be described as one who loves sharing the concerns of other people (e.g., by patient listening) or helping others work through their problems (e.g., by friendly counseling). Love in such cases is a matter of gaining satisfaction by serving others. The person who values humility finds satisfaction in responding to the needs of other people, and the person who values kindness finds satisfaction in helping other people with their difficulties.

In cases of the previous sort, the person concerned desires things (such as wealth) that enable pursuit of the value in question (possessions). In cases of the latter sort, the person finds satisfaction in things (such as serving others) that enable realization of the corresponding value (humility). Although desire and satisfaction are different forms of love, the relation between a given value and the factors that enable it can be generalized. Put generally, we tend to love the conditions or influences that enable the things we value. Valuing and loving go hand-in-hand, in that we tend to love the resources, activities, and practices that enable our dominant values to be realized.

One feature of the metanoia preached by Jesus at the start of his mission is a change in the values that order a person's life. Instead of values supporting wealth and position, so-called "mammon" at *Matthew* 6:24, Jesus' followers were urged to conduct their lives according to values preparing them for the kingdom of heaven. Along with commitment to those heaven-oriented values goes love for the enabling influences that bring them to fruition.

A second feature of this metanoia is the conviction that God is responsible for the valuable qualities of everything inherently worth valuing. Not only is God the source of all that is (*Genesis* 1:1, *John* 1:3, *Acts* 17:24), but more specifically God is the source of everything inherently valuable. In the words of *James* 1:17, "every good gift and every perfect gift is from ... the Father" (*pasa dosis agathē kai pan dōrēma teleion ... estin ... apo tou patros*). Inasmuch as God is the source of everything good and perfect, it follows that God enables everything a follower of Jesus should find worthy of value.

This brings the first great commandment into coherent focus. God is the enabler of everything worthy of being valued. The injunction of this commandment, in effect, is

to acknowledge God in this role. Insofar as we love what enables the things we value, all those who participate in Christian metanoia will be inclined to direct their love toward God himself. The form of love here is not an emotion like desire, nor a feeling like satisfaction, but rather a state of gratitude.

Anyone who has undergone the metanoia preached by Jesus will be disposed to love God as the enabler of everything fit to be valued. The force of the first great commandment is that anyone following the path of Jesus should actualize this disposition. Moreover, such a person should do so with a whole heart, a whole soul, and a whole mind. Loving God, in effect, is being unconditionally grateful for God's gift of everything worthy of being valued.

(5.322) The Second Great Commandment

The first great commandment mandates a reorientation of the individual person's relation to God. It requires that the individual relate to God with unconditional gratitude. The second great commandment mandates a reorientation of the individual's relation to other people. Compliance with the second requires replacing self-concern with concern for one's neighbors. In effect, this is tantamount to replacing pride with humility.

Inasmuch as gratitude is the form of love duly rendered to God, love of neighbor and love of God are different forms of love. A person is called to love his or her neighbor, regardless of having received no benefits for which gratitude would be a fitting response. A well-known statement of the second great commandment is at *Luke* 10:27, following which a lawyer asks Jesus "who is my neighbor?" (*tis estin mou plēision*;; 10:29). Jesus responds with the story of the Good Samaritan, in which the Samaritan

showed mercy to the wounded traveler, but received no benefit that might serve as an occasion for gratitude in return.

The love shown by the Good Samaritan, nonetheless, shares standard features of *agapē* with the love mandated by the first great commandment. Both are intentional, in the sense of being directed toward specific objects. Both convey attitudes that are essentially positive. And both are unconditional, as is *agapē* generally. Let us now consider respects in which the love shown by the Good Samaritan is unique among forms of love in the NT.

Gratitude is an intentional relation. In gratitude toward God, the grateful person is the subject of the intention and God is its object. But there is nothing about gratitude that prompts the subject's awareness of the object to eclipse the subject's awareness of him or herself. Gratitude toward God typically does not lead to loss of self-awareness. Conceivably, it could even heighten self-awareness by increasing the subject's sense of personal fulfillment.

Love of neighbor, on the other hand, works to diminish one's awareness of oneself. The thought that love of neighbor should eclipse self-awareness might at first seem counterintuitive. The second commandment enjoins that one should love one's neighbor as oneself; and self-love seems the height of self-awareness. Self-love poses a quandary. We need to understand what love of self amounts to before we can understand what it means to love one's neighbor in the same fashion.

In this particular context, loving oneself cannot be the same as holding oneself in high regard. Holding oneself in high regard is tantamount to pride, and there are numerous passages in the NT condemning pride. The author of *James* quotes *Proverbs*

3:34 verbatim, saying: “ God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble” (*Ho theos huperēphanois antitassetai, tapeinois de didōsin charin, James 4:6*). In *2 Timothy* 3:2, moreover, Paul links arrogance (*huperēphanoi*) and self-love (*philautoi*) together, along with other traits that stand in the way of becoming “lovers of God” (*philotheoi*, 3:4). If self-love were something God condemns, as these passages suggest, there presumably would be no divine command to treat one’s neighbors in this manner.

Regardless of what the term *agapē* means in this context, we may assume that the second great commandment was intended to correct a fault in the way people commonly treat each other. A hint of what that fault might be is found in *James 2:9*. Immediately after a statement of the second commandment in its standard formulation (“you shall love your neighbor as yourself,” *Agapēseis ton plēsion sou hōs seauton*, 2:8), the author avers: “if you show partiality, you are committing sin” (*ei de prosōpolēmptēite, hamartian ergazesthe*). Another common translation of this passage replaces “partiality” with ‘favoritism’. Interpreted in light of *Romans 2:11*, which affirms that God shows no favoritism (partiality, *prosōpolēmpsia*), the force of *James 2:9* is that being partial to oneself is a sin. Understood in this light, the mandate of the second great commandment is that one should be no more partial to oneself than to other people.

As far as partiality to oneself and others is concerned, partiality has to do with the importance attached to the person or persons in question. Being partial to oneself is tantamount to considering one’s own self to be of primary importance in the world one inhabits. Such partiality, as it were, amounts to thinking of the world as revolving around oneself. The second commandment enjoins the followers of Jesus to stop thinking of

themselves as centers of their respective worlds. They are enjoined to start thinking of the world as centered around other people no less than themselves.

The love of the second great commandment is a form of deference. It is common to speak of deferring to one's superiors. Dividing people into superior and inferior, however, is contrary to the intent of the second commandment. The relevant sense of deference here is that of deferring to other human individuals as being no less important than oneself among creatures in God's created universe. In *Galatians* 5:13, Paul leads up to his statement of the second commandment (5:14) by advising his listeners to use their Christ-given freedom to "serve one another through love" (*dia tēs agapēs douleuete allēlois*). They are to serve one another, not as inferior serves superior, but as equal serves equal in expressing Christ's love.

No matter what form it takes, *agapē* is an intentional relation. Love's intentionality itself supports the shift from self-importance to the importance of other people. The shift is in the directionality of the subject's attention. In self-centered awareness, one's attention is directed inward toward oneself. When one is engaged in a love relation, however, one's attention is directed outward toward the object of one's love instead. Inasmuch as one's attention cannot be directed inward and outward simultaneously, engaging in a love relation preempts the subject's focus on him or herself.

With regard to pride and humility, pride is a condition in which one's awareness is directed inward with a focus on oneself. In the love relation dictated by the second great commandment, however, the person's awareness is directed outward toward the worth of other people. It is in this manner, in accord with the second great

commandment, that love of others replaces the pernicious condition of pride with a modest humility.

(5.33) Participation in Christ's Sacrifice

The third major component of the Christian narrative is divided itself into three distinct parts. First come Christ's resurrection and ascension, both occupying fixed places in the past. The second part comprises aspects of Christian practice that were current during NT times and remain current as time progresses. The practice of Christian love is one such aspect. Another is ongoing participation in the Lord's Supper.

Both *Acts* and *1 Corinthians* contain passages that refer to participation in the Lord's Supper during the early decades of the Church. The earliest references are in chapters 10 and 11 of *1 Corinthians*. In 10:16, Paul queries his audience: "The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ?" (*to potērion tēs eulogias ho eulougoumen, ouchi koinōnia estin tou haimatos tou Christou; ton arton hon klōmen, ouchi koinōnia tou sōmatos tou Christou estin*);). Paul goes on to observe that he and his audience comprise one body "because we all partake of one bread" (*hoi gar pantes ek tou henos artou metechomen*, 10:17). Another reference by Paul comes at 11:27, immediately after his quotation of the words with which Jesus inaugurated the Lord's Supper.

Warning his audience to avoid frivolous participation, Paul says: whoever "eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner shall be accountable regarding the body and blood of the Lord" (Greek above).

Probable references to the Lord's Supper in *Acts* appear in 2:41, 2:46, and 20:17. Pertaining to the "approximately three thousand souls" (*psuchai hōsei trischiliai*, 2:41) added by Peter to the fold in a single day, the author (presumably Luke) remarks that they devoted themselves to the teaching, the fellowship, and "the breaking of bread" (*tē klasei tou artou*, 2:42). Along with other new converts, these people attended the temple together, while "breaking bread in their homes" (*klōntes te kat' oikon arton*, 2:46). Turning later to the ministry of Paul, the author mentions a time with Paul on the Sabbath when "we were gathered together to break bread" (*sunēgmenōn hēmōn klasai arton*, 20:7). Unlike *1 Corinthians* in this regard, there is no mention in *Acts* of the cup linked to the blood of Christ.

These passages provide the earliest reports in the NT of occasions on which the Lord's Supper was celebrated. Taken together, they illustrate the formative influence the Lord's Supper exercised on early Christian life generally. From NT times onward, the Lord's Supper has remained a formative influence in the lives of individual Christians. Let us review our earlier discussions of the Lord's Supper in this subsequent role.

Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper (the Eucharist) on the occasion of his last meal with his disciples. Accounts of this event are given in each Synoptic Gospel and in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians. According to *Matthew* 26:28, the purpose of the Lord's Supper is the forgiveness of sins. The brief account at *Mark* 14:22-25 says nothing about purpose, while *Luke* 22:17-21 says merely that its purpose is to remember Jesus. According to *1 Corinthians* 11:26, in turn, its purpose is to proclaim the Lord's death until he comes (presumably, comes again). Although the Gospel of *John* does not treat the institution of the Lord's Supper as such, *John* 6:54 assigns it yet a further

purpose, saying: “Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day” (Greek above).

Each of these accounts deals with both the bread and the wine. In four of the five, however, the wine receives special notice for its association with the New Covenant. In both *Luke 22:20* and *1 Corinthians 11:25*, Jesus refers to the wine directly as “the New Covenant” (*hē kainē diathēkē*) of his blood. And while the adjective ‘new’ (*kainē*) is withheld in *Matthew 26:28* and *Mark 14:24*, the New Covenant clearly is intended in these references. The association is such that whereas institution of the Lord’s Supper prefigures initiation of the New Covenant, the latter provides the context in which the Lord’s Supper is subsequently enacted. The Lord’s Supper also provides nurture required for the New Covenant to serve its purpose, which is to enable the individual believer to achieve eternal life.

The New Covenant took effect with the initial enactment of the Lord’s Supper. Early enactments of the Lord’s Supper were noted above, but there is no way of telling when the first took place. As argued previously, Jesus’ institution of the Lord’s Supper did not itself constitute an enactment of the rite he was introducing. When Jesus took the bread and said “This is my body ... do this in memory of me,” and then took the cup saying “This is the new covenant in my blood ... do this in remembrance of me” (*1 Corinthians 11:24-25*, Greek above), those actions and those words were not themselves a celebration of the Lord’s Supper. For he went on to tell his disciples that when they eat this bread and drink this cup, they “proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes” (*11:26*, Greek above). And a person’s death cannot properly be proclaimed (asserted) while that person is still alive. Jesus instituted the Lord’s Supper by showing his disciples how to

enact it after his death. There is no reason to think that Jesus ever took part in the Lord's Supper himself, if indeed this even makes sense.

In the terminology of *1 Corinthians* 10:16, partaking of the Lord's Supper constitutes a participation (*koinōnia*) in the body and blood of Jesus Christ on the cross. The relation of participation here is similar to that between Plato's eternal Forms and the sensible objects that instantiate them in chronological time. Despite their temporal urgency, Christ's body and blood on the cross have eternal significance. The crucified Christ is the spotless lamb whose sacrifice redeemed humanity from inherent sin. Although the actual crucifixion took place in a single day, its significance has no temporal bounds. As a Platonic Form is instantiated in sensible objects, so the significance of Christ's body and blood on the cross is instantiated every time the Lord's Supper is enacted.

Everything significant about Christ's body and blood on the cross is instantiated in the consecrated bread and wine of the Lord's Supper. First and foremost, that event is significant in the redemption it achieved from original human sin. And everyone who receives the consecrated bread and wine participates in the full significance of that event. This means that every individual recipient shares in the sacrifice that accomplished his or her redemption.

By sharing in this sacrifice, an individual recipient (1) remembers Jesus who endured the event personally (*Luke 22:19, 1 Corinthians 11:24-25*). The recipient also (2) proclaims the Lord's death until he comes (*1 Corinthians 11:26*). He or she furthermore (3) acknowledges the forgiveness of sins provided by the Lord's death (*Matthew 26:28*), and (4) engages it as a means to the end of eternal life (*John 6:54*).

Eternal life is a difficult goal in several respects. One is that progress toward this goal requires discipline and active encouragement. In the context of the New Covenant, eternal life is the projected end of a way of life established by the life of Jesus Christ. A hallmark of this way of life is the discipline required to serve God in preference to the lures of mammon (*Matthew 6:24*). Partaking of the Lord's Supper is a fitting mode of discipline, in that mammon pales in the presence of Jesus' death on the cross.

The Lord's Supper also provides encouragement along the path toward eternal life. There is encouragement in the Christian love that Jesus' sacrifice represents. In the words of *John 3:16*, "God so loved the world as to give his only begotten Son, that all who believe in him should not perish but have everlasting life" (Greek above). As God loved the world, so the Son loved his people, and so the people in turn are to love each other. In this atmosphere of pervasive love, the discipline of Chris's way seems less severe. Another source of encouragement is Christ's reentry into heaven. The Lord's Supper is a reminder of Jesus' death, which enabled both his resurrection and his return to a timeless existence.

Another difficulty posed by the goal of eternal life is its persistent avoidance of clear understanding. Let us turn now to a synopsis of our foregoing discussion of the mysterious character of eternal life.

(5.34) Eternal Life: Its Temporal Counterpart

This brings us to the third part of the third major component of the Christian narrative. The first part, we recall, comprises past events exclusively, while the second part treats events underway in both the past and the present. The third part, in turn, deals

exclusively with events in the future. More accurately, it deals with circumstances projected as holding subsequently to time currently present. These circumstances pertain to eternal life on the part of persons who are presently alive.

Eternal life is a state of existence that never changes. Since everything in time is subject to change, eternal life is a state outside of time. Nonetheless, the nature of eternity is inseparable from the nature of time, and cannot be understood without reference to it. Thus a recapitulation of our previous analysis of time will serve as an appropriate beginning of our synopsis of eternal life..

Aristotle sets the stage with his intuitively plausible definition of time as the measure (*metron*) of motion according to before and after (*Physics* 220b33, *passim*). An equivalent formulation, which Aristotle seems to favor, identifies time as the number (*arithmos*) of motion (*Physics* 219b1, *passim*) instead. Characterized either way, time functions as a standard with which periods of motion can be compared. To serve as a standard in this regard, time must be divided into fixed units (days, hours, minutes, etc.). When marked off in fixed units, time provides a scale by which periods of motion can be measured or numbered.

Typical examples of temporal scales include calendars based on lunar or solar cycles. The ancient Babylonian calendar, one of the earliest on record, was based on the interval between one new moon and the next (approximately 29.5 days). This interval results in a lunar year of about 354 days, which requires periodic additions to bring it in line with a solar year of approximately 365 days. Two major solar calendars were introduced during the 1st century AD. Assuming 365 days in the year, the Mayans divided them into 18 “months” of 20 days each, leaving 5 irregular days between years. The

Julian calendar (for Julius Caesar) was based on the more accurate estimate of 365 days and 6 hours per solar year, which required adding an extra day every 4 years (i.e., on leap years). After some 1500 years of use, the Julian calendar gave way the Gregorian system (for Pope Gregory XIII), based on a more accurate estimate of 365 days, 5 hours, 48 minutes, and 46 seconds per solar year. The Gregorian system eliminates potential leap years divisible by 100 but not by 400.

Systems more accurate than the Gregorian have since been devised, including a revised Julian calendar that gains only about 2 seconds per year. Although the Gregorian scale gains roughly ten times that much, even with its complicated system of leap years, it is sufficiently accurate to serve most practical purposes. No solar-based scale tracks the sun's orbit perfectly, which for the most part makes little practical difference.

According to the analysis undertaken previously, time is motion scaled in a manner that allows it to serve in the measurement of other motion. The brief discussion of calendar systems above provides a straightforward illustration of what this means. Solar-based calendars (e.g., the Gregorian) apply numerical scales to solar motion, providing a temporal progression by which unscaled motion (e.g., the growth of crops) can be measured. This progression enables us to gauge the time committed to related activities (e.g., farming) in terms of days, months, and years.

Also evident in the discussion above is that calendar scales are human artifacts. No particular system of years, months, and days is an inherent feature of celestial motion. To be sure, heavenly movement itself is a natural process; but the scales imposed on that movement are human products. The motion of heavenly bodies would not be affected if

human life vanished from earth. But without the ingenuity of human beings, the time of calendars would not exist.

Human ingenuity has produced other temporal scales that measure motion in smaller increments. Prominent among these are scales articulated in hours and minutes. These scales go hand in hand with instruments devised to apply them. Our ability to measure motion in terms of hours developed conjointly with the invention of sundials and waterclocks. Ability to measure in minutes developed with clocks and other chronometers. Ability to measure seconds, in turn, came with the invention of products like stopwatches. And so on for milliseconds and photo-finish cameras, and for microseconds and atomic clocks. In each of these cases, both the time scale and the associated instruments are products of human ingenuity.

Although time scales and associated measuring instruments are closely related, however, they are not inseparably bound to each other. The standard time scale, with 60 seconds to the minute and 60 minutes to the hour, can be applied with various chronometric instruments (sundials, waterclocks, watches, etc.). Conversely, there are various measuring instruments that can be adapted for the application of different time scales. A time scale traditionally used in China divides the 24-hour day into 100 decimal minutes (14 and $\frac{2}{5}$ standard minutes in length), and each decimal minute into 100 decimal seconds. Instruments of various sorts can be calibrated in terms of these decimal units, including sundials, clocks, and watches. The French watch company Swatch, for example, currently markets decimal timepieces.

According to the present analysis, temporal measurement involves three distinct factors. One (1) is the motion or change being measured. Thus one might measure the

activity of preparing a meal, or the process of driving to the airport. Another (2) is the temporal scale employed in the measurement. Driving to the airport might take approximately an hour, while preparing the meal might occupy about 100 decimal minutes (i.e., about $1/10^{\text{th}}$ of a 24-hour day). Third (3) is the time-telling instrument by which the relevant scale is applied. The instrument in one case may be the clock in the motorist's car, in the other a Swatch clock mounted in the chef's kitchen.

Factors (2) and (3) both are human artifacts. To be sure, they are artifacts of different sorts. Factor (3) is a product of human technology, whereas factor (2) is primarily mathematical. These two factors, nonetheless, develop in tandem. Technological advances in (3) are motivated by increased precision in (2), whereas refinements in (2) often follow from advances in (3).

This leaves two respects in which time is a human production. According to the present analysis, time is motion (solar cycles, sand flowing through an hourglass) articulated in accord with factor (2). Factor (2), in turn, depends on technological achievement (3) for its full development. But both (2) and (3) are human products. So, accordingly, is the time they produce.

(5.35) Eternal Life: Its Timeless Status

Being a human construct, time itself cannot be infinite, since everything human is finite in nature. This means that eternal life cannot be endless existence in time. If eternal life were endless existence in time, it would be a process that never ends. Eternal life, however, is not a process. It is a state of existence outside of time.

This is reflected in the definition of eternal life attributed to Jesus at *John* 17:3. Addressing the Father, Jesus avows that eternal life is to “know (*ginōskōsin*) you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent” (Greek above). The sense of ‘know’ here is not a matter of being aware that something is the case. The sense is that of being related to God in a certain way. Eternal life is the state of being related in this way to the only true God, and of being related in like manner to the Son he has sent.

Other NT passages in which *ginōskō* is used in approximately this sense include *Luke* 16:15, *Romans* 11:34, and *2 Corinthians* 5:21. In the first, Jesus admonishes the Pharisees, saying “God knows your hearts” (Greek above). In *Romans* 11:34, Paul queries his audience: “who has known the mind of the Lord?” (Greek above). And then in *2 Corinthians* 4:21, Paul describes Christ as “one who knew no sin” (Greek above). Each passage alludes to a relation (or lack thereof) that is deeply personal.

Another deeply personal use of the term occurs at *Matthew* 1:25 and *Luke* 1:34. First the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary announcing that she would bear the infant Jesus. Mary responded in amazement with the words: “I do not know (*ginōskō*) man” (*Luke* 1:34, Greek above). After she had conceived by the Holy Spirit (*Matthew* 1:20), an angel appeared to Joseph in a dream, advising him to accept Mary as his wife. Joseph complied, but did not “know” (*eginōsken*, *Matthew* 1:25) Mary until she had given birth.

As in the passages just cited, the term *ginōskō* used at *John* 17:3 pertains to a deeply personal relationship, in this case a personal relationship with God. Given the pervasive emphasis on love in the NT, we might expect that love is an essential component of this relation. More insight in this regard is provided in *1 John*, chapter 4. Since love is from God, we read at 4:7, “whoever loves has been born of God and knows

(*ginōskei*) God” (Greek above). According to this passage, love directed toward God results in (is sufficient for) knowing God. On the other hand, “someone who does not love cannot know (*ouk egnō*) God” (4:8, Greek above). This says that loving God is necessary for knowing God as well. Loving God is both necessary and sufficient for knowing God. Apropos *John* 17:3, this is equivalent to knowing God being inseparable from loving God.

The sequence on love in *1 John* continues by tracing our ability to love back to God himself. “We love,” says 4:19, “because he first loved us” (Greek above). Once again, this calls to mind *John* 3:16, which tells how God’s love bears on eternal life: “For God so loved the world [*kosmon*, humankind generally], as to give his only begotten son, that all who believe in him should not perish but have everlasting life” (Greek above). Taking these passages together, we infer that the love God inspires in us provides an avenue to eternal life.

Another aspect of human love for God comes into focus at *1 John* 5:3, which affirms: “this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments” (Greek above). The two great commandments, of course, are to love God wholeheartedly and to love one’s neighbor as oneself. As it bears on the first commandment, *1 John* 5:3 is relatively uninformative, saying in effect that the love of God should be unstinting and without reservation. Taken in conjunction with the second great commandment, however, this passage conveys a substantial message: to love God is to be unsparing in one’s love for other people.

John 12:50 relates keeping God’s commandments to eternal life directly. In the course of reflecting publicly on God’s ultimate authority, Jesus acknowledged that his

teaching had followed God's command (12:49). In 12:50, he goes on to say that he knows (*oida*) "that this commandment is eternal life" (Greek above). The sense seems to be that eternal life is earned by following God's commandments, which are the precepts conveyed by Jesus at God's behest.

As far as the attainment of eternal life is concerned, Jesus is God's proxy on earth. According to *John* 12:49, the words Jesus speaks are ordained by God. Essentially the same line of authority is expressed at *John* 14:10, where Jesus tells Philip that the words he speaks are not his own, but rather "work done by the Father" (Greek above) who dwells within him. Jesus' oneness with God is highlighted at 14:9 by his reminder that whoever has seen him has seen the Father. This augments the definition of eternal life at *John* 17:3, explaining how it is that knowing the Father is equivalent to knowing the Son.

According to the several passages reviewed above, in short, eternal life is a state in which the person concerned knows God in a manner that involves loving Jesus Christ as well. Preparation for this timeless state involves a discipline that consists essentially in obeying God's commandments. God is love (*1 John* 4:8, 4:16); and his commandments are expressions of that love. As an initial act of love, God sent his Son to teach the way of eternal life (*John* 3:16). By following Jesus' teachings, the concerned individual aspires to the state of loving God in return. Eternal life is a state of fulfillment in which the individual person returns God's love to its original source.

Along with knowing God and loving God, moreover, eternal life comprises a state of being united with the Father and the Son. This theme of unity comes to the fore in the final verses of *John* chapter 17. In the middle section of this chapter, Jesus prays to the Father that the people given over to his care "may be one, even as we are one" (17:11,

Greek above). Beneficiaries of this entreaty include not only Jesus' original followers, but also those "who will [come to] believe in me through their word" (*tōn pisteuontōn dia tou logou autōn eis eme*, 17:20). Still addressing the Father, Jesus asks that these all should be one (*hen*): "just as you, Father, are in me, and I am in you, may they also be in us" (*kathōs su, pater, en emoi kagō en soi, ... kai autoi en hēmin ōsin*, 17:21).

This entreaty is repeated in the next three verses, with reference to the glory (*doxan*) the Father bestowed on the Son. This glory, the Son says, he has passed on to his people, "that they may be one even as we are one" (*hina ōsin hen kathōs hēmeis hen*, 17:22). Even more effusive is the desire Jesus' expresses to the Father that his people may be with him "to behold my glory" (*theōrōsin tēn doxan tēn emēn*), which is the glory you "gave me because you loved me before the foundation of the world" (*dedōkas moi hoti ēgapēsas me pro katabolēs kosmou*, 17:24). Given the assumption that time began with the foundation of the world, it follows that beholding this primal glory would require being with Jesus in a state of timeless existence.

Chapter 17 of *John* is occupied entirely with Jesus' final prayer to the Father. At the very middle of this chapter, Jesus anticipates his imminent return (*erchomai*) to heaven and reflects on the purpose of the words he "speaks in the world" (*lalō en tō kosmō*, 17:13). With his people in mind, Jesus says he has spoken "so that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves" (*hina echōsin tēn charan tēn emēn peplērōmenēn en heautois*, 17:13). This reiterates an earlier remark in the same context, when Jesus told his disciples that he has conversed with them "in order that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full" (*hina hē chara hē emē en humin ē kai hē chara humōn plērōthē*, *John* 15:11).

The joy Jesus refers to in these passages, presumably, comes with the completion of his mission on earth. His mission was to speak words that lead his followers to everlasting life. Jesus' joy, again presumably, does not abate with the passage of time. Nor does the joy evoked in his followers, if indeed that joy has reached fulfillment. Like the joy of Jesus, accordingly, the joy of his followers is not bounded by time.

Given this reading, *John* 15:11 and 17:12 add another aspect to eternal life. Along with knowing God, loving God, and being in unity with Father and Son, eternal life includes an endless sharing of the Son's joy.

(5.36) Eternal Life: Its Personal Aspect

According to the NT, Jesus Christ established a pathway to eternal life. According to the account above, eternal life is a timeless state of being. What does it mean to adopt a timeless state of being as the goal of one's temporal life? The question is one of intelligibility; not whether such a state exists, but what it amounts to if it exists.

Personal goals are exercised in the context of personal life-stories. An individual's life-story, it may be recalled, is neither an autobiography nor a biography written by someone else. Biographies of either sort are recorded in public media, with the intention of making them available to other people. A given individual's life-story, on the other hand, is "recorded" on the private medium of his or her self-awareness. The process of composing it typically is not deliberate, and often occurs without the individual involved being explicitly aware of it.

Self-awareness is an intentional state in which one's attention is directed toward oneself. Awareness of the external world occurs when one's attention is directed outward.

In self-awareness, one's attention is directed inward. Not all inwardly directed attention constitutes self-awareness. One might be aware of emotions and feelings without being aware of oneself. Self-awareness occurs when one's attention is directed specifically toward oneself.

In self-awareness, the attention of the subject-self is directed toward the corresponding object-self. In one respect, subject-self and object-self are the same. Both are aspects of the same self. A given person's subject-self cannot be aware of another person's object-self; and a given person's object-self cannot serve another person's subject-self as object of its awareness.

In other respects, however, the subject-self and the object-self of a given person are clearly distinct. One such respect is that the subject-self is active, whereas the object-self is passive. The subject-self is active in its awareness of the object-self, whereas the object-self is incapable of active awareness. A correlative difference is that the intentionality of self-awareness is unidirectional. The intentional "arrow" of self-awareness points from subject to object, and cannot be reversed to point in the other direction.

Another important difference is that the object-self is dependent on the subject-self for its existence, but not vice versa. With regard to a given person's self-awareness, there would be no object-self without a subject-self to sustain it. On the other hand, a subject-self might exist without an object-self to occupy its attention. A given person's field of inner awareness might conceivably be limited to that person's feelings, emotions, and sense impressions. This may have been the case with David Hume, leading him to view the human self as a construct of such inner presentations. Contrary to Hume, the

present view is that self-awareness explicitly reveals an object-self toward which the attention of the subject-self is directed. According to the present view, when the attention of the subject-self is directed toward its corresponding object-self, the latter is no less evident than any Humean impressions it might happen to support.

One further difference has to do with dependence on episodic memory. As previously characterized, episodic memory is recall of specific events and situations that once were encountered by the subject directly. This in contrast with discursive (propositional) memory, which is recall *that* certain things once happened. Although events present in episodic memory might be discursively remembered as well, discursive memory retains many items of which the subject was never directly aware.

The importance of episodic memory in the present account concerns its contribution to the persistence of the object-self. Whereas the subject-self gains continuity through the life-story it supports, the object-self is held together by its presence in episodic memory. The object-self of a given moment is present to its corresponding subject-self only at that same moment. Without episodic memory, the object-self of a given moment would remain disconnected from the object-self at earlier moments. Apart from episodic memory, in a manner of speaking, the object-self would lack self-identity through time.

Let us bring these observations to bear on the present topic of eternal life. For the duration of an individual life-story, both subject-self and object-self enjoy a kind of persistence in human time. Eternal life is a mode of existence outside of human time. The onset of eternal life, accordingly, involves a transition from a time-bound to a timeless mode of existence. What is it about the self that undergoes this transition?

In our development of the Christian narrative thus far, the term ‘soul’ has been conspicuously absent. The most commonly used Greek term for soul, of course, is *psuchē*. It was noted previously that the present account of eternal life is close to that in Plato’s *Symposium*, the main difference being the deities involved. Another difference is that the lover as such (the person) gains eternal life in the *Symposium*, as distinct from the lover’s *psuchē* (his or her soul).

Regarding antecedents, however, it should be noted that the present version of the Christian narrative derives primarily from the NT and only incidentally from Plato. For this reason, it is relevant to survey the use of *psuchē* in the NT, with particular attention to passages where the soul is mentioned in connection with eternal life.

Among the roughly one hundred occurrences of *psuchē* in the NT, the meaning most commonly conveyed is life or living person. In *Matthew* 10:39, for example, Jesus says that one who loses one’s life (*tēn psuchēn*) for his sake will find it. In *John* 13:37, Peter tells Jesus he will lay down his life (*tēn psuchēn*) for him. And in recounting Joseph’s stay in Egypt, the author of *Acts* mentions that Joseph brought down his father and all his relatives, numbering seventy-five persons (*psuchais*, 7:14) in all. Also common is the use of *psuchē* to mean seat of affection or emotion. Thus Jesus tells the disciples with him in Gethsemane that his soul (*hē psuchē mou*) is “sorrowful unto death” (*Perilupos ... heōs thanatou*, *Matthew* 26:38). According to *John* 12:27, Jesus addressed a crowd, saying: “Now my soul is troubled” (*Nun hē psuchē mou tetaraktai*); after which the crowd heard thunder in the sky. Then afterwards, when the disciples were warning people to save themselves from this evil world, “fear came on every soul” (*’Egineto de pasē psuchē phobos*, *Acts* 2:43), and thousands were baptized.

Of these approximately one hundred uses of *psuchē* in the NT, only five pertain to life after death explicitly. And only one of these five is found in the Gospels. This is at *Matthew* 10:28, where Jesus counsels fear of the one (Beelzeboul, 10:25) who can “destroy both body and soul in hell” (*psuchēn kai sōma apolesai en geennē*). Another of the five occurs at *Acts* 2:27, which paraphrases *Psalms* 16:10 with these words addressed to God: “you will not abandon my soul to Hades” (*ouk enkataleipseis tēn psuchēn mou eis hadēn*).

The remaining three occur in epistles other than those written by Paul. In *Hebrews* 10:39, the author joins his recipients in owning that they are not among those who shrink back and are destroyed, but rather among those “who have faith regarding the preservation of soul” (*pisteōs eis peripoiēsēsin psuchēs*). In *James* 1:21, the author advises his audience to receive “the word that is able to save your souls” (*logon ton dunamenon sōsai tas psuchas humōn*). And in *I Peter* 1:9, the self-avowed apostle acknowledges the faith of his audience, through which they will achieve “the salvation of their souls” (*[humōn] sōtērian psuchōn*).

As mentioned previously, nearly half of the more than forty references to eternal life in the NT are attributed to Jesus himself. Most are such that it would seem odd for him to elaborate by spelling out what is it about the human person that might live on forever. The fact that Paul had nothing to say on this topic is notable in its own right, given that eternal life is a theme frequently visited in his letters. Regardless of who speaks in their writings, it appears that NT authors generally were too enthralled by Jesus’ promise of eternal life to think seriously about what that involves.

Given our purpose of composing a coherent Christian narrative, at any rate, it behooves us to advance an account of immortality that is reasonably clear and free from jargon. Eternal life is a timeless state projected as an outcome of merging one's personal life-story with a narrative that proposes that state as life's primary goal. Progress toward that goal takes place in time. Achievement of that goal thus requires transition from a temporal to a timeless state of existence. We now return to the question of what it is about the human person that might be capable of making that transition. The following answer is a summary of the account given previously, with certain emendations to make soul an explicit part of the picture.

(5.37) Eternal Life: Its Conceptual Basis

Among many locutions incorporating the term 'self', the expression 'self-awareness' is unique. Its closest cousin is 'self-consciousness', from which it differs primarily in the structure of the attention involved. The attention of a self-conscious person is focused outward on judgments harbored by other people, whereas in self-awareness the person's attention is focused inward on his or her own self. Other differences between self-awareness and self-consciousness were examined previously.

Also by way of summary, the seat of attention in self-awareness is the subject-self. The attention of the subject-self is directed inward toward its corresponding object-self, which latter by definition is incapable of attention. The subject-self is active, and the subject-self passive. Not only is the object-self the passive recipient of attention, it also depends on the subject-self for its existence. The subject-self persists even when its

attention is not focused on its object-self, but there is no object-self without a subject-self directing attention toward it.

Among English synonyms of the term 'self' are 'psyche', 'soul' and 'spirit'. In the unique relation between subject-self and object-self, only the former might plausibly occupy a state of timeless existence. Let us examine conditions under which the subject-self of self-awareness might exist out of time.

Return to hypothetical person N from above, who dies at time $t(d)$. Before death, N's awareness alternates between an outward and an inward focus. When N's attention is directed outward, N is aware of various objects in the external world. With attention directed inward, N becomes aware of his or her object-self. In N's self-awareness, the subject-self that is N attends to its corresponding object-self. For brevity, let us refer to N's subject-self simply as "N's self." Capitalizing on available synonyms of 'self', we might also refer to N's self as "N's soul."

In self-awareness, N's self attends to itself as object. In self-awareness, N's self is active and N's object-self is passive. N's self is active in attending to (directing attention to) its corresponding object-self, and N's object-self is passive in receiving N's attention. The relation "attending to" is unilateral. Being passive, N's object-self is never aware of N's self. By definition, N's object-self is recipient of N's attention, incapable of actively attending to N's self in turn.

As recipient of N's attention, N's object-self is dependent on N's active self for existence. If there were no active self to be aware of it, there would be no passive recipient of awareness. N's self, on the other hand, exists independently of its

corresponding object. N's self participates in countless circumstances with its attention directed outward. N's self is not dependent on self-awareness for its existence.

With N's death, however, another sort of dependency comes into play. At t(d), N's self loses the organic support of the physical body that kept it active. Before t(d), N's self was active in the perception of external objects, in contemplating various courses of action, in reflecting on inner moods and feelings, and so forth. With death, capacity for action of these various sorts is cut short. After t(d), the parts remaining of N's body lack the functional capacity to sustain N's active self in existence.

Put in terms reminiscent of Aristotle, N's death carries with it loss of potential that can be actualized in these various forms of activity. Let us refer to these as "active potentialities." Before t(d), N had active potentialities that were actualized from time to time in perceiving external objects, in contemplating courses of action, and so forth. With N's death, these active potentialities fall by the wayside. At t(d), what remains of N loses any potential N had previously for such forms of activity. With regard to N's subsequent existence, the active potential of N's self vanishes with N's demise.

A thing's incapacity to act on its own, however, does not prevent it from being acted on by other things. Let us say that something capable of being acted on by other things has a "passive potentiality" to that effect. Some things have active potentialities for acting on other things, and some things have passive potentialities for being acted on by other things. It is the case, of course, that a given thing might be potentially active in some respects and potentially passive in others.

A key feature of passivity for present purposes is that being acted on by something else might be enough to maintain a given thing in existence. Aristotle says as

much in *De Anima* 417b2-5. As he puts it, the expression “to be acted on” (*to paschein*) has two meanings, one of which is destruction of a thing by another thing that opposes it. The other is the “preservation of something potential by something that is actual and like it in the way actuality might pertain to potentiality” (*sōtēria ... tou dunamei ontos hupo tou entelecheia ontos, kai homoiou houtōs hōs dunamis echei pros entelecheian*).

Aristotle’s illustration is the transition from the state of being able to know (knowing potentially) to the state of actually knowing, a transition that preserves the original state of being capable of knowing. As this example indicates, a passive potentiality can be maintained in existence while the process of actualizing it is underway.

Another illustration, readily adaptable for present purposes, comes from the field of operatic performance. Consider the aria “Musetta’s Waltz” from Puccini’s *La Bohème*. This aria has the passive potentiality of being performed; and there are many singers with the active potentiality of performing it. In any given performance, the aria’s passive potentiality of being performed is actualized. The actualization of a given performer’s active potentiality of singing “Musetta’s Waltz” preserves in existence the aria’s passive potentiality for being sung.

Beyond that, “Musetta’s Waltz” does not have to be actually sung for its passive potentiality for being sung to remain in existence. As long as there are singers prepared to perform it, the aria retains its passive potential for being sung. The passive potential of the aria, that is to say, does not disappear when no one is actively engaged in singing it. “Musetta’s Waltz” retains its passive potential for being sung as long as it remains in the repertoire of living singers. If (per impossibile) the succession of singers prepared to sing it continued endlessly, the aria itself would partake of endless existence.

With this musical analogy at hand, we now return to Jesus' definition of eternal life at *John* 17:3. This definition equates eternal life with knowing God and Jesus Christ whom he has sent. Drawing on *1 Corinthians* chapter 13 and *1 John* chapter 4, we have inferred that knowing God and loving God are inseparable. Another key connection is indicated by *1 Corinthians* 8:3, which says that anyone who loves God is known by God in return. N's knowing God, and N's loving God simultaneously, together constitute actualizations of active potentials on the part of N. For N to be known by God, consequential on his or her loving God, constitutes an actualization of a passive potential on N's part in turn.

While still alive, let us stipulate, N actively loved God and was actively known by God in return. In what way is this relation between God and N changed when N dies? With death, N loses all active potential, including potentially knowing and potentially loving in particular. Yet N's self retains any number of passive potentials. Among these are the passive potentials for being remembered by friends, for being yearned for by family, for being emulated by admirers, and so forth. Just as the passive potential of a musical aria for being sung is sustained by the active potentials of persons prepared to sing it, so these passive potentials on N's part are sustained by the corresponding active potentials of the other persons involved. But the lifespans of those who remember, yearn for, and emulate, are limited; and so accordingly are N's passive potentials for being remembered, yearned for, and emulated. In short, N's self continues to exist as the seat of these passive potentials only as long as people remain who relate actively to N's now disembodied self.

Among passive potentials associated with N's self after death, however, may be that of being known by God. This accords with *1 Corinthians* 8:3, which attests that God knows every person who loves him. If God actively knows N at t(d), then the same relation between N and God continues after N's death. For God does not change in human time. In his timeless state, God knows N without temporal bounds, and the passive potential of N's self for being known by God is sustained atemporally as well. In short, if N loves God at time of death, then God sustains N's soul in a timeless state of existence.

According to *1 John* 5:3, to love God is to keep his commandments. To our hypothetical scenario concerning N, let us add the stipulation that N attempts in good faith to keep God's commandments up to the point of death. According to *Romans* 13:9, God's commandments are summed up in the maxim "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Greek above). A final stipulation regarding N is that he or she has made a sincere and opportune effort to abide by that maxim.

N's hypothetical scenario unfolds as follows. N expresses love of God by obeying his commandments. N's passive potential for being known by God is actualized by God in response to this love during N's lifetime. After death, N's self is sustained in existence by God's endless activity of knowing N. Being actively known by God in a timeless manner, N's soul is timelessly sustained in existence. As a result of N's loving God during his or her lifetime, N's soul joins God in a state of timeless existence.

This is one way of understanding eternal life, the end projected for Christian believers who participate in the New Covenant.

(6) Account of Religious Belief Summarized, with Addenda

The overarching theme of this study is that religious belief can be conceived as a merger of one's personal life-story with a religious narrative. This characterization is intended to hold for religious belief generally. In developing this theme, however, I have relied mostly on examples from Christianity. This emphasis on Christianity is due both to the fact that I am Christian myself and to my conviction that Christianity has the richest narrative among world religions. In summarizing the results of this study, I shall continue to rely on Christianity for examples.

The summary that follows falls into four major parts, ordered specifically for expository purposes. One deals with the nature of a personal life-story. Among topics included here are the nature of self-awareness on which life-stories are recorded, the difference between life-stories and autobiographies, and the role of memory in sustaining an individual person's life-story. Another part deals with the merger between life-story and religious narrative. Featured topics under this heading include what the narrative contributes to the life-story and what the life-story contributes to the narrative. The mutual dependence between these two is stronger than may at first appear.

Yet another major part concerns the advantages that flow from this conception of religious belief. Advantages of one sort have to do with the reading of scripture. There are passages in the OT, for example, that invite reading as history (e.g., those describing the Passover), and others that are overtly symbolic (such as the temptation of Adam and Eve in Paradise). The present conception allows passages of both kinds to pull their weight without questions of historicity getting in the way. Other advantages include increased authenticity in a person's own religious practice. When a person's life-story is

merged with a religious narrative, that narrative becomes an integral part of his or her personal identity. It comes to play an active role in the formation of that person's moral conscience. And a life shaped by personal conscience seems clearly more authentic than a life submissive to the dictates of external authorities.

Before addressing these several topics, however, we should situate religious belief among other forms of acceptance. Doing this constitutes the fourth major part of the present summary, which which it is appropriate to begin.

According to the present analysis, forms of belief are divided according to objects they accept. Probably the most common form is what we have labelled "doxastic belief," or "belief(d)" for short, which is acceptance of one or another proposition as being true. A belief(d) is true or false according to the truth-value of its propositional object. The belief(d) that snow is white, for example, is true if and only if the proposition to that effect is true.

Less commonly discussed is a second kind labeled "apodexic belief" ("belief(a)" for short), after the Greek term *apodechomai* meaning acceptance. Belief(a) is acceptance of a state of affairs (SOA) as being the case. An example is a mother's spontaneous acceptance of her baby's cry as the SOA of the baby's needing assistance. SOAs are either the case or not the case, but neither true nor false. Since beliefs(a) take SOAs rather than propositions as objects, they also lack truth-value. Beliefs(a) might be accurate or misleading, cautious or unheeding, but never true or false.

The third kind of belief under consideration in this study is titled "believing in," or "belief(n)" for short. The class of beliefs(n) includes acceptance of certain things as filling certain roles. A person might accept a given news medium (e.g., the *New York*

Times) as a reliable source of information, which amounts to believing(n) that news medium. A person also might accept a given institution (e.g., the United Nations) as an effective agency for accomplishing a certain purpose, which amounts to believing(n) that institution. Likewise, one might accept a certain functionary (e.g., city mayor) as capable of carrying out relevant duties of office, which amounts to believing(n) that man or woman. What one accepts in this case is not a particular individual as such, but rather an individual as occupant of a particular office.

The fourth kind of belief distinguished previously stands in sharp contrast with the other three. One contrast is between general and specific. Belief(d) is acceptance of specific propositions as being true; belief (a) is acceptance of specific SOAs as being the case; and belief(n) is acceptance of specific news media, institutions, or individuals as adequate in performing specific roles. By contrast, beliefs of this fourth kind consist in acceptance of one or another worldview in the role of making sense of humankind's place in the world generally. The worldview of animism, for example, presents the human spirit as on a par with the spirits of winds, rivers, and other natural forces capable of interacting with it. The worldview of materialism is another example, according to which human beings consist entirely of matter like everything else in the world at large.

Another point of contrast has to do with the exclusive character of this fourth kind of belief. With each of the other three kinds, a given individual commonly will exercise many different beliefs simultaneously. At a given moment, a person is likely to believe(d) the propositions that snow is white, that the earth is round, that Paris is north of Rome, and so forth. At a given moment, similarly, a mother could believe(a) the SOA of her baby's needing attention, the SOA of her alarm clock ringing, and the SOA of her

computer having crashed. In like manner, it would be commonplace for someone to maintain belief(n) regarding many things simultaneously, such as one's newspaper, one's congressperson, and one's favorite charity. In the case of this fourth kind of belief, however, exercising it with respect to one worldview typically will preclude exercising it with respect to any other. Thus accepting materialism as a general worldview precludes concurrent acceptance of animism in the same capacity.

The fourth kind of belief boils down to acceptance of a comprehensive worldview as a context in which the many facets of one's life can be brought together coherently. The standard Greek term for "bringing together" is *sumpherō*. A suitable name for this kind of belief, accordingly, is "sympheric belief," or "belief(s)" for short.

It is obvious at this point that religious belief is basically a form of belief(s). But it should be equally obvious that it incorporates other kinds of belief as well. Before returning to belief(s), let us reconsider how beliefs of the other three sorts are involved in religious belief.

(6.1) The Doxastic Ingredient of Christian Belief

By way of review, doxastic belief (belief(d)) is the acceptance of particular propositions as being true. A particular proposition is true if and only if the SOA it represents has the status the proposition ascribes to it. SOAs are either the case or not the case. A given SOA is the case if and only if it is an aspect of the world as it actually is. A SOA that is the case is an actual SOA. A given SOA is not the case if and only if it is an aspect of the world as it might be, other than it actually is. Such a SOA is possible but not actual.

According to the present analysis, all SOAs are either actual or possible, but never both together.

Propositions play a distinctive role in communicating the occurrence (being the case) and nonoccurrence (not being the case) of SOAs. In order to play this role within a given group of communicating individuals, members of that group must have a shared understanding regarding the identity of the SOAs involved. They must agree on the circumstances that constitute the occurrence or nonoccurrence of those SOAs. This enables a common understanding within the group of what to look for in determining whether specific SOAs are or are not the case. Given a shared understanding to that effect, members of a linguistic group can communicate about happenings of shared interest in the world about them. Without a common understanding of circumstances that constitute potentially relevant SOAs, on the other hand, a group would be unable to communicate intelligibly about those SOAs.

In some domains of interest, a common understanding of this sort might mean simply a working definition. At one stage in the development of climatology, for instance, its practitioners presumably got by with working definitions of tropical storm, jet stream, climate change, and so forth. In the domain of particle physics, for a contrasting example, the common understanding in question is more highly theoretical. Joining the discussion within the linguistic group of specialists studying the effects of neutrons in heavy-metal atoms requires theoretical training just to identify the SOAs being discussed. For present purposes, the generic expression “linguistic group” is intended to cover any class of people who interact in discussing matters of a given common interest.

Unlike groups of climatologists and particle physicists, members of other linguistic groups might be motivated by conflicting purposes. Opposing parties in Congress, for example, may talk about subsidized health care as a common interest, while maintaining quite different views regarding its desirability. Unless the opposing political parties agree on what subsidized health care amounts to, however, their debates on the issue are rhetorical only and have no common content. An example germane to religious belief is the shared interest of advocates and critics in the topic of Jesus' virgin birth. As with subsidized healthcare, unless advocates and critics have a common understanding of circumstances that constitute Jesus' being born of a virgin, their opposing views are not concerned with the same SOA.

In the disagreement between advocates and critics of Jesus' virgin birth, it is incumbent on the former to establish the identity of the SOA they support. The burden is on the former because their view is a departure from the commonly understood requirements for human birth. What the advocates have to provide is a specification of the circumstances that would constitute the occurrence of the SOA of Jesus' virgin birth as they understand it. To say merely that the scriptures record such an occurrence is not a specification of the circumstances in question. Nor is a description of these circumstances based on someone's personal imagination. What is incumbent on the advocates is to identify those circumstances in a way that makes them accessible to advocate and critic alike. As far as I can tell, this has not been done for the purported SOA of Jesus being born of a virgin.

A genuine SOA is one the occurrence or nonoccurrence of which can be ascertained by anyone within the relevant community of shared interest (i.e., relevant

linguistic group). Genuine propositions refer to genuine SOAs and ascribe to them the status either of being the case or of not being the case. A proposition is true if and only if the SOA it refers to has the status ascribed. A genuine doxastic belief amounts to acceptance of a genuine proposition as being true. Inasmuch as the purported SOA of Jesus being born of a virgin is not genuine in the relevant sense, it cannot serve as referent of a genuine proposition. And since a purported proposition to that effect would not be genuine, it would not be available as an object of belief(d). This is not to say that Jesus was not born of the Virgin Mary. The present account remains neutral on the matter. The present point is only that Jesus' virgin birth is not an object of doxastic belief.

This point notwithstanding, it must be acknowledged that certain SOAs described in the NT are available for genuine doxastic belief. One is that Jesus was born on or about the first year AD (CE if preferred). This is rendered available for belief(d) by the division of the calendar into BC/AD (BCE/CE), which billions of people acknowledge and which hinges on the historical dating of Jesus' birth. Another is that he died under Pontius Pilate, which is recorded in various secular histories. Competently written secular histories establish the identities of the SOAs they treat. We believe(d) that Rome burned in 64 AD during the reign of Nero on the basis of the *Annals* (Book 15, Chapter 44) by Tacitus. The same historical source serves as basis of our belief(d) that Christ died under Pontius Pilate.

For the most part, however, other events recorded in the NT do not qualify as SOAs that can be represented by genuine propositions. Accordingly, the occurrence or nonoccurrence of these events is not subject to doxastic belief. This restriction would not have held for people alive at time of occurrence, given that indeed these events actually

occurred. Zacchaeus presumably believed(d) the genuine proposition that Jesus was a guest in his house (*Luke 19:5*), and Cornelius presumably believed(d) the genuine proposition that Peter had come to visit him in Caesarea (*Acts 10:24*). As time of occurrence shifts from present to past, however, different standards of factuality come into play. A currently existing SOA is genuine (factual) if interested parties agree in their understanding of commonly accessible circumstances that constitute its actual occurrence. With past SOAs, however, circumstances of actual occurrence are no longer accessible. Past SOAs retain identity in being vetted and recorded by competent historians. The SOA of Jesus' dying under Pontius Pilate is genuine, accordingly, and thus available for belief(d), inasmuch as it passed muster by the historian Tacitus.

Although the NT (save *Revelation*) deals with events in the past, it clearly was not written as a work of history. Necessary features of competently written works of history include (1) being written by known authors, (2) identification of sources, and (3) explanation of events treated in terms of natural causes. These requirements, as previously noted, are due to Herodotus, who laid them down several centuries before the NT was written. The fact that the NT does not meet these requirements shows only that the NT is not a work of history, not that the events recorded in it did not occur. Failure to qualify as a work of history, nonetheless, renders most of the NT unsuited as a source of doxatic belief.

To qualify as suitable for belief(d), contents of the NT would have to be equivalent to propositions representing SOAs that occur under circumstances on which both advocates and critics agree. These circumstances would establish the identities of the SOAs in question. When advocates and critics agree on the identity of a given SOA,

the two parties are equally well situated to determine whether that SOA is or is not the case. Accordingly, the two parties are equally well situated to determine the truth-value of the corresponding proposition. Under these conditions, the SOA in question would be genuine, and a proposition representing it would be either true or false. This would make the proposition a suitable object of belief(d).

If advocates and critics of a given NT account were equally well situated to determine whether the SOA affirmed by that account actually occurred, however, neither would be in a position to overrule the other if their verdicts disagreed. In short, if the contents of the NT generally were subject to belief(d), all parties with a shared interest in a given topic would be qualified to investigate the truth of the doxastic beliefs in question. Advocates and critics of the view that Jesus underwent three temptations by the devil, for instance, would be equally competent to investigate whether that SOA actually occurred. In the case of the three temptations, as in many other cases, there is no reasonable assurance that the critics would not be vindicated.

In effect, if NT accounts generally were subject to doxastic belief, the veracity of the beliefs in question would be subject to historical investigation and no longer stand as articles of faith. All in all, the Christian believer should not object to the conclusion that his or her acceptance of accounts in the NT does not amount to doxastic belief. For this conclusion is tantamount to accepting as being the case the SOA of the NT not being a work of history, which leaves open its availability as an object of faith.

(6.12) The Apodexic Aspect of Christian Belief

Doxastic belief is acceptance of a proposition as being true. Apodexic belief, in turn, is acceptance of a SOA as being the case. Examples given previously include a mother's acceptance of her child's being in distress (that SOA) on the basis of his cry, a hiker's acceptance of a bear's being present upon encountering a dark shape in the twilight, and my acceptance of my chair's being sound when I sit down at my desk in the morning. In each case, the mental attitude of acceptance has behavioral consequences. The mother goes to the aid of her child, the hiker stops abruptly to scrutinize the bear-like appearance, and I sit down confidently to begin the day's work.

In each of these cases, it is important to note that the relevant belief(a) is a mental attitude rather than a disposition or behavioral trait. New mothers often respond instinctively whenever they hear their babies cry. The mother's response in the example is intended to be more discriminating. She has learned to tell the difference between routine cries and cries indicative of distress. In the example, the mother arrives at a belief(a) that her baby is in distress and responds accordingly. What triggers her response is not an instinct or a disposition, but a mental acceptance of its being the case that her baby is in distress.

In the case of the hiker and the bear-like appearance, the hiker stops suddenly and begins to scrutinize the phenomenon for further signs of its identity. It is not unusual for people to freeze in their tracks when startled by a threatening appearance. But the hiker's response is not a startle reaction. This person has been warned of bears in the area, and has been on the lookout since the sun began to set. Upon initial encounter, the bear-appearance elicited a belief(a) accepting the presence of a bear as being the case. In

response to that mental attitude of acceptance, the hiker begins viewing the semblance from various angles and subjecting it to other tests of veracity. Regardless of outcome, the hiker's initial acceptance of the bear-appearance remains a genuine apodexic belief.

The example of my viewing the deskchair and accepting it as sound, in turn, is different from a habitual trust in the integrity of the furniture and equipment around me. On some days and in some circumstances, to be sure, I pay no heed to such matters, which is a habit fed by familiarity with my daily surroundings. But chairs have long been an issue for me. Most chairs do not suit my back, and at least one old favorite collapsed when I sat on it. On the occasion of the example, I do a cursory inspection and am mentally reassured by what I see. I accept as being the case that my deskchair is still sound and capable of supporting me. This accordingly is an instance of belief(a), with nothing left to habit or a trusting disposition.

These illustrations all involve specific and concrete situations. In each case, however, the manner of acceptance in question can be generalized. On the occasion of the first example, the mother hears the baby's cry and accepts as being the case the SOA of the baby being distressed. But the mother presumably will be sensitive to the child's needs in other circumstances as well. There will be occasions when she comes to believe(a) that the child needs cuddling, when she comes to believe(a) that it needs rest, when she comes to believe(a) that it needs visual stimulation, and so forth. If the mother is duly attentive, she will develop a general awareness of her child's needs that covers all such circumstances. This awareness will be accompanied by a general acceptance of those needs as being the case on the occasions of their actual occurrence.

In the second case, we may assume that the hiker spends an appreciable amount of time in the mountains and is alert to dangers often encountered along the trails. The precautions taken with the bear-appearance will be duplicated with the seeming appearance of a mountain lion, a wolverine, or a rattlesnake nearby. As a general practice, he or she initially will accept the presence of the potentially dangerous animal as being the case, and will undertake appropriate tests to make sure. Generally speaking, the cautious hiker has a proclivity to accept appearances of danger at face value and to proceed accordingly. This is a generalized form of belief(a). In similar fashion, my acceptance of the chair as being sound is a particular instance of the mental attitude I maintain generally regarding the structural integrity of chairs I am about to occupy. I generally accept as being the case the SOA of such chairs being suitable for sitting; and my acceptance on the occasion of the example is a particular instance of this general belief(a).

The mother of our example entertains a general belief(a) regarding circumstances having to do with her child's needs. The hiker entertains a general belief(a) having to do with caution on the trail. And I entertain a general belief(a) having to do with chairs I can sit in confidently. It is easy to imagine a culture in which most mothers entertain similar beliefs(a) regarding the needs of their children, most hikers entertain similar beliefs(a) regarding trail safety, and most people who work at desks entertain similar beliefs(a) regarding suitable sitting arrangements. Culturally shared beliefs like these have been designated "generic apodexic beliefs."

In the setting of a given culture, an array of generic beliefs(a) of this sort is comparable to what is known as a "horizon of expectation" in literary reception theory.

This term pertains to the cultural codes and symbolic conventions a reader brings to the interpretation of a literary text. The general idea is that horizons of expectation vary with changing cultural circumstances, resulting in different readings of a text in different social and political settings. In adopting the term for present purposes, we set aside the emphasis on cultural change and focus on the aspect of shared expectations. The range of expectations shared within a given literary culture is analogous to the panoply of spiritual entities accepted by participants in the Christian narrative. Prominent among such entities are angels, spirits, and devils.

Strictly speaking, of course, angels and devils are not SOAs. This means that accepting such entities as part of the Christian narrative is not an exercise of apodexic belief, which is acceptance of SOAs as being the case instead. The fact remains, nonetheless, that such entities play major roles in the Christian narrative. To tighten the analogy with a literary horizon of expectation, let us speak more precisely of accepting as being the case that angels and devils playing prominent roles in the Christian narrative. In this sense, the apodexic ingredient of Christian belief may be characterized as the horizon of expectation that sets the stage for the unfolding of the Christian narrative.

Setting the stage in this regard amounts to acknowledging distinctive entities and distinctive faculties that a person engaged in the Christian narrative should be prepared to encounter. As just noted, distinctive entities in question include angels and spirits, both of which are divided between forces of good and of evil. Good angels are marshaled against bad in *Revelation* 12:7, for instance, where we read of “Michael and his angels” (*ho Michaēl kai hoi angeloi autou*) at war with “the dragon [Satan] and his angels” (*ho drakōn ... kai hoi angeloi autou*). The next verse confirms that the latter were defeated.

Regarding spirits, *Romans* 8:15 contrasts the “spirit of bondage” (*pneuma douleias*) that produces fear (which is bad) and the “spirit of adoption” (*pneuma huiiothesias*) that makes us children of God (which is good). Other pernicious spirits include the “evil spirits” (*pneumatōn ponērōn*, *Luke* 7:21) and “unclean spirits: (*pneumatōn akathartōn*, *Luke* 6:18) cast out by Jesus and his disciples. Another term for pernicious spirit is *daimōn*, as in *Mark* 16:9, which tells of the “seven demons” (*hepta daimonia*) Jesus cast out from Mary Magdalene. Other beneficent spirits include those that lend life to individual human beings. Thus in *Acts* 7:59 we hear of the last words of Stephen who died by stoning, which were “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit” (*Kurie 'Iēsou, dexai to pneuma mou*).

In contrast with immaterial beings like spirits and angels, which come in good and bad versions, there is one spiritual being in the NT who is invariably beneficent. This is the Holy Spirit, the third Person of the Trinity. According to the previous analysis, the Holy Spirit plays three distinct roles in the NT account. The role (i) of enabler is epitomized by the impregnation of the Virgin Mary. The angel Gabriel advises Mary of this forthcoming event in *Luke* 1:35, with the words “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you” (Greek above). The sanctifying role (ii) is attested in *1 Peter* 1:2, where the author assures his audience that they have been set apart “by the sanctification of the Holy Spirit” (Greek above). A dramatic illustration of the indwelling role (iii) of the Holy Spirit is found in *Luke* 1:41. Well into her pregnancy, Mary visits her cousin, Elizabeth, who is pregnant herself with a child later to be known as John the Baptist. When Elizabeth heard Mary speak, the unborn child leapt in her womb and she “was filled with the Holy Spirit” (Greek above).

As a dramatic counterbalance to the Holy Spirit, the devil (whose name is seldom dignified by capitalization) is invariably evil. Jesus' earthly mission is launched by three (unsuccessful) temptations by the devil, and is brought to an end by the devil's (successful) possession of Judas his betrayer. In between these symbolic bookends, the devil stays on the sidelines and bides his time. He is frequently mentioned throughout the NT, but is actively involved only on these two occasions. If the devil's aim was to thwart Jesus' earthly mission, his possession of Judas was self-defeating. For Judas' betrayal led to Jesus' death on the cross, which completed his mission of redeeming humankind. Jesus' act of redemption on the cross was also a victory over the devil.

(6.131) Belief in God, Church, and Holy Writ

In preceding discussions of the topic, believing(n) was divided into three separate categories. First is belief in persons, such as one's primary-care physician. Second is belief in institutions, such as representative democracy. Third is belief in sources of information, such as the *New York Times*. Each category also includes instances of belief that are explicitly religious. Let us consider in turn the beliefs expressed by the first-person utterances (i) "I believe in God," (ii) "I believe in the Church," and (iii) "I believe in the Bible."

The first-person affirmation "I believe in God" can be used in two quite different senses. For one, a person might use the expression to state a fact about him or herself. Unless the speaker is lying or speaking idly, his or her utterance "I believe in God" will be true. In this use, the expression is comparable to a first-person statement of belief in life on other planets. One might acknowledge belief in extraterrestrial life, while at the

same time admitting the possibility that life is confined to earth. As a statement of fact about oneself, the affirmation “I believe in life on other planets” does not entail that the object in which belief resides actually exists. There is no inconsistency in affirming both that one believes in extraterrestrial life and that one might possibly be wrong in that belief. Similarly, one might acknowledge belief in God as a fact about oneself, while simultaneously admitting the possibility that God does not exist. The first-person factual affirmation “I believe in God” is logically consistent with an admission that the object in which belief is reposed might possibly not exist.

This is the case as well with a third-person statement of fact about the belief of another person. To say that Jones believes in God is consistent with acknowledging the possibility that God does not exist. In point of fact, the third-person affirmation that Jones believes in God is logically consistent with the assertion that God actually (not just possibly) does not exist. In the parallel case of life on other planets, a third-person affirmation that Jones believes in extraterrestrial life is logically consistent with a first-person assertion that no life exists outside of earth.

The second use of the affirmation “I believe in God” is markedly different in several respects. In this second sense, the affirmation in question constitutes a profession of belief. To profess “I believe in God” in this second sense is actively to commit oneself to God. One difference is that a profession of belief in this sense is not a factual statement, and accordingly is neither true nor false. That one believes in God may be a fact about oneself, but professing belief in God is not a statement of fact.

Another distinct difference is that professing belief in God rules out acknowledging the possibility that God does not exist. There is a substantial analogy here

with the vows made by partners in a wedding ceremony. In saying “I take you to be my lawfully wedded wife (husband),” each partner enters effectively into a new relation with the other. The relation is such that it could not conceivably be entered into with someone who does not exist. Ceremony aside, it is of course conceivable that neither party exists. In the context of the ceremony, however, each party must exist for the vows of the other to take effect. In circumstances where someone professes belief in God, similarly, the existence of God must be accepted for the profession to be effective. One cannot profess belief in God while at the same time denying that God exists.

Profession of belief in God resembles marriage vows as well in that both result in personal commitments. Marriage vows commonly incorporate phrases like “I promise to be true in sickness and in health.” When pronounced in a creedal context, likewise, “I believe in God” carries with it a commitment to live by God’s precepts. As first-person locutions, both marriage vows and creedal professions make changes in the lives of those pronouncing them. Both are what philosophers refer to as performative utterances. Both involve promises to other persons that may not have been in effect previously.

Yet another parallel between wedding vows and creedal professions of belief in God is that their performative effects in the first-person do not carry over into third-person utterances. Just as pronouncing wedding vows in the third-person does not bring about another person’s marriage, so no one can make commitments to God in another person’s behalf. Utterance of the third-person “Jones believes in God” is neither a confession of belief in Jones’ behalf nor an imposition on Jones of any significant commitments. Creedal profession is a one-to-one personal transaction, with no direct involvement of other people.

A final parallel has to do with the repetition of wedding vows and of creedal professions. It is not uncommon for married couples to repeat their marriage vows years after their original ceremony. Likewise, it is common for Christians to repeat their commitment to God by recitation of one or another creed. We return presently to the topic of creedal profession.

Next in line for consideration is the first-person utterance (ii) "I believe in the Church." The object of belief in this case is an institution rather than a person. In this respect, believing in the Church is like believing in democracy or in the United Nations. Part of the likeness here is that belief in the Church is not accompanied by a personal commitment to the institution in which belief is vested. Personal commitments, for the most part, are made to people rather than institutions. Even in a creedal context, "I believe in the Church" lacks the performative force typical of "I believe in God." Regarding the performative act of promising, for example, one no more could make promises to the Church than to democracy or to the institution of marriage.

In the case of the Church, as in the case of democracy, existence of its object is not essential to the act of belief(n). One could believe in a form of democracy (e.g., direct rather than representative) not currently instantiated. And one could believe in a form of the Church (e.g., non-patriarchal) that currently does not exist. This means that belief in the Church does not carry with it a presumption of existence. But it also means that the simple utterance "I believe in the Church" often would have to be qualified to serve as an accurate expression of someone's institutional belief. Variations of denomination (Catholic, Protestant, Evangelical) aside, believing in the Church as it might be can differ substantially from believing in the Church as it actually is.

Regarding the expression (iii) “I believe in the Bible,” finally, there probably are few people who would find occasion to speak in such terms explicitly. Presumably more common are occasions when third-person locutions are used to ascribe belief in the Bible to other people. In some respects, belief in the Bible is like belief in other sources of information. One might believe in the *New York Times* as a reliable source of recent news. One might believe in the *Old Farmers Almanac* as a reliable source of long-range weather predictions. And one might believe in the Bible as a trustworthy source of divine revelation. These cases are alike in that the information sources toward which belief is directed obviously exist. Existence of their objects is not presumptive, but is a palpable feature of the belief itself.

A difference among these several cases of belief(n) has to do with the uniqueness of their respective objects. Both the *New York Times* and the *Old Farmers Almanac* are unique publications with well-known identities. In neither case is there an appreciable likelihood of ambiguity stemming from different publications sharing the same title. If several individuals are known to reside belief in the *New York Times*, chances are high that they believe in the same publication.

In the case of the Bible, however, there are many volumes sharing the same title in which a person might reside belief. Depending on criteria of individuation, there are upwards of one hundred current versions of the Bible. These versions differ significantly both in style and in wording. There are differences of another sort regarding the substance of the Christian message they contain. When Christianity separated from Judaism in the first century, people disagreed in their views about what it meant to be Christian. One such disagreement regarded the relative importance of works and faith.

This dissension is still evident in the tension between *James* 2:14-26 (which favors works) and *Romans* 3:28 (which favors faith). Another controversy among early Christians concerned the canonical status of *Hebrews* (challenged by Rome) and of *Revelation* (challenged by Constantinople). Other documents of likely importance to early Christians never made it into the canon. Notable among these was the Gospel of (the Apostle) Thomas, which recorded over one hundred sayings of Jesus himself. All in all, there is an imperfect correlation at best between the 27 books of our current NT and documents contributing to the formation of early Christians.

As far as the OT is concerned, some translations are based on the original Hebrew and others on the Greek Septuagint. Several editions of the Sepuagint are currently available, some closer to the original Hebrew than others. There are differences as well among Christian denominations regarding books included in their versions of the OT. A standard Catholic Bible contains seven complete books (*Tobit, Judith, 1 and 2 Maccabees, Wisdom, Sirach, Baruch*) not recognized by most Protestant denominatiions. To complicate matters further, several different Catholic Bibles have been published since the turn of the millennium, including different translations of the OT. Here again, there are significant differences between current versions of the OT and the Septuagint available to early Christian authors.

For someone who believes in the Bible as a source of divine revelation, in brief, there is a nontrivial question regarding the version of the Bible involved. To claim that privilege exclusively for one particular version, even when approved by one or another religious group, is to venture beyond the bounds of credibility.

(6.132) Creedal Profession of Belief

We return now to the role of “I believe in God” in the context of creedal profession. The two main creeds of Christianity are the Apostles’ Creed and the Nicene (more accurately, Niceno-Constantinopolitan) Creed. The first-person singular *Credo in Deum* (“I believe in God”) occurs at the beginning of the Apostles’ Creed, followed immediately by *Et in Jesum Christum* (“And in Jesus Christ”). Later comes *Credo in Spiritum Sanctum* (“I believe in the Holy Spirit”). The Nicene Creed begins similarly with *Credo in unum Deum* (sometimes rendered “We believe...” in English), and proceeds in corresponding fashion with *Et in unum Dominum Jesum Christum* and *Et in Spiritum Sanctum*. In both Latin and English, these locutions lend themselves to profession of belief(n). They pertain in particular to belief in persons, namely the three Persons of the Trinity.

After belief in the Holy Spirit, both creeds move on to belief in the Church. In the simpler version of the Apostles’ Creed, we have *Credo in ... sanctam ecclesiam catholicam* (“I believe in the holy catholic church”). As noted above, this falls under the category of belief(n) vested in institutions. From there on, the two creeds vary substantially. The Nicene Creed drops *credo* in favor of *confiteor* (“I acknowledge”) and *expecto* (“I anticipate”), listing “one baptism” and “the forgiveness of sins” as things acknowledged, and “the resurrection of the dead” and “life of the world to come” as things anticipated. The Apostles’ Creed, on the other hand, extends the *Credo* previously directed to the Holy Spirit and the holy catholic church to cover the following circumstances as well: “the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting” (*sanctorum communionem; remissionem peccatorum; carnis resurrectionem; vitam oeternam*). Such circumstances, however, are neither

persons, nor institutions, nor sources of information. Accordingly, they are not suitable objects of belief(n).

Like other circumstances on this list, forgiveness of sins and resurrection of the body are purported SOAs. This makes them purportedly appropriate objects of apodexic belief instead. In effect, the meaning of the final *Credo* in the Apostles' Creed changes as the enumeration of objects continues. It changes from (i) belief(n) in the Holy Spirit and in the catholic church to (ii) belief(a) directed toward presumed SOAs such as sins being forgiven and bodies being resurrected. In this respect, the wording of the corresponding section of the Nicene Creed is more accurate. The locutions "I acknowledge" (*confiteor*) and "I anticipate" (*expecto*) are suitable for the expression of apodexic beliefs. As a mother can acknowledge (accept) as being the case the need exhibited in her baby's cries, so a believer can acknowledge as being the case the forgiveness effected by Christian baptism. And just as a hiker can anticipate (accept as a future occurrence) the SOA of avoiding danger, so a believer can anticipate the SOA of resurrection from the dead. As a final item in the Nicene Creed, a believer can also anticipate *vitam venturi saeculi*, which is the presumed SOA of life in the age to come.

In sum, both creeds feature belief(n) directed toward persons (God, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit), and both end with purported objects of belief(a) (SOAs such as forgiveness of sins and everlasting life). Most of the remaining space, however, is taken up with characterizations of the three Persons involved that invite acceptance as objects of belief(d). Thus both creeds characterize God as almighty Father and creator (or maker) of heaven and earth. Both characterize Jesus Christ as the only Son of God and as born of the Virgin Mary by the Holy Spirit. Both add that Jesus Christ was crucified under

Pontius Pilate, rose again three days later, and ascended into heaven to be seated on the right hand of the Father. And both say that Jesus Christ will come (*venturus est*) again to judge the living and the dead. Prima facie, these characterizations are factual claims open to doxastic belief, and as such are either true or false. The apparent intent behind both creeds is that a believer, by dint of reciting them, should affirm that these claims are true.

What or who is the locus of this apparent intent? For the most part, the contents of the creeds can be traced back to the Bible. The creeds themselves, however, are products of theological enterprise undertaken after most of the NT had been committed to writing. Although details are unknown, the Apostles' Creed probably originated late in the 2nd century AD. The title *Symbolum Apostolicum* appeared in a letter written by Ambrose to Pope Sirisius in the aftermath of the 390 AD Council of Milan, whereas the present version of that creed first appeared in written form in a publication by St. Piriminus in the early 8th century. Both Ambrose and Piriminus, one might presume, were better known as theologians than as NT scholars. The locus of intent in this case was probably theological rather than scriptural.

The origins of the Nicene Creed are less speculative. It began as a product of the first ecumenical Council of Nicaea in 325, and was known initially as the Creed of Nicaea. This early document rejected the Arian thesis that God begat Jesus in time. (Thus its entry *ex Patre natum ante omnia saecula*, born of the Father before all ages.) In 381, the creed was revised by the first Council of Constantinople to take sides on the question of the relation between God and the Holy Spirit, which was ignored in the earlier Creed of Nicaea. The position reached in 381 is that the Holy Spirit “proceeds from the Father” (*a Patre procedentem*), and is worshipped together with the Father and the Son.

Further elaboration of the place of the Holy Spirit in the Trinity came with Synod of Toledo in 447, which proclaimed that the Holy Spirit proceeds from both the Father and the Son. This doctrine was officially entered into the Nicene Creed in 589, with words affirming explicitly that the Holy Spirit “proceeds from Father and Son” (*ex Patre Filioque procedit*). It is relevant to note that there is no clear warrant in the NT for either including or excluding the *Filioque* clause. The dispute over this clause, which led to the Great Schism between the Eastern and the Western Churches, was a dispute among theologians and civil authorities rather than NT scholars.

Consider again the circumstances under which the Nicene Creed was promulgated. The 381 Council of Constantinople was convened by the Emperor Flavius Theodorus (not by Church authority) to combat remnants of Arianism among his subjects. At issue in particular was the Arian view that Jesus was created by God and hence not eternal. When the council pronounced that Jesus was born of God before all ages, the emperor ordered Church authorities to promulgate the new teaching, and threatened anyone who refused with punishment under his civil authority. Theodosius died in 395, the last ruler of an undivided Roman empire.

After Theodosius’ death, the empire was divided into eastern and western portions, ruled respectively by his sons Arcadius and Honorius. In the course of the next century, eastern and western branches of the Church began to drift apart, both culturally and politically. Greek became the working language of the eastern branch, and Latin of the western. Each branch developed its own rites, and its own doctrinal proclivities. Explicit conflicts in doctrine had emerged by the end of the 5th century, leading Pope Felix III to excommunicate Acacius, the Patriarch of Constantinople. Due to the Council

of Chalcedon in 431, the Patriarch of Constantinople at that time was recognized as supreme among fellow patriarchs in the east. Pope Felix's excommunication of Patriarch Acacius was the first move in a protracted power struggle between the eastern and the western branches of the Church.

Animosity between the two sectors was intensified with the emergence of the *Filioque* controversy following the Toledo Synod of 447. The western position on the matter was solidified by the requirement that the Franks under Charlemagne accept the *Filioque* clause when they entered communion with Rome in the early 9th century. The East reciprocated in the 869 Council of Constantinople, which challenged Rome's authority on matters of doctrine and excommunicated Pope Nicholas I. A later hostile act by the Eastern Church was the excommunication in 1054 of Pope Leo IX by Michael Cerularius, Patriarch of Constantinople. Excommunication of Cerularius by Leo was underway simultaneously, but Leo died in the process. This exchange was the immediate precursor to the Great Schism of 1054. It was followed by the brutal sack of Constantinople in 1204 during the Fourth Crusade.

By way of review, the compilation of Christian beliefs that evolved into the Apostles' Creed probably dates back to the early 2nd century AD. Different versions undoubtedly were generated by different groups of believers. As far as we know, the earliest versions were not committed to writing. If written versions were produced, we can be sure the authors were practicing Christians who were not theologians. Theologians were not involved in creedal formulation until the 325 Council of Nicaea, the first ecumenical gathering to issue a written report of its proceedings.

It is reasonable to presume that original unwritten versions served the dual purpose of standardizing group beliefs and of providing formats for professing these beliefs. According to the earliest surviving description of these earlier versions, they included words to the effect (in translation) “I believe in God the Father almighty, ... in Jesus Christ his only Son, ... and in the Holy Spirit.” By reciting such words, an individual believer could profess belief in the three Persons of the Trinity. This would have amounted to an expression of genuine belief(n) directed toward these three Persons.

Recent versions of both the Apostles’ and the Nicene Creeds add purportedly factual claims to the original beliefs(n). Mandated by relevant ecumenical councils, these additions are based primarily on theological arguments. The effect of such additions is to redirect the original beliefs(n) from the three Persons to characterizations of these Persons. Generally speaking, the intent of the councils in question was that individuals professing the creeds affirm that these characterizations are true. Since only doxastic belief can be true, the effect of these theological additions was to change the original beliefs(n) into purportedly factual beliefs(d). As a result, someone faithfully inclined to profess an original belief(n) might hesitate with the modified factual content.

Consider belief in God as an illustration. Both creeds invite an individual reciting them to affirm that God created heaven and earth. The Nicene Creed is more explicit in describing God as maker of “all things, seen and unseen” (*visibilium omnium et invisibilium*). If one takes this as a factual (rather than figurative) description, it is all too easy to read it as a rejection of what contemporary science has to say about the origin of the universe. The apparent quandary for someone who reads it this way is that belief in God seems contrary to well attested results of contemporary science. If affirming that

God created heaven and earth requires rejecting what science has to say on the matter, most thoughtful Christians today probably would opt for the latter.

According to the Nicene Creed, Jesus Christ was begotten but not made. To reconcile this with the preceding statement that God made everything, the creed adds that Jesus is God in being “consubstantial with the Father” (*consubstantialem Patri*). The term *consubstantialis* is a coinage of 14th century theology, rooted in an Aristotelain-based metaphysics that many Christians today consider outdated. A consequence is that professing belief in Jesus Christ by reciting the Nicene Creed engages theological views that many Christians today might not readily accept. The problem again is that beliefs(d) have been grafted onto earlier beliefs(n), making the creed a dubious vehicle for professing these original beliefs.

Regarding the Holy Spirit, in turn, procession “from the Father and the Son” (*ex Patri Filioque*) is built into the description of the Third Person in whom belief(n) might be professed. In professing this part of the creed, in effect, one seems required to take a stand on the *Filioque* issue that helped precipitate the bloody conflicts between the Christian Churches of Rome and Constantinople. Belief in the Holy Spirit should not be burdened with theological disputes about procession.

As far as creedal profession of belief(n) is concerned, the upshot is that both the Apostles’ and the Nicene Creeds have been preempted by theological asseverations that impede their use in the avowal of Christian faith. Although practicing Christians engage regularly in creedal profession, many undoubtedly “cross their fingers” mentally when they come to such parts as those sending Jesus to hell (*ad inferna*) after death on the cross or looking forward to bodily resurrection (*carnis resurrectionem*). One might be

reminded of Pope Francis' warning (Triduum, 2016) of the blindness to God's will that can result from "an excess of complicated theology."

An unproblematic role of the creeds in the life of the Church is signaled by their official Latin titles, namely *Symbolum Apostolorum* and *Symbolum Nicaenum*. Standard meanings of *symbolum* include "paired halves of a coin retained by two people as a sign of mutual commitment," and "sign by which something is commonly known." To recite one of the creeds is to signify one's commitment to the fellowship in which the recitation takes place. Alternatively, it is to make known one's identity as a practicing Christian. These uses of the creeds are not impeded by their excessive theological content.

(6.14) Christian Conviction as a Form of Symphoric Belief

As defined previously, belief(s) (symphoric belief) is acceptance of a comprehensive worldview as a reliable framework for the pursuit of a meaningful human life. Like its German equivalent *Weltanschauung*, the term 'worldview' conveys various meanings in various contexts. The meaning intended here is that of a general perspective from which a person might perceive and interpret the world. Worldviews figuring in foregoing discussions of this topic include those of animism, of secular humanism, and of Christianity.

Thus conceived, a worldview is not a description of the world or of things in the world. Descriptions can be expressed in propositions, and hence might be true or false. Expressed in propositional form, descriptions of the world are suitable objects of doxastic beliefs, which in turn are either true or false. But a perspective from which the world can be viewed and described is not itself a description. A perspective might be helpful or

unhelpful, advantageous or inauspicious, but never true or false. As a perspective for viewing the world, a worldview itself lacks truth-value.

Lack of truth-value makes worldviews unavailable as objects of belief(d). Since a worldview is not an aspect of the world, moreover, it is not a SOA. This makes it unsuitable as an object of belief(a) as well. Being neither a person, an institution, nor a source of information, furthermore, a worldview is not an object of belief(n). To accept a given worldview as a suitable perspective for viewing the world is an act of symmetric belief instead. And since worldviews lack truth-value, beliefs(s) themselves are neither true nor false.

Religious belief is a subset of belief(s), which means that not all beliefs(s) count as religious. Secular humanism is a case in point. In our preceding discussion of secular humanism, it was observed that its worldview features a “quest for abiding values” (*Humanist Manifesto I*) and the achievement of “an abundant and meaningful life” (*Humanist Manifesto II*). This latter document also describes secular humanism as “an expression of a living and growing faith.” These features, of course, are typical of religious worldviews as well. *Humanist Manifesto II*, however, is outspoken in its rejection of religion as a means of achieving these goals. It rejects “the existence of [anything] supernatural,” finds “the dogmas and myths of traditional religion” unsupported by “scientific evidence,” and criticizes “traditional religious morality” for denying “humans an appreciation of their own potentialities and responsibilities.” The “institutions, creeds, and rituals” of traditional religion, moreover, “often impede the will to serve others.” Acceptance of this humanistic worldview clearly is not a case of religious belief(s).

In addition to features shared with secular humanism, religions typically stress the importance of a community of believers. All major world religions have meeting places dedicated to communal worship, and all involve specific practices and rituals that believers enact in concert with one another. Among Christian rituals in particular are sacraments, such as baptism, communion, and marriage, along with group practices like creedal recitation and common prayer. A Christian perspective shows all these components in their respective places. And to accept this perspective as suitable for the pursuit of a meaningful human life is to engage in Christian belief(s).

Another important respect in which a Christian worldview differs from that of secular humanism pertains to the dynamic aspect of the former. The humanist worldview is static. It promises to give “personal meaning and significance” to the lives of people regardless of “race, religion, sex, age, or national origin” (*Humanist Manifesto II*), but includes no agenda for making that happen. Accepting this worldview does not commit a person to any particular course of action. Secular humanists meet occasionally to discuss common interests. It is not unreasonable to presume, however, that when the meeting adjourns, those in attendance typically shake hands, maybe sign a few documents, and go about their daily business as usual.

In some respects, the static worldview of secular humanism is like the vantage point of a land surveyor that shows a layout of physical objects fixed in place. Results of the survey are suitable for recording in fixed form on a two-dimensional map. If the layout of objects changes significantly, the map will be outdated and the new survey may be required.

The dynamic worldview of Christianity, on the other hand, is like the vantage point of a dance choreographer. This vantage point provides for a progressive rearrangement of dancers in motion. In working from this vantage point, the choreographer's primary concern is shaping this motion to convey an artistic vision. The choreographer's effort results in patterns of coordinated movement that can be exhibited in performance on stage. Although particular performances can be recorded on video, the choreographer's aim to produce patterns of motion that can be staged rather than fixed recordings of such motions.

It is not part of this analogy to depict an individual Christian as a dancer following the instructions of some "divine choreographer." The point of the analogy is that the Christian perspective, like that of the choreographer, is one featuring action pursued with a group of collaborating people. By accepting the Christian worldview, the individual believer engages a way of life that encourages certain communal actions and discourages others. For this acceptance to take place effectively, the Christian perspective must be presented in a form the individual believer can integrate into the practices of his or her daily life.

According to the present account, the Christian perspective is most effectively presented in narrative form. Presented as a narrative, the Christian worldview takes on a structure matching that of an individual person's life-story. Like an individual life-story, the Christian narrative has a beginning, a middle, and a projected end. When the Christian narrative is integrated into an individual life-story, the projected end of the narrative becomes the hoped-for end of the life-story of the person involved. This leads to the conception of religious belief around which the present study is organized. Christian

belief, in particular, is a merger of the Christian narrative with the life-story of an individual believer.

The present account is not intended to disqualify other conceptions of religious belief. There undoubtedly are Christians who think of their belief as a matter of accepting one or another static set of theological doctrines, such as can be found in one or another catechism. From the present perspective, however, this seems too much like acceptance of the abstract directives compiled for the guidance of secular humanists. Symphonic Christian belief is acceptance of a dynamic worldview, rather than acceptance of a set list of abstract doctrines.

(6.2) An Individual Person's Life-Story

According to the present account, once again, Christian belief(s) consists of a merger of the Christian narrative with the life-stories of individual believers. A synopsis of the Christian narrative has already been offered. Let us now review the essential features of an individual person's life-story.

An effective way of delineating these features is to contrast life-stories with autobiographies. To prepare for this contrast, we may note that life-stories and autobiographies are alike in two prominent respects. Both have some kind of beginning, and progress through an intermediate phase to some kind of end. Both, that is to say, are composed in narrative form. And both are focused on the lives of the individuals responsible for composing them. Beyond that, life-stories and autobiographies differ in essential respects.

By way of itemizing those respects, observe first (a) that autobiographies are formulated in public language. Whether written or delivered orally, autobiographies are intended to be shared with other people. This requires that they be recorded on media to which other people have access. Life-stories, by contrast, are essentially private. The medium on which an individual life-story is preserved is the self-awareness of the person involved. And no one has access to the self-awareness of another person.

A closely related difference is (b) that an autobiography is an artifact resulting from a deliberately undertaken task. The person composing it is consciously motivated by the goal of producing a certain kind of work. A typical life-story, on the other hand, is not the outcome of a consciously pursued task. Life-stories tend to unfold spontaneously, often without the person involved being aware of this happening. A notable exception occurs when the person involved deliberately joins his or her life-story with a religious narrative.

Other differences have to do with the way autobiographies and life-stories deal with time. One such difference is (c) that a proper autobiography is confined to past occurrences. Once the work is finished, events in the author's continuing life performance are omitted. This includes events that at a given future time the author might perceive as currently present. As far as temporality is concerned, on the contrary, an individual's life-story includes things past, things present, and things yet to come. Of these three temporal sectors, the present is likely to be most dominant. This is because self-awareness tends to the present as a default position, when it is not preoccupied with past or future.

A less obvious difference in this regard is (d) that events treated in autobiographies, unlike those in life-stories, can be routinely located in public time. As a

general rule, events in autobiographies occur at times that can be specified by clocks and calendars. This enables such events to be accurately arranged in chronological sequence, and to be temporally related to events experienced by other people. Events in an individual life-story, however, cannot be measured in public time. They are not measurable by the individual involved, since the inward self-awareness on which such events are recorded is incompatible with outward attention directed toward a measuring instrument. And they are not measurable by people other than the person involved, since an individual's self-awareness is not accessible by other people. Among the consequences of this predicament are that events in an individual life-story often cannot be arranged in precise chronological sequence without augmentation of self-awareness by memory, and often cannot be temporally connected with events in the lives of other individuals.

Our review of life-stories continues with further comments on the nature of self-awareness, of its temporal characteristics, and of its augmentation by other faculties. Next to be considered is the uniqueness of self-awareness among relations into which one might enter with oneself.

(6.21) Self-Awareness

Self-awareness is unique among relations with oneself in being reciprocal, being exclusively personal, and being inwardly directed. Being inwardly directed is a form of intentionality. To get this relation in focus, let us contrast it with other self-oriented relations that are not reciprocal, not intentional, and not confined to personal selves.

As defined previously, reciprocity is a two-term relation in which each term (x or y) inherently pertains to the other (y or x). Two contradictory statements are reciprocally related insofar as each pertains to the other with regard to their logical connection. When a statement contradicts itself, then the reciprocal relation of contradiction connects the statement to itself, so that in effect $x=y$ (x and y are identically the same statement). Thus, for example, when the statement 'the statement in this box is false' is inscribed in a box, identically the same statement appears in the box with vacillating truth-values.

The relation of self-contradiction, of course, is exemplified by certain statements but never by persons. Other examples of reciprocal relations that are impersonal include self-inclusion and self-reference. A catalog of reference works is self-inclusive if it lists itself among its contents. The catalog pertains inherently to each item among its contents, and each item pertains inherently to the list that includes it; this inasmuch as neither the catalog nor the items listed would be the same apart from one's relation to the other. (The catalog is a list of *those* specific items, and a given item is a member of *that* specific list). Self-reference is exemplified above by the statement in the box with vacillating truth-values. Another example of impersonal self-reference is Russell's paradoxical posit of a set including all sets that do not include themselves. (That particular set excludes *itself* in particular, which in turn is excluded by *that* particular set.)

Like those just noted, most instances of reciprocal (R) relations are impersonal (-P). In the reverse case, examples of self-implicating personal (P) relations that are not reciprocal (-R) are comparably hard to find. One such, however, is the relation of teaching oneself, as when someone learns Latin without help from other people. This relation is not reciprocal because the person's status as learner does not pertain inherently

to his or her status as a teacher. The person's identity as a learner of Latin would not change, that is to say, if another person were involved as teacher. Another example is the relation of self-restraint, when the term 'self-restraint' refers to an act rather than a character trait. A state senator might deliberately hold himself back from making offensive comments about a colleague in the senate chamber. Alternatively, the senator might be restrained from such speech by the rules of the senate. The identity of the affected senator remains the same regardless of the source of restraint. A few other possible examples of non-reciprocal self-directed personal relations are self-accusation, self-denial, and self-control.

Yet more exclusive is a self-directed relation that is both personal (P) and reciprocal (R). The only clear example I can find is self-awareness itself. Obviously involving persons capable of awareness, self-awareness is reciprocal because each of its terms pertains inherently to the other. When person N is aware of him or herself, there is a self that serves as subject of awareness and a self that serves as its object. If either subject-self or object-self were other than it is, the case no longer would be an instance of self-awareness on the part of N specifically.

It might be proposed that self-consciousness is another relation of this sort. To assess this proposal, we need to distinguish two senses of the term 'self-conscious'. In one sense, being self-conscious is a state of mind, roughly equivalent to being prone to embarrassment or being ill at ease. In this sense, a self-conscious person is someone overly concerned with the impression he or she makes on other people. In the other sense, being self-conscious is an activity consisting of someone's being conscious of him or

herself. It is self-consciousness in this latter sense that initially might seem equivalent to self-awareness.

There is one salient feature of self-consciousness, nonetheless, that self-awareness does not share. This feature has to do with the object toward which self-consciousness is directed. Consider the previously examined case of a young man at a dinner party who realizes that his coat is buttoned unevenly. He is nervously conscious both of other people's reaction to his faux pas and of his own awkwardly attired person. This latter is an instance of self-consciousness. The self toward whom his consciousness is directed in this case is the young man's public self, which is to say the self he displays to other people. Attending to his public self in this way requires that his consciousness be directed outward. His conscious attention is directed outward to the self that shares public space with the selves of other persons.

In self-awareness as thus far considered (later to be designated "focal self-awareness"), on the other hand, a person's attention is always directed inward. Since a person's attention cannot be directed inward and outward at the same time, self-consciousness and self-awareness cannot occur simultaneously. On balance, (focal) self-awareness appears to be the only self-oriented relation that is reciprocal, exclusively personal, and inward directed.

(6.211) Subject-Self and Object-Self Revisited

Self-awareness is a bipolar relation. At one pole is the subject whose attention is directed inward, previously designated the subject-self. At the other pole is the object of this

inward directed attention, previously designated the object-self. Self-awareness consists in the subject-self's awareness of the object-self.

The subject-self is active, the object-self passive. The object-self is passive not only in receiving the subject-self's attention. It also depends upon the subject-self for its existence. In the context of a given individual's self-awareness, that person's object-self would not exist without its corresponding subject-self. The subject-self, on the other hand, not only is inherently active, but also might exist apart from any involvement with its corresponding object-self. In the case of a person not given to introspection, there still would be a self that is actively engaged as subject of external perception. In the case of a normally introspective person, the subject-self will continue to function actively in moments when its attention is directed outward. When a person watches for a walk signal at an intersection, for example, the attention of that person's subject-self is focused on the traffic light without regard at that moment for its associated object-self.

There is yet another respect in which the object-self is passive. Not only is it the passive recipient of the subject-self's attention and dependent on the subject-self for existence. It is passive also in being subjected to innumerable feelings, sensations, and emotions. To suffer pain, for instance, is for the object-self to undergo a severely unpleasant sensation. Pain awareness consists in a subject-self directing its attention to its corresponding object-self in that condition. To experience joy, for another example, is for the object-self to undergo a feeling of delight or elation. Awareness of joy consists in the subject-self directing its attention to the object-self when it is affected by some such feeling. Other examples that might be elaborated that include a subject-self attending to an object-self affected by emotions like those of enthusiasm, of love, or of compassion.

To be sure, it is hard to pin down circumstances in which an object-self might be present to its corresponding subject while unaffected by any such qualities. Affections of this sort are the features on which a person's subject-self is fixed in (focal) self-awareness. An unaffected object-self is no more accessible by its subject-self's awareness than an invisible object is accessible by the faculty of vision. In the introspective act of (focal) self-awareness, the inner self that comes into view is a self passively engaged in being affected.

These observations regarding the subject-self's passivity are not countered by outwardly directed emotions like anger and resentment. Anger is an emotion that energizes a person's external behavior, quite apart from that person's internal state of self-awareness. In moments of anger, indeed, a person is unlikely to be internally aware of anything at all, directing his or her attention externally to the object of anger instead. Self-anger is no exception. Like anger directed toward other things, self-anger falls outside the domain of introspection. On occasions of self-anger, a person's self-awareness conceivably might disclose an object-self affected by the emotion of anger. But on such occasions, the object-self is neither the self that is actively engaged in being angry (the object-self is not active) nor the specific object toward which self-anger is directed (one is not angry at one's passive self).

In these respects, the emotion of resentment shows the same characteristics. To resent the speech or behavior of another person is an attitude actively engaged with regard to a set of external circumstances. The affection of resentment might be passively registered on the object-self of the person actively involved. But the object-self of that person is neither the agent nor the recipient of the resentment in question. Accordingly, if

the object-self of that person is engaged at all, it will not be involved the act of resentment as such. The object-self plays a role only when a person's attention is directed inward, whereas in resentment the person's attention is always directed outward.

The inward/outward distinction also rules out Hume's treatment of sense impressions (such as colors, sounds, and shapes) as having the same introspective status as feelings and emotions. In Hume's account, what we term "the self" is a collection of subjective experiences associated by cotemporality and collocation. Included among such experiences are impressions we learn to associate with external objects and affections we attribute to the internal self. In Hume's account, nothing beyond these experiences comes into view when the "mind's eye," so to speak, is "turned inward on itself."

From the present perspective, the relevant mistake in this account is the notion that impressions like colors and shapes are accessible when the mind's eye is turned inward, which is to say that they are accessible by introspection. When the attention of the subject-self is turned inward, it reveals an object-self affected by emotions such as gratitude or resentment, or by feelings such as pain or joy. But introspection never reveals anything characterized by color or shape. To gain awareness of objects characterized by color, sound, or shape, the attention of the subject must be directed outward. Internal awareness is no more capable of revealing colors and shapes than external awareness is capable of revealing feelings and emotions.

The relation between subject-self and object-self treated above is confined to internal awareness. We have been referring to it as "focal self-awareness," inasmuch as its focus is exclusively inward. There is a more diffuse mode of self-awareness, however, in which the subject is aware of the self in one or another external aspect. In being aware

of the color of one's hair or the sound of one's voice, for example, one's attention as subject is directed outward. The subject's awareness is a private occurrence, but its object is an occupant of the public domain. Even when directed toward public occurrences, nonetheless, this more diffuse awareness of self takes place within the private domain generated by the activity of its subject. An essential feature of this domain is that occurrences within it are located in subjective time. Like its focal counterpart, the activity of diffuse self-awareness occurs in private time. We turn now to reconsider relevant facets of this private time.

(6.212) The Specious Present

As an essential component of the medium in which the subject's life-story is recorded, diffuse self-awareness must have temporal dimensions. It must comprise a past, a present, and a projected future, providing for the corresponding phases of the life-story itself. In relation to each other, moments of diffuse self-awareness must occur within a temporal expanse. Within this expanse, moments of self-awareness are bound together in the subject's memory. Before returning to the contributions of memory, however, we should review the nature of momentary self-awareness itself.

Considered in isolation from other such moments, a moment of self-awareness (either focal and diffuse) itself exhibits a temporal spread. A given subject's awareness of itself occurs in a momentary present that is not clearly distinct either from the immediate past or from the immediate future. This moment of self-awareness is known as the "specious present," a term made prominent by William James in his *The Principles of*

Psychology. The present in question is specious (deceptive) in containing traces of times other than present within it.

The temporal expanse of self-awareness overall is the cumulative result of successive specious presents. One speciously present moment yields imperceptibly to the next, carrying the subjective time of self-awareness along with it. What once was present fades indiscernibly into the past, and what previously had been future flows indiscernibly into the present. Although vacillaing between inward and outward directionality, the self-aware subject's attention moves seamlessly forward from past to future. Following the lead of the specious present on which it is based, the time of self-awareness moves ever forward. In ways discussed previously, this forward movement of private time enables the establishment of a public time in which individual subjects can coordinate their respective activities by use of clocks and chronometers.

The role of the specious present in constituting subjective time is comparable to that of the talon in a zipper. As the specious present moves forward, the previously past and the previously future are seamlessly meshed together. What was and what will be are joined in one continuing expanse of subjective time. There are obvious disanalogies, to be sure, one of which is that past and future are joined only at the present, unlike the two sides of the zipper joined together throughout. Another disanalogy is that there is no end-state of subjective time corresponding to a fully meshed zipper. When the talon has done its job, the zipper stays meshed until the talon is reversed. Subjective time, however, cannot be reversed. When the specious present has finished meshing past and future together, subjective time on the part of the concerned individual ceases to exist. Past,

present, and future are simultaneously terminated. This can happen temporarily, as in dreamless sleep, or permanently, in the case of death.

The specious present binds past and future together in a temporal expanse that enables the past, present, and projected future of the personal life-story to unfold in the context of that expanse. Without memory, however, a temporal expanse would lack the content needed to render it in the form of an intelligible narrative. A given individual's life-story is reorded on a temporal expanse, successive moments of which are occupied by contents drawn from that person's memory. Let us review the feaures of memory that enable it to provide the content in question.

(6.213) Episodic and Discursive Memory Revisited

A person's life-story is recorded on his or her (diffuse) self-awareness, augmented by memories that provide both content and coherence. Although present awareness and conscious anticipation are involved as well, by far the lion's share of a life-story's content is contributed by memory. Various forms of memory have been distinguished in various disciplines for various purposes, most commonly with reference to short-term and long-term memories. A more basic distinction is between episodic and discursive memories, both of which contain memories of shorter and longer terms. Both episodic and discursive memories contribute to the augmented self-awareness in which life-stories are recorded.

As used in this study, the term "episodic memory" refers to direct recall of episodes (events, circumstances) encountered in the subject's past experience. Examples are recalling the thrill of a downhill ski run, and remembering the taste of a perfectly ripe

muskmelon. At one point the muskmelon taste was directly present in the subject's external awareness. Moments afterward the taste passes into the subject's short-term memory. Eventually it may recede into long-term memory, without noticeable diminution of its distinctive flavor. Regardless of the time span over which episodic recall takes place, the taste is directly present within the subject's episodic memory.

In the subject's initial experience of the muskmelon, its taste is immediately (directly) present in the subject's sensory awareness. The taste and the awareness are directly related without intervention of any mediating factor. The subject's awareness of the tasty muskmelon remains unmediated when sensory awareness shifts into short-term memory. In the typical course of events, moreover, short-term extends into long-term memory without an intervening factor being inserted. Even in long-term memory, the subject is likely to remain directly aware of muskmelon episode with its distinctive taste. As long as episodic memory prevails (over discursive memory), its object is directly present to the subject of awareness. Episodic memory, accordingly, can be characterized as a two-term relation between subject and object, with no third factor intervening between the two terms.

The episodic memory illustrated by these cases is distinct from recalling *that* a given ski run was thrilling, or *that* a given muskmelon tasted deliciously ripe. These latter are cases of discursive memory instead. A given person's life-story will include many circumstances and events that were never present within the subject's immediate awareness. Examples include facts regarding the subject's ancestry, along with relevant events that occurred during the subject's lifetime of which he or she was not directly aware. The lives of many people currently in their late-fifties were affected by the death

of John F. Kennedy in 1963, for example, but few of these people experienced that event personally. To the extent that this event enters into their personal life-stories, it would be through discursive rather than episodic memory.

Discursive memory is so-labelled because its contents are acquired primarily through discourse, which is to say primarily through the use of language. Most people concerned learned of Kennedy's death by some form of news report (newspaper, television), after which it was stored in their discursive memories. When committed to memory, such facts retain their discursive form. The form of discourse involved is such that: (i) it represents SOAs (like Kennedy's death), (ii) it represents them as either being the case or not being the case, and (iii) it is either true or false depending on the veracity of the representation.

Not all discourse represents SOAs. The warning "watch out" is an example. The discourse currently in question (i) represents SOAs in the sense of standing in for (representing) their presence. A representation of a particular SOA refers to the particular SOA it represents. Its nature is such that it stands in for that particular SOA exclusive of all others. In learning of Kennedy's death initially, the subject relies on the representational capacities of public language. When that event is stored in discursive memory, representational capacities of the subject's cerebral cortex take over. Essentially involved in either case is a representation intentionally related to the SOA it represents. The representation in question stands in for that SOA exclusively.

Representations (ii) stand in for SOAs that either are or are not the case. The quality of the representation does not depend on the status of the SOA it represents. Some representations stand in for SOAs that might have been but were not the case, as in

“*yesterday’s predicted thunderstorm* did not materialize.” Others stand in for SOAs that are not but might yet be the case, as in “I hope *tomorrow’s weather* is sunny”. There are even representations of things that cannot occur, such as “a set’s being a member of the empty set.” The discourse involved in discursive memory employs representations both of SOAs that are the case and of SOAs that might be the case but in fact are not. In the case of a particular representation, such as that of Kennedy’s dying in 1963, the status of the SOA at hand (its being the case or its not being the case) is not indicated by the representation itself.

The discourse involved in discursive memory is capable of ascribing status to the SOAs represented within it. Like representations themselves, ascriptions of status can take various forms. However formulated, a representation designates a SOA, and a status-ascription assigns a status to the designated SOA. With its capability of ascribing status to the SOAs represented within it, discursive memory takes on the character of propositional discourse. In effect, discursive memory retains the structure of the public discourse responsible for its contents. Most people first heard of Kennedy’s assassination through propositionally structured reports in newspapers or television broadcasts. That same propositional structure was retained when those reports were transferred to memory. Whereas before the transfer both representation and status-ascription were formulated in public language, however, afterwards they were formulated in terms of (less well understood) structures in the linguistic cortex.

The contents of discursive memory are (iii) true or false according to the match between status ascribed and the actual status of a relevant SOA. Given that Kennedy actually died in 1963, it is false to assign the status of being the case to the SOA of his

dying in 1964. A person who remembers 1964 as his date of death is burdened with a false discursive memory. By reverse token, a discursive memory to the effect that he died in 1963 corresponds to the facts of the matter and accordingly is true.

In one form or another, representations are essential to discursive memory. This means that discursive memory, unlike its episodic counterpart, embodies a three-term relation. One term is the diffuse self-awareness of the subject engaged in the memory. Another is the event or SOA toward which the subject's awareness is directed. In between is the representation that directs the subject's awareness toward the event or SOA in question. The representation is the mediating term that connects the subject's state of awareness with its corresponding object.

Episodic and discursive memories are both implicated in the life-story of an individual human being. More than that, the two types of memory interact in the unfolding of the story. Given their stark difference in structure, it is not immediately apparent how this interaction takes place. Let us review our previous discussion of this topic, bringing different aspects of the interaction to the fore.

Episodic memories are often converted into discursive form. I once encountered some delicious wild raspberries in Norway, within shouting distance of the original site of Wittgenstein's cottage. My episodic memory of their taste persisted for as much as a decade. After frequent reflection on this taste-memory subsequently, the discursive memory *that* I had tasted delicious raspberries on that occasion came to dominate the original episodic memory. A representation of the event had intervened between the original experience and my previously immediate awareness of the event.

Discursive memories, on the other hand, cannot be converted into episodic form. In episodic memory, the object remembered is directly present in the subject's awareness. This is the effective upshot of its being a two-term relation. In discursive memory, however, the intermediate representation plays the essential role of holding subject and object together. The subject is connected to the object by the intentional reference of the representation. If the representation were removed, the subject's awareness would lack a specific object. Since the intermediate term would have to be eliminated to convert a three-term into a two-term relation, the result in this case would be no specific memory at all. Removal of the intermediate term of a discursive memory could never result in the direct presence of object to subject that is characteristic of episodic memory.

Another characteristic of episodic memory is that the events remembered typically are not located in chronological time. Entertaining an episodic memory of a particular event does not by itself comprise a memory of when it occurred. Moreover, a series of events might be remembered episodically with no indication even of the order in which they occurred. With occasional exceptions, as when the episode remembered includes a salient date (e.g., a wedding anniversary), episodic memories remain undated.

Discursive memories, however, often incorporate locations in chronological time. I confidently remember my date of birth, along with the fact that my paternal grandfather died shortly thereafter. I also remember discursively that my raspberry experience in Norway occurred during my term as Visiting Fellow at Oxford. The unsurprising reason behind such memories is that references to chronological time are often included in the SOAs toward which discursive memories are directed.

A consequence of their time-referential capacities is that the contents of discursive memory often can be reinforced by written records and by communication with other people. My memory that my grandfather died in 1929, for instance, is corroborated by an obituary found in a local newspaper. And I have established other salient dates in my grandfather's life by correspondence with various relatives. Because it is open to corroboration of this sort, discursive memories are relatively stable. Whereas episodic memories by nature cannot be verified, discursive memories provide a basis for a coherent life-story.

(6.214) The Plasticity of Narrative Memory

Life-stories are recorded in a person's diffuse self-awareness augmented by discursive memory. To supplement the narrative form of a person's life-story in this manner, discursive memory itself must take on narrative form. Empirical studies of what psychologists call "narrative memory" provide insight into the narrative structure of life-stories themselves.

Narrative memory is so-called by psychologists because it organizes remembered events in the form of an ongoing story. It also employs certain strategies, as it were, to make the resulting story coherent. One such strategy is to eliminate memories that do not fit into the developing pattern of the story. Another is a tendency to alter remaining memories if necessary to make them fit into the pattern. Yet another is to insert projected goals that make past sequences of events appear less fortuitous and more purposeful. Each of these strategies results in changes that are less likely to occur in sequences of

memories not organized in narrative form. Taken together, these strategies bring a characteristic plasticity to narrative memory.

In the application of these strategies, narrative memory operates in a manner comparable to that of a responsible historian. During early stages of the writing process, the historian sorts through available facts to identify those especially relevant to the project at hand. This amounts to setting aside other material as irrelevant. Narrative memory operates in a similar fashion by eliminating *de facto* memories that contribute little to the story it is piecing together. Hypothetical examples include episodic memories like that of a sibling's eye color, and discursive memories like that of a grandparent's mode of dress. If included, such details would detract from the cohesion of the developing narrative overall.

During middle stages of the writing process, the historian commonly will encounter gaps in the set of facts with which he or she is working. To fill in such gaps, a responsible historian will probably conduct additional research, such as interviewing knowledgeable people or reading other historical accounts. Narrative memory might occasionally follow suit by dredging up discursive facts it once had been aware of but had since forgotten. This could happen if something in the subject's current experience recalls a previously forgotten fact to mind. For the most part, however, narrative memory tends to rework its store of discursive facts to close the gap. Operating as it does without constraints of historical accountability, narrative memory is likely to preserve coherence by making adjustments to its contents. A memory of a venture that ended poorly, for instance, might be recast as a memory of a welcome opportunity to undertake a more promising venture.

A third point of comparison has to do with narrative memory's incorporation of goals and purposes yet to be achieved. This too has an analogue in the composition of historical accounts. Although history by nature is focused on past events, these events often are described with an eye toward their future significance. An example is the differing treatments of the Bolshevik revolution by Leon Trotsky (*The History of the Russian Revolution*, 1930) and W. H. Chamberlin (*Russian Revolution 1917-1918*, 1935). In the Introduction of the former, Trotsky writes that his analysis of the social culture in Russia, "far from having been accommodated ex post facto to the achieved events, was on the contrary made ... long before the revolution" (Max Eastman, trans. 1932). In other words, Trotsky's account was written with what he considered a favorable outcome in view. Chamberlin, on the other hand, while writing from the opposite point of view, recognized that the events in question constituted a "historical panorama, always moving and dramatic, heroic, or tragic, or both, according to one's point of view" (Introduction). Chamberlin's account, in other words, viewed the events in question as unfavorable, but acknowledged that a historians's view of the outcome flavors his or her treatment of their antecedents.

So also narrative memory is shaped with an anticipation of where the story in question is heading. Events in the subject's past and present take on the aspect of means that enable the achievement of various ends. Most of the ends in question are transitory, as when one leaves work early as an expedient for getting to the store before it closes. There are other ends, however, whose influence over past and present is more pervasive. Someone aiming at a medical career, for instance, will typically spend years in

preparation, such that large segments of his or her narrative memory are dominated by that particular goal.

Such is the case as well with a given individual's life-story, inasmuch as that life-story is augmented by the narrative memory of the person involved. Although transitory goals might occasionally come into play, a typical life-story includes longterm goals that shape the course of the developing story overall. Overarching goals of this sort might spring from various sources. If one's long-term goal is to amass a billion-dollar fortune, that goal probably resulted from being brought up in culture that places a high value on wealth. A life-story oriented toward that goal typically will feature activities undertaken with little concern for the wellbeing of other people. On the other hand, if one's long-term goal is to do what can be done in the service of other people, that goal probably resulted from a formative exposure to values ranking care for others over care devoted to the pursuit of wealth.

A formulation of such a goal that is particularly relevant for present purposes is the second great commandment of the NT. By and large, we may assume, this goal results from a formative exposure to NT values. Such an exposure is most likely to take place within the context of the Christian narrative.

Having recapitulated both the formulation of an individual life-story and the Christian narrative itself, let us return for a further look at the nature of their merger.

(6.3) The Merger Revisited

As one of its characteristic functions, the Christian narrative provides a master plan for participating in a Christian community. The interaction between narrative and community

in this regard casts the narrative in two distinct roles. On one hand, the narrative lends the community in question its Christian identity. The community is Christian because of the narrative in which its members participate. If its members share no common narrative, the community might not be fully Christian. On the other hand, the narrative provides guidelines for members of the community to follow in their communal lives. There are guidelines regarding shared rituals (e.g., the Lord's Supper), shared practices (reciting the Lord's Prayer), and appropriate values to maintain (neighborly love). Taken together, these guidelines mark out a way of life that identifies those who follow it as Christian.

The Christian narrative also provides goals that inform the personal lives of the individuals concerned. Two such goals are featured in the Westminster Catechism, which pronounces that the "chief end of man" is "to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever." Among the various senses of 'to glorify' (*doxazō*) distinguished previously, the most immediately relevant sense is to render praise. This sense is illustrated in *Mark 2:12*, where witnesses are said to have glorified God when the paralytic picked up his bed and walked.

The other goal, according to this source, is to enjoy God forever. This second goal is also emphasized in the Baltimore Catechism (No.4) of 1891, which states that God made humans "to be happy with Him forever." Both documents say, in effect, that human beings were created for the ultimate purpose of existing eternally in a felicitous relation with God. In our earlier attempt to make this intelligible, eternal life was characterized as a timeless state in which being known and being loved by an eternal God sustains an individual self in existence. For a given individual to exist eternally, that is to say, is for that self to share in the timeless life of God as an object of God's knowledge and love.

The Baltimore Catechism adds yet another goal for the believer to achieve by reversing the direction of this relation of knowing and loving. According to the 1891 edition, in addition to the end of being “happy with Him forever,” God made the human individual “to know Him (and) to love Him” in the present world of time. The three goals humans are created to achieve, according to these documents in combination, are to glorify God, to enjoy him forever, and both to know him and to love him in the present world. All three goals come into play when an individual’s life-story is merged with the Christian narrative.

As far as a person’s life in time is concerned, one of the merger’s key results is to dispose that person to conduct his or her life according to the dictates of the second great commandment. This commandment is not a goal to be achieved, and does not pertain to the person’s relation to God directly. It rather is a guiding principle intended to regulate a person’s interaction with other people. As formulated in *Matthew* 22:39, the second great commandment is “You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Greek above).

The importance of this precept in the Christian way of life is forcefully stated by Paul in *Romans* 13:8-10. As he puts it, the (OT) commandments “You shall not commit adultery; You shall not murder; You shall not steal; You shall not covet;” along with any other commandment, “are summed up in this word: You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (13:9, Greek above). Since “love does no wrong to a neighbor,” Paul goes on to say, “love is the fulfillment of the law” (13:10, Greek above). The message is repeated in *Galatians* 5:14: “For the whole law is fulfilled in one word--You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Greek above).

Although the NT contains no terminology equivalent to our expression “meaning of life” (which itself has various meanings), it should be clear that a life led in accord with the second great commandment is a meaningful life. Inasmuch as merging one’s life-story with the Christian narrative disposes one to lead a life of this sort, the contributions to a meaningful life of such a merger are obvious. Nevertheless, it will be worth our while to review the nature of these contributions more carefully.

(6.31) Remarks on a Meaningful Christian Life

The second great commandment calls for a reorientation of one’s customary attitudes toward other people. It calls for replacing one’s natural self-concern with an overriding concern for one’s neighbors. In place of an outlook dominated by self-interest, compliance with this commandment requires relating to other people with their interests primarily in view. In its most basic respect, compliance with this commandment amounts to relinquishing one’s view of oneself as more important than other people. In effect, the net result of compliance is the replacement of pride with humility.

According to the reading of the Eden story most in keeping with the NT, as argued previously, Adam’s original sin was a prideful attempt to manage God’s newly created universe in a manner serving his own self-interest. The advent of Christianity brought with it both awareness that this sin required atonement and a way of life enabling Adam’s descendents to avoid repeating it. The need for atonement was satisfied by Christ’s death on the cross. A regimen for avoiding repetition, in turn, was provided by the second great commandment. In effect, the commandment of neighborly love marked the way that Jesus laid out for his followers to forestall repetition of the sin of pride.

Although the term *agapaō* (to love) is used in the formulation of both great commandments, the love mandated by the second commandment is significantly different from that of the first. The love mandated by the first great commandment is the counterpart of the love shown by God in giving his Son for the salvation of the world. In response to this love on God's part, the first commandment enjoins the world to return God's love in comparable measure (with all one's heart, mind, and so forth). From the human perspective, the love involved in the first commandment is that of unstinting gratitude for God's superlative gift.

For present purposes, it should be noted that gratitude is a fitting response to favors shown, to services rendered, and to gifts given. Love in the sense of gratitude is a form of affection appropriately directed toward a benefactor. Even God would not be a suitable recipient of gratitude apart from his gifts to the human race. Gratitude, moreover, is not an antidote to pride. A person subject to pride could be deeply grateful for gifts from a loved one without his or her pride being even slightly diminished. Indeed, one might be proud of being the kind of person who would show suitable gratitude toward a generous patron.

The love mandated by the second great commandment, however, differs from gratitude in both respects. For one, love of neighbor is not a response to benefits rendered. When asked for an illustration of neighborly love in *Luke* 10:29, Jesus responded with the parable of the Good Samaritan. In this story, it is clear that the Samaritan's care of the wounded traveler had nothing to do with gratitude for services rendered. The Samaritan's "(felt) compassion" (*esplanchnisthē*, 10:33) for the victim was an unalloyed instance of neighborly love, shown toward someone he had not known

previously. As with neighborly love generally, the Samaritan's care of the wounded traveler was freely given, and in no way earned by the recipient.

Unlike gratitude, moreover, love of neighbor is an effective antidote to pride. Love is effective in that capacity for reasons having to do with the dynamics of human awareness. Personal pride is a matter of holding oneself in high esteem, equivalent to a sense of self-importance. When engaged in an attitude of high self-esteem or self-importance, one's attention is directed inward toward one's personal self. When engaged in love of neighbor, on the other hand, one's attention is directed outward toward the other person or persons in question. Since a subject's attention cannot be directed outward and inward simultaneously, love of neighbor precludes holding oneself actively in high esteem.

There is a distinction, of course, between pride as an active state of self-esteem and pride as a character trait or disposition. A proud person is someone disposed to manifest pride, which is compatible with that person's attention being directed outward on particular occasions. By reverse token, a person disposed to neighborly love might direct his or her attention inward on occasion, even to the extent of indulging in moments of self-esteem. In point of fact, the opposition between neighborly love and pride runs deeper than the antithesis between outward and inward attention. At this deeper level, the opposition involves a tendency toward favoritism or partiality.

Immediately following his endorsement of the second great commandment at *James* 2:8, the author cautions his readers: "But if you show partiality, you commit sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors" (*ei de prosōpolēmpeteite, hamartian ergazesthe elenchomenoi hupo tou nomou hōs parabatai, 2:9*). Paul reinforces this

caution against partiality in *Romans* 2:11, which reads simply: “God shows no favoritism” (Greek above, including the term *prosōpolēmpsia*, translated either ‘partiality’ or ‘favoritism’). According to the sequence of *James* 2:8-9, the second great commandment enjoins that one should show no more partiality toward oneself than toward other people.

Being partial to oneself amounts to thinking of oneself as occupying a position of central importance in the world. In effect, it amounts to thinking of the world as revolving around oneself. The disposition of pride is a tendency to view oneself as superior in importance to other people in the world. The second great commandment is an injunction to forswear that form of partiality. Obedience to this commandment requires treating one’s neighbors as no less important than oneself in pursuit of one’s daily affairs.

Neighborly love is an antidote to the sin of pride insofar as it counters one’s inherent disposition to think of oneself as uniquely important in a world shared by other creatures. From the viewpoint of the NT, at least, this is the disposition that led to Adam’s original sin. Thus viewed, neighborly love is the NT’s prescription for being worthy of the redemption from Adam’s sin accomplished by Christ’s death on the cross.

(6.32) The Depths of Neighborly Love

Neighborly love is the source of benefits beyond that of overcoming pride. As just noted, a person’s inborn disposition toward pride often takes the form of an inclination to think of him or herself as more important than other people. Metaphorically, this is an inclination to think of the world as centered around oneself. Since the world in fact is not

so disposed, this way of thinking conflicts with the way things actually stand in the world. For people caught up in this way of thinking, such a conflict is likely to result in frustration and unhappiness.

Generally speaking, it seems fair to say, a person's natural reaction to such a conflict is an attempt to alter the circumstances that provoke it. On the part of a particular person caught up in self-importance, the natural reaction is an attempt to alter aspects of the world perceived by that person as contrary to his or her self-interest. In effect, the natural reaction of such a person is an attempt to reshape the world to his or her own liking. Inasmuch as such attempts are seldom successful, the upshot is that people so inclined render their happiness hostage to the vicissitudes of fortune. So disposed, people who think of themselves as uniquely important tend to be unhappy people.

Instead of trying to reshape the world, the other way of relieving this conflict is to change the attitude of self-importance from which it stems. On the surface, this amounts to acknowledging that the world does not revolve around oneself and does not owe one preferential treatment. Although acknowledging this does not guarantee happiness, it reduces the risk of unhappiness caused by willful resistance to an indifferent world. On a superficial level, at least, an acknowledgement to this effect is a prudential judgment, and does not rely on the backing of a radical prescription like the second great commandment.

The commandment of neighborly love calls for a more deep-seated change in the way one thinks about one's place in the world. Beyond the initial change of acknowledging one's relative unimportance, neighborly love dictates a view of the world from which matters of personal importance are no longer a dominant concern. For

someone occupying this perspective, self-concern recedes into the background, where it becomes indistinguishable from concern for other people. In this way of viewing the world, questions about individual self-importance do not even arise.

Considered from this perspective, the customary phrasing of the second commandment itself can be misleading. In its customary phrasing, the second commandment mandates love of neighbor patterned after love of self. Love of self persists as a model for love of neighbor. Not only is self-love (being self-centered) itself problematic, as argued previously, but the implied distinction between self and other that it embodies seems contrary to a deeper understanding of the second commandment. In its deeper reading, the second commandment sets aside the contrast between self and other. Its basic prescription for a Christian life is not about how one specific person (oneself) should relate to other specific persons. It is instead about a relation that should prevail regardless of specific people involved.

Kierkegaard makes what I take to be the same point in his *Works of Love* (translated by Howard and Edna Hong, 1962, Harper Torchbooks). Speaking of Christian love in contrast with erotic love (*eros*) and friendship (*philia*), both of which he considers “preferential” (directed toward objects of preference, p. 65), he points out “that its object is without any ... definite qualifications of difference” (p.77). A person is not a neighbor, he goes on to say, “in the sense that the king is king, the scholar a scholar, your relative your relative” (p. 97). “In being a neighbor,” rather, “we are all unconditionally like each other” (p. 97). The point is summed up with the remark that neighborly love is “loving everyone in particular but no one in partiality” (p. 78). Kierkegaard’s development of the point relies on a somewhat idiosyncratic (and scripturally unfounded) understanding of

what it is to be a neighbor. Without regard to wording, however, his *Works of Love* is a remarkably insightful examination of Christian love as such.

With regard to wording in scripture, it is noteworthy that there are five passages in the Gospels where the second commandment is expressed in the terminology of self and neighbor. One is *Matthew* 19:19, where Jesus instructs a young man schooled in OT morality regarding requirements for gaining eternal life. Another is *Matthew* 22:39, where Jesus responds to a lawyer's trick question about the "great commandment in the Law" (*entolē megalē en tō nomō*, 22:36). In his response, Jesus distinguishes two great commandments, the second of which is "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (*Agapēseis ton plēsion sou hōs seauton*, 22:39). Two further passages are *Mark* 12:31 and *Mark* 12:33, where a scribe endorses Jesus' statement of the two great commandments. Fifth is *Luke* 10:27, where a lawyer replies to Jesus' question about "what is written in the Law" (*En tō nomō ti gegraftai*, 10:26) regarding the inheritance of eternal life. In his reply, the lawyer identifies both great commandments, expressing the second in exactly the same terms as at *Matthew* 22:39. In all of these situations, the men concerned are well versed in OT law. The relevant part of that law is recorded in *Leviticus* 19:18, where the Septuagint expresses the second commandment in exactly the same terms as at *Matthew* 22:39 and *Luke* 10:27. It stands to reason that Jesus should use OT terminology when speaking with people schooled in OT law.

When presenting the second commandment to his disciples, on the other hand, Jesus eschews the terminology of self and neighbor. Thus at *John* 13:34 he expresses as a new commandment "that "just as I have loved you, so you are to love one another" (*kathōs ēgapēsa humas hina kai humeis agapate allēlous*). Essentially the same wording

occurs at *John* 15:12. The simplest formulation, however, is found in *1 John* 4:7: “Let us love one another” (*agapōmen allēlous*). Comparably simple formulations also appear in *Romans* 13:8, *1 Thessalonians* 3:12, and *1 John* 4:11. What is essential about this love relation is not who should bear it to whom, but that everyone should bear it to everyone else without regard to specific identity.

This love is a relation in which all people are called to participate, but one in which no individual person plays a unique part. Every participating individual is active in loving all other individuals, which is to say that every individual is an agent of love. But every participating individual also is passive in being loved by everyone else involved, which is to say that every individual is an anonymous recipient of love. Every participating individual is both agent and patient. When a given individual ceases to participate (by death or some other reason), moreover, the relation itself remains unaltered. The dynamics of this love relation are such that it remains in effect regardless of individuals involved in any particular instance. Specific participants come and go, but the relation itself is ever present.

The dynamics of this love relation reflect its timeless (eternal) origin. As God loved his Son, so Jesus loved his disciples (*John* 15:9). And as Jesus loved his disciples, so they are to love one another (*John* 15:12). Proceeding by this line of transmission, God’s timeless love energizes the love for each other that Jesus enjoined upon his followers. For those who internalize the second great commandment at its deepest level, their love for each other is a temporal manifestation of God’s eternal love. Thus it is that concerned individuals participate in this love in a manner transcending their personal identity.

More than this, individuals who internalize the second commandment at its deepest level contribute to the fulfillment of the love God invested in the human race. According to 1 *John* 4:12, at least, "if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us" (*ean agapōmen allēlous, ho theos en hēmin menei kai hē agapē autou en hēmin teteleiōmenē estin*). A parallel message regarding fulfillment is conveyed by 1 *John* 2:5 and 1 *John* 5:3 in tandem. The first passage attests that "God's love is perfected" (*hē agapē tou theou teteleiōtai*) by whoever keeps his commandments, whereas the second confirms that keeping his commandments is tantamount to "the love of God" (*hē agapē tou theou*). An alternative translation of (the verbs based on) *teleiō* in 2:5 and 4:12 is "completed," or maybe "finished." In any case, the author of 1 *John* affirms that complete submission to the second great commandment contributes to completion of the love that God conveyed to the human race through the love he invested in Jesus Christ.

(6.33) The Merger's Contribution to Eternal Life

Let us repeat with shifted emphasis. In what appears to be its standard formulation, the second great commandment prescribes that followers of Jesus should love each other. The term we translate "love" here is *agapē*, which (in contrast to *philia*) is an unconditional form of affection. With its predominantly outward orientation, love of others is an effective antidote to the inward-directed condition of pride. In its role of countering pride, the second great commandment shapes a person's temporal interactions with other people.

On a deeper level, the second commandment also shapes an individual Christian's relation with God in human time. On this deeper level, the commandment eschews the distinction between self and neighbor, mandating instead a form of love to be shared with other people regardless of distinctive identity. The nature of this love is such that it originates in prototype with God ("God is Love"), is mediated by God's love of Jesus, and becomes humanly effective through Jesus' love of his followers. The love his followers are commanded to show for each other during their human lifetimes is derivative in origin from the love that God initially showed for Jesus, and similar in nature to the love Jesus subsequently showed for his disciples.

On this deeper level as well, the second great commandment provides a pathway for gaining compresence with God in a timeless state of existence. According to *1 John* (2:5, 4:12), at least, God's love is perfected by the love people show for each other in keeping with this commandment. Without his people's selfless love for each other, God's love itself would be incomplete. In a manner of speaking, God's initial love is an investment in humanity, and the love his people show for each other is a return rendered in response to that investment. Expressed less metaphorically, the love God's people show for each other is a return in kind for the gift of love God conveyed through Jesus Christ.

Love rendered as a return in kind is different from the love of God mandated by the first great commandment. The love mandated by the first commandment is an expression of gratitude, but leaves nothing about God unfulfilled if it is not duly rendered. Love returned in response to the second commandment, on the other hand, helps bring God's love for humanity to completion. Love of human beings for each other

augments God's initial love in a way that would leave God's love unfulfilled if human love were not duly rendered to other humans in turn.

The sequence *1 John* 4:7-12 ends with the affirmation that if God's people love one another, "his love is perfected" (*hē agapē autou ... teteleiōmenē estin*, 4:12) in them. It begins with the affirmation that everyone who loves according to the second commandment "comes from God and knows God" (*ek tou theou gegennētai kai ginōskei ton theon*, 4:7). The verb *ginōsko* (*ginōskei*, knows) here also figures essentially in Jesus' definition of eternal life at *John* 17:3. In this by now familiar passage Jesus prays to God in behalf of the followers God has given him, saying that eternal life is "that they know (*ginōskōsin*) you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent" (Greek above).

This is the manner in which obedience to the second great commandment serves as a pathway to eternal life (*zōēn aiōnion*, *John* 17:2). By loving one another, his people complete God's love and thereby come to know God immediately. When situated beyond the realm of human time, this immediate knowledge of God converts into a compresence with God in his timeless state of existence. This is the spiritual counterpart of the physical relation of *ginōsko* (knowing) through which Adam generated the human race when he "knew his wife Eve" (*egnō Euan tēn gunaika autou*, *Genesis* 4:1).

Modern reproductive technology aside, human individuals enter the realm of time through interactions of knowing in the sense that Adam knew Eve. According to the Christian narrative, Jesus Christ was an exception in being conceived by the Holy Spirit. Jesus' mission in the realm of time was to establish a path that individual humans might follow with the prospect of coming to know God in another sense, a sense that

transcends time. According to the Christian narrative, at least, the path from temporal to timeless existence must be traversed in fellowship with other people. The discipline required for not diverging from this path is to join one's fellows in mutual love.

When merged with an individual's life-story, the Christian narrative brings the goal of timeless existence to bear in that person's temporal affairs. The goal of timeless existence becomes a factor in his or her daily life. With the narrative's emphasis on selfless love, such a merger also enhances a person's interactions with his or her fellow human beings. In the words of *Romans* 13:10, "love does no harm to a neighbor" (*hē agape tō plēsion kakon ouk ergazetai*). Merger of Christian narrative and life-story also brings the path to eternal life into bold relief. It does not guarantee success in negotiating that path. But it does provide a goal guaranteed to bring meaning to an individual human life.

In his *Culture and Value* (University of Chicago Press, 1984, trans. Peter Winch, p. 32e), Wittgenstein observes that Christianity offers us a narrative in historical form that is not subject to belief in the manner of a standard historical narrative. Belief in a standard historical narrative is conditional on "historical truth," and can be withdrawn on the basis of contrary evidence. The Christian narrative, however, should be believed "through thick and thin, which you can do only as the result of a life." Wittgenstein goes on to say, in his own italicized words (translated): "*Here you have a narrative; don't take the same attitude to it as you take to other historical narratives! Make a quite different place*" for it in your life.

(6.4) The Present Account of Religious Belief in Practice

A central thesis of the present account is that religious belief is symphoric rather than doxastic. Both symphoric and doxastic belief are forms of acceptance. Doxastic belief(d) is acceptance of particular propositions or sets of propositions as true. The proposition representing snow's being white is true just in case the state of affairs (SOA) of snow's being white in fact is the case. To accept a proposition to that effect as true is to believe(d) that the SOA of snow's being white indeed is the case in the actual world.

Symphoric belief, on the other hand, has nothing to do with propositions. Belief(s) is acceptance of an overarching worldview as a conceptual setting for dealing with the vicissitudes of one's life. Such a worldview lends a perspective from which the various features of one's life can be addressed and evaluated. Worldviews discussed previously include those of animism and materialism, as well as that of Christianity. A suffering animal would be viewed quite differently from the perspectives of animism and of materialism, leading to appreciably different responses by the person involved.

In contrast with animism and materialism, the worldview of Christianity puts a premium on how one relates to other people. In accepting the worldview of Christianity, a person accepts responsibility for abiding by the second great commandment. Neither animist nor materialist is duty-bound, as such, to treat other people as no less important than themselves. Accepting the worldview of Christianity, however, makes a practical difference in the way one treats other people. The Christian worldview provides an inducement to action in that particular respect. Being a practicing Christian calls for acting differently with regard to other people than would be expected normally of someone outside that faith.

According to the present account, religious belief is a form of belief(s). Christian belief, in particular, is acceptance of a worldview that is characteristically Christian. According to the present account, furthermore, the manner of acceptance has to do with adopting the perspectives of Christianity as a dynamic part of one's developing life-story. Expressed in terms that by now should be familiar, Christian belief amounts to a merger with the Christian narrative of the personal life-story of the individual involved.

Joining in a merger of his sort is tantamount to accepting the worldview presented within the narrative itself. Among the results of such a merger are substantial changes in the life of the person involved. There are changes in that person's daily routines, changes in the goals by which that person's life is motivated, and changes in that person's interactions with other people. In these and other pertinent ways, the practical ramifications of Christian belief become manifest in the unfolding of that person's life-story.

Among these practical ramifications are some that flow directly from the Christian narrative's non-propositional character. As with narratives generally, the Christian narrative progresses along a storyline unbounded by constraints of strict factuality. To be sure, there may be occasional overlaps with factual occurrences. But the narrative as such is not a record of things that happen in the actual world. A consequence is that the narrative cannot be expressed exclusively in terms of propositions. The effect of the Christian narrative on the practical life of the believer does not depend on the truth or falsity of particular propositions the narrative might happen to include. To say it once again, Christian belief is not a variety of belief(d).

Christian belief is a variety of belief(s) instead. This means that it is non-propositional in general character. Among its practical ramifications, moreover, there are some that flow from its non-propositional character in particular. And some of these consequences, it may reasonably be claimed, are distinctly advantageous. Being able to articulate such consequences counts in favor of the present account of religious belief.

The purpose of the section now underway is to recount several of these advantages. One flows from the fact that the Christian narrative, in common with the NT on which it is based, avoids classification as a work of history. If the Christian narrative were historical, its acceptance would hinge on historical evidence and would resist being understood as an act of faith. Another advantage is that the non-propositional character of the Christian narrative removes it from potential conflict with scientific accounts. Being essentially non-propositional in character, the Christian narrative is logically unrelated to the propositions of science. Yet other advantages accrue with regard to Christian worship. By eschewing an understanding of the Apostles' Creed as propositional, for example, one can avoid the distraction of wondering how the crucified Christ could move from heaven (on late Friday afternoon) to hell (as that Creed affirms) and back to earth (on Sunday morning) in a period of approximately thirty-six hours.

The following review of these advantages draws on material developed earlier in this essay. Now and then, however, new observations will be brought to bear for purposes of emphasis or clarification.

(6.41) Benefits of the Christian Narrative's Nonhistorical Character

Contents of the Christian Narrative derive primarily from the NT. If the NT were a historical document, the Christian Narrative performance would follow suit. If the Christian Narrative were historical, however, accepting it as part of one's life-story would amount to a historical judgment rather than an act of faith. Let us once again review reasons why the NT does not qualify as a historical document.

The NT, to be sure, is historical in the sense that it records events that took place in the past. But the authors of the NT were not qualified historians, and their works do not qualify as genuine historical accounts. Works written by qualified historians identify their sources, deal primarily with natural causes, and confine themselves by and large to objectively verifiable events. These are among the features that enable competently written works of history to serve as evidence for the occurrence of past events.

Other evidence for past events comes in the forms of personal memory and of testimony by other people situated as eyewitnesses. Indeed, memory and eyewitness testimony are factors on which historians rely in compiling their own accounts. But recorded accounts of other person's memories constitute reliable evidence about the past only when they meet the standards of responsibly written history. The same is the case with eyewitness testimony that finds its way into writing. Unless the testimony is recorded in a manner that meets historical standards, it falls short of being evidence on which other people can make responsible historical judgments. The fact that the author of *John* claims to have witnessed the events he records (*John* 21:24), for example, does not make his record a reliable eyewitness source for subsequent readers.

Regardless of the perspectives from which they write, the authors of the NT do not qualify as proper historians. The NT, accordingly, is not a document enabling the reader to make responsible judgments about the historical status of the events it records. A consequence of particular relevance for present purposes is that the Christian narrative itself is essentially unburdened by historical content. With relatively few exceptions (such as Christ's birth and crucifixion), it is not concerned with historically verifiable events.

Many Christians regard the NT to have been divinely inspired. Whatever this might mean for a given advocate, it would be fanciful to imagine that God dictated the words and phrases in which the NT was formulated, or that he selected the books that eventually became canonical. It would also be fanciful to imagine that God intended the NT to take shape as a historical document. A timelessly present God should not be concerned with specifically dated happenings in human time. Just as an oral tradition does not become history by being rendered in writing, so divine authorship would not make a written document historical.

If the NT were a work of history, it would have joined relevant works of Livy and Tacitus as a reliable account of happenings in the Roman Empire during the age of Caesar. Given such status, later historians investigating that period would have cited it among their sources. The fact that later historians do not recognize it as a reliable source is the best evidence we might have that the NT is not historical. It remains the case that many events it records can be verified by independent historical sources. But mention of these events in the NT itself does not constitute evidence of their historical occurrence.

To appreciate why the NT's lack of historical status is an advantage for the present account, let us assume (counterfactually) that in fact it is a work of history and

examine the consequences. Among the consequences of the NT's being a work of history is that the events it records would have to be objectively verifiable. Its contents by and large would consist of propositions that are true or false depending on the status of the SOAs they represent. The veracity of these propositions would be subject to assessment by qualified historians. Other interested parties, believers and nonbelievers alike, would lack credentials to mount an effective challenge to the historians' assessment.

For the believer in particular, being unable to challenge the historians' assessment would be an unpromising situation. For there is a high likelihood that historical assessment would run counter to key Christian tenets. Key tenets likely to be affected include those pertaining to Christ's temptation by the devil, his resurrection from the dead, and his ascension into heaven. If the NT were treated as a work of history, arguments for its overall veracity almost certainly would fail.

Another hazard of treating the NT as a work of history is a distortion regarding the character of the believer's commitment. If the teachings of Christianity were historical in character, then accepting them would boil down to accepting a set of historical propositions. In effect, accepting them would amount to taking a stand on matters of historical fact. Believing what the NT says about Jesus and his followers would be closely akin to believing what Thucydides says about the Spartans and the Athenians in his *History of the Peloponnesian War*. This comes close to being a caricature of Christian belief. Not only that, but it treats Christian belief as a form of belief(d), which is to say belief regarding the truth of certain propositions. As argued at length previously, however, religious belief is a form of belief(s). Instead of acceptance

of the truth of various propositions, religious belief is acceptance of an overarching view of the world as a context for making sense of life's various experiences.

The telling advantage of the present account is that it forestalls these unfavorable consequences. It preserves the status of Christian belief as a matter of faith, immune from disinterested assessment by historical inquiry. And it avoids the hazard of thinking of religious belief as a commitment to the de facto occurrence of questionable past events. In effect, the present account of Christian belief provides reason for rejecting the (counterfactual) assumption above, which is the source of these several unfavorable consequences.

(6.42) The Specious Conflict between Religion and Science

It is not easy to specify precisely the respect in which the Christian religion is supposed to conflict with science. Consider, for example, the supposed conflict regarding the origin of the world. The OT book of *Genesis* begins with the affirmation that in the beginning (*en archē*) God created heaven and earth, and *John* in the NT begins by affirming that in the beginning (*en archē*) there was the *Logos*. It seems safe to assume, however, that no genuine scientific account is at hand that expressly denies these affirmations. Put otherwise, no genuine scientific account exists that directly contradicts what the Bible says about the world at its beginning. Evaluating the veracity of the Bible is not an appropriate scientific endeavor. The conflict in question, accordingly, is not a matter of one party making a claim that the other explicitly denies.

There is a simple explanation for this lack of direct contradiction. For two accounts to contradict each other, they must make claims about the same set of

circumstances (the same SOA). And there are no genuine SOAs pertaining to the world at its beginning. A SOA is genuine only if all parties concerned agree on circumstances that would constitute its occurrence. For a past SOA, more specifically, being genuine requires that concerned parties agree on circumstances that constitute its having occurred. In the case of putative conflict regarding origins, concerned parties include scientists and Biblical exegetes alike. It may be presumed that there is no agreement between these parties on what constitutes (or would constitute) the beginning of the world. A consequence is that there is no genuine SOA regarding which they might assume opposing stances.

Yet it remains the case that some people accept the Biblical account of creation, that others accept a scientific account featuring an initial “Big Bang,” and that both camps include people who are persuaded that these accounts are mutually exclusive. The opposition is such, moreover, that the two camps sometimes openly attack each other, and sometimes respond to the other’s attacks. Although attacks might be initiated in either direction, defenders of the religious account more often find themselves on the receiving end.

A common line of defense for the Biblical account goes by the name “creationism.” Emerging in the late-19th century as a response to Darwin’s theory of evolution, creationism holds that God created the world out of nothing and that all forms of life presently on earth were part of that original creation. Creationism has gained notoriety in recent decades for its efforts to have “creation science” added to the curricula of targeted high schools and universities. In the view of legitimate scientists generally, creationism is a pseudoscience devoid of serious content.

From the present perspective, creationism errs in accepting the *Genesis* account as factually true. Factual truth is a property of propositions. And for reasons already examined, the language of the creation passages in *Genesis* is not propositional. If indeed the *Genesis* account requires defense from scientific attack, a more effective defense is the argument above that the Biblical account and the “Big Bang” account are logically disconnected. Without shared propositional content, neither of the two accounts can mount an effective attack on the other.

One might accept this resolution of apparent conflicts like that regarding world origins, and yet remain convinced that Christianity and science are basically at odds with each other. Setting specific tenets aside, one might be convinced of a basic disparity between Christianity and the view of the world in which science is conducted. To be sure, individual scientists sometimes pursue their discipline in the context of a materialistic worldview. Materialism is a worldview that excludes supernatural happenings. According to one standard version, everything in the world is subject to explanation by natural science. For scientists committed to this version of materialism, events beyond scientific explanation cannot be countenanced as part of the actual world. Since religion of any sort involves supernatural events, Christianity has no place in the worldview of scientific materialism. A consequence, it might be maintained, is that Christianity and science are fundamentally opposed to each other as disparate worldviews.

Although sometimes pursued in the spirit of materialism, however, science can be pursued no less effectively in an explicitly Christian context. Instead of proscribing scientific inquiry, in the manner that materialism rules out religion, the Christian worldview is amenable both to the supernatural and to the pursuit of scientific

explanation. In point of fact, there are numerous instances in the history of modern science where significant results have actually been enabled by a Christian perspective. One instance is Descartes' principle of the constancy of the quantity of moving matter in the physical universe. In Descartes' own words (translated), "God is the primary cause of motion; and he always preserves the same quantity of motion in the universe" (*The Principles of Philosophy*, Part II, article 36). Similar examples are available from the scientific works of Kepler, Galileo, and Newton, among others. It is historically inaccurate to maintain that Christianity is opposed to the pursuit of science.

In and by themselves, nonetheless, the worldviews of Christianity and of materialism are mutually exclusive. The nature of comprehensive worldviews is such that accepting one precludes accepting any other. Beyond that, it is also the case that the worldview of materialism precludes admission of supernatural events generally. Accepting the worldview of Christianity, on the other hand, leaves room for dealing with supernatural phenomena and scientifically explainable phenomena on an equal basis. As the history of modern science shows, indeed, scientific inquiry can actually be enhanced when conducted from a Christian perspective.

This clarification of the relation between science and religion, while not entirely original, follows from the present account of religious belief as symphonic rather than doxastic. If this clarification itself has merit, it redounds to the credit of the present account.

(6.43) Benefits Pertaining to Christian Worship

According to the present account, Christian belief consists in the merger of the Christian narrative with an individual's personal life-story. To appreciate the minimal propositional investment of this account more fully, let us compare it with an alternative account in which the role of propositions is front and center. Without concern for who might subscribe to this alternative account (perhaps no one in its entirety), let us give it the fictitious title "magisterianism."

Magisterianism maintains that: (1) the Bible is the inspired word of God, (2) there are theologians expressly trained as experts in interpreting the Bible, (3) the truths of Christianity are found not only in the Bible but also in tradition, (4) these truths are expounded by trained theologians convened in church councils, and (5) there is an officially designated magisterium (a genuine word) that keeps track of these truths and is responsible for teaching them to untrained laypeople. Magisterianism maintains further that (6) the truths of Christianity are propositional in character, and that (7) a believing Christian is someone who accepts these truths unconditionally, regardless of whether he or she understands what they mean. In brief, magisterianism is the view according to which there exists a body of propositions that represent the truths of Christianity, and according to which Christian belief consists in an unqualified acceptance of these propositional truths.

An unmistakable indication that something is amiss with magisterianism is that it would make a believer of someone who accepts all the truths in question, yet remains inherently evil. Beelzebub (the "prince of devils," *Matthew* 12:24), for instance, might believe every truth the magisterium puts forward, and yet fail to act on those truths.

Regardless of what truths are promulgated, Christian belief surely is distinct from merely accepting a set of propositions as true.

A key question raised by the Beelzebub instance is what characteristics, beyond purportedly propositional belief, are needed to qualify someone as a genuine Christian. Beelzebub and his devilish traits aside, what more is needed on the part of an ordinary person to convert blanket acceptance of purported truths into genuine Christian belief? Part of the answer comes with the observation that the religious truths in question are passive and static, whereas Christian belief is dynamically active. Propositional truths might lie at rest in the archives, while genuine belief is part of the believer's day-by-day activity.

Another part of the answer is that the religious truths involved must be made operational. This means that they must be rendered in a form that makes them ready for practical application. For abstract truths to become operational is for them to become applicable in concrete practice. Considered in these terms, Christian belief ensues when the truths in question are brought to bear in the believers' everyday activities. Whatever truths are involved, they must be made practicable.

(6.431) Making Christian Truths Operational

There are various ways in which the truths of Christianity might be made operational. The way at work in magisterianism is obedience to command. More specifically, the way characteristic of magisterianism is the imposition of hierarchically based authority. If the hierarchy includes bishops, priests, and laypeople, for example, the bishops will tell the

priests to tell the laypeople what they should and should not believe. And the authority at each level has the power to impose sanctions on his subordinates if they do not comply.

This is reminiscent of the way God sought to impose his will on the Israelites under the Old Covenant. God told Moses how the people should behave, and Moses passed God's word on to the (often disobedient) people. The arrival of the New Covenant with the NT provided reason to expect that the OT way of operationalizing God's truths would be superseded. In some respects, magisterianism represents a return to OT authoritarianism.

A second way of operationalizing divine truth is characteristic of the New Covenant. This way is to make the application of Christian principles an attractive activity. There is little about the commandments delivered by Moses to the Israelites that is inherently attractive. For the most part, these commandments are in the form of prohibitions; and there is little enjoyment in not doing things that have been prohibited. Operationalization under the New Covenant, by contrast, is a matter of exercising neighborly love. And the exercise of love is inherently enjoyable. We return to this topic presently for further exploration. By way of preparation, however, let us consider how neighborly love figures in the 1994 *Catechism* of the Catholic Church.

Although the commandment to love one's neighbor is ranked second at *Matthew* 22:37-39 and *Mark* 12:30-31, it seems closer to the heart of Jesus' message than the first. The first great commandment, of course, is that one should love the Lord God to the full extent of one's ability to love. While there are at least four passages in the NT where the two commandments are stated jointly, however, the first great commandment is never stated in isolation from the second. The second great commandment, on the other hand, is

stated independently of the first in nearly one dozen passages (three in the Gospels, two in Paul's letters, and six in *1 Peter* and *1 John* combined). A review of these passages would suffice to make the key role of neighborly love in the New Covenant unmistakable.

These statistics are in stark contrast with the recessive treatment of the two great commandments in the *Catholic Catechism* of 1994. Entry 2055 of that compendium quotes *Matthew* 22:37-39, with the added commentary: "The Decalogue must be interpreted in light of this twofold yet single commandment of love." The same entry goes on to quote *Romans* 13:9, to the effect that the Decalogue is summed up by the second commandment, and concludes with a verbatim quote (without quotation marks) of *Romans* 13:10. Along with a short and oblique mention pertaining to charity in entry 1823, these brief references in 2055 to the two great commandments with regard to the Decalogue are the only times they are cited in the entire *Catechism*. In all, the document's 682 pages of Catholic teaching contain a mere one-half page on the great commandments at the heart of the New Covenant. Insofar as contemporary Catholicism is represented by this document, a fair conclusion is that it does not rely on neighborly love to make God's dictates operational. In this respect, at least, the 1994 *Catechism* is more in line with the Old than with the New Covenant.

A further indication that the authors of the 1994 *Catechism* were not preoccupied with neighborly love is their idiosyncratic translation (in entry 1825) of the noun *agapē* in *1 Corinthians* chapter 13. Presumably following the Douay-Rheims 1582 translation of the Latin Vulgate, the term usually rendered "love" in English is translated "charity" instead. Thus we have Paul admitting at 13:2 that if he lacks charity he is nothing, and

proclaiming at 13:13 that, of faith, hope, and charity, charity is the greatest. The problem with this translation is that it changes a two-term relation (love) into a one-term character trait (charity). Love is an emotion directed toward a specific object (such as God or neighbor), whereas charity is a disposition toward generosity shown in one's treatment of people generally. This difference between love and charity is underscored by the fact that both Greek and English have verbs for the exercise of love (*agapaō*, "to love"), whereas neither language contains a verb for exercising charity.

Authors of the 1994 Catechism deserve credit for drawing attention to references to the second great commandment in *Romans* 13:9 and 13:10. In commenting on these passages, however, their main concern is with the Ten Commandments rather than the power of love itself. And in commenting on *1 Corinthians* chapter 13, they focus on charity rather than love as such, again neglecting the power of love to motivate action in accord with the principles of the New Covenant. Although love can be an effective force in making those principles operational, the power of love in that role too often goes unnoticed by contemporary Christian theologians.

To operationalize divine truths is to render them in a form making them applicable in practice. A third way of making divine truths applicable, especially suited to the New Covenant, is to integrate the power of love into the very fabric of one's personal life. This effect is gained by merging the Christian narrative with one's personal life-story. According to the present account, a merger of this sort is the sum and substance of Christian belief. If this account is correct, Christian belief engages the power of love from its very inception.

The conception of belief epitomized by the 1994 *Catechism* makes love an extraneous factor that may or may not accompany a believer's acceptance of prescribed rules of behavior (mostly the Ten Commandments). The present account differs in treating love as an essential factor in one's life as a Christian. In his respect, the present account is more closely in accord with the provisions of the New Covenant. This counts as an additional benefit of the present account.

(6.432) Participating in the Mass without Propositional Assertion

Yet another advantage of the present account is its removal of an impediment that often encumbers participation in the Mass. The impediment is an implicit assumption that taking part in the Mass involves a series of propositional assertions. Inasmuch as some of the propositions in question appear to be dubious, having to assert them can stand in the way of wholehearted participation. Let us consider how the present account of Christian belief avoids that impediment, along with the benefits that flow from its avoidance. Our procedure will be to work through successive stages of the Mass, considering the putative involvement of propositions along the way.

A typical Catholic worship service begins with a hymn, proceeds through a communal profession of belief, and culminates in a celebration of the Eucharist. Interspersed along the way are scripture readings, recitation of the Lord's Prayer, mutual gestures of peace, and a (typically rather brief) homily. These stages vary with respect to their *prima facie* involvement with propositions.

Although formulated in various ways grammatically, hymns normally do not invite interpretation as propositional utterances. For most worshipers, presumably, to sing

“On a hill far away stood an old rugged cross” is no more an assertion of fact than singing “And he will raise you up on eagle’s wings.” The same may be said of other songs during the service, such as one sung during the Offertory (bringing the unconsecrated bread and wine to the altar). Singing “Soon and very soon, we are going to see the King” would not normally be understood as an assertion about a king being ready to appear.

Following the opening hymn are three readings from scripture, typically from the OT, from NT letters, and from one of the Gospels. A seasoned lector will attempt to present his or her reading in a way that reflects its Biblical setting. In many cases, this amounts to presenting them as part of an ongoing narrative, as when reading: “From Mount Hor they [the Israelites] set out by way of the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom” (*Numbers* 21:4). To read this merely as a statement of historical fact would be to overlook its contribution to story of the Jews’ departure from Egypt.

There are other cases in which factual claims appear explicitly to be involved, as with the report in *John* 2:15 of Jesus’ treatment of the money-changers: “And making a whip of cords, he drove them all out of the temple.” Other Gospel accounts of this event (*Matthew* 21:12-13, *Mark* 11:15-17, *Luke* 19:45-46) vary in detail. One can withhold judgment about the factuality of these passages without diminishing their role in the story of Jesus’ interaction with the Jewish officials seeking to destroy him. In any case, the lector’s task is not to affirm the historicity of certain biblical passages, but rather to provide a scriptural context for subsequent parts of the Mass.

The propositional burden of the creeds professed in a typical Catholic service is more complicated. Discussed at length previously, the two most commonly professed

versions bear the Latin titles “*Symbolum Apostolorum*” and “*Symbolum Nicaenum*.” A standard meaning of *symbolum* is “sign by which something is commonly known.” To recite one of the creeds, accordingly, is to make oneself known as a member of the Christian community, including those sharing in the recitation. This is the sense conveyed by entry 188 of the 1994 *Catholic Catechism*, which characterizes creedal profession as “a sign of recognition and communion between believers.”

Complications arise, however, with the other role assigned the “symbol of faith” in the same entry of the *Catechism*, namely that of “a summary of the principal truths of the faith.” One complication results from use of the term ‘truth’. Truth and falsehood are attributes of doxastic (propositional) belief(d). Primary among beliefs in both creeds, however, are items of belief(n) (believing in) instead. Thus: “I believe in God,” “I believe in Jesus Christ,” “I believe in the Holy Spirit,” and “I believe in the holy catholic church.” The objects of belief here are persons and institutions. Since neither persons nor institutions possess truth-values, these beliefs cannot be accurately characterized as “truths of the faith.”

There are other items of professed belief, to be sure, in which belief(d) might conceivably be involved. Two such appear in the Nicene Creed. One is in the description of the Holy Spirit as proceeding “from the Father and the Son.” This reflects the pronouncement of the 447 AD Synod of Toledo on the notorious “Filioque” controversy, which led to the Great Schism between Eastern and Western Christianity in 1054. Second is the characterization of Jesus Christ as “consubstantial with the Father.” The term *consubstantialem* is Latin for “one in being,” approved for creedal use by the Nicene Council of 325 AD. In both cases, proposition-like formulations by theologians have

found their way into the creedal profession of ordinary people, who often would have no idea what they meant. The result is that many people, in reciting the Creed, profess beliefs they do not understand.

While the Apostles' Creed avoids theological complications of this sort, it contains a seemingly factual claim (previously noted) that seems especially dubious. After Jesus Christ "was crucified, died, and was buried," the Creed reads, "He descended into hell." It is hard to imagine how Jesus could die on Friday afternoon, meet the repentant thief in paradise later that day (*Luke* 23:43), and then descend to hell in time to reappear on Sunday less than a day and one-half later. All in all, it seems better to set these propositional anomalies aside, and to profess the Creed simply as "a sign of recognition and communion between believers."

A typical Mass culminates with a celebration of the Eucharist. The Liturgy of the Eucharist begins by acknowledging God's blessedness in providing the bread and wine about to be consecrated, and praying that the forthcoming sacrifice may be acceptable to the Lord. Following are petitions in behalf of Church officials and in behalf of various saints. According to the *Catholic Catechism* (entry 1105) there is supposed to be an invocation (*epiclesis*) of the Holy Spirit to sanctify the gifts about to be consecrated. In the Roman canon, however, the sanctifying role of the Holy Spirit is left unattended. Instead we have "Be pleased, O God, we pray, to bless, acknowledge, and approve this offering in every respect" (*Quam oblationem tu, Deus, in omnibus, quaesumus, benedictam, adscriptam, ratam; <http://sanctaliturgia.blogspot.com/2004/09/quam-oblationem.html>*).

Then follow the Words of Consecration by which the consecration is accomplished. For probable reasons discussed previously, the words affecting the bread are fewer and more direct than those affecting the wine. The words used by the celebrant to consecrate the bread are:

(in Latin) *Accípiter et manducáte ex hoc omnes: hoc est enim corpus meum, quod pro vobis tradétur*

(official English) Take this, all of you, and eat of it, for this is my body, which will be given up for you.

As concerned scholars generally recognize, there is no place in the NT representing Jesus as speaking these exact words. The words spoken by the celebrant instead are pieced together from the texts of *Matthew, Mark, Luke, and I Corinthians*. Of incidental interest is that none of these sources contains language corresponding to *ex hoc omnes* (all of you). This must be an insertion by later theologians.

Words used to consecrate the wine are more numerous, and pertain to a wider range of topics:

(Latin) *Accípíte et bíbite ex eo omnes: hic est enim calix sánguinis mei novi et aetérni testaménti, qui pro vobis et pro multis effundétur in remissionem peccatórum. Hoc fácíte in meam commemoratiónem*

(English) Take this, all of you, and drink from it, for this is the chalice of my blood, the blood of the new and eternal covenant, which will be poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this in memory of me.

With the exception of one term, these words also trace back to *Matthew*, *Mark*, *Luke*, and *I Corinthians*. The exception is *aetérni* (eternal), modifying *testaménti* (covenant).

Description of the New Covenant as eternal presumably comes from *Hebrews* 13:20, which speaks of (Jesus') "blood of the eternal covenant" (*haimati diathēkēs aiōniou*).

As expressed in these Words of Consecration, the purpose of participating in the Eucharist is "the forgiveness of sins." This is the purpose specified by Jesus in *Matthew* 26:28. Other purposes are specified in other texts that did not find their way into the official wording. In *John* 6:54, Jesus says: "Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life" (Greek above). And *I Corinthians* 11:26 quotes Jesus as saying: "for as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes" (Greek above). One might wonder why the theologians who chose the Words of Consecration favored forgiveness of sins over these other purposes. After all, forgiveness of sins is the business of the Sacrament of Penance, whereas the Eucharist is directly related to the Lord's death on the cross and to the eternal life enabled by it.

In the Liturgy of the Eucharist, the words said in consecrating the bread are introduced by a claim that Jesus spoke them "on the day before he was to suffer" (*prídíe quam paterétur*). Similarly, the words consecrating the wine are preceded by the assertion that Jesus spoke them "when supper was ended" (*postquam cenátum est*). Taken literally, these statements most likely are false. Neither set of words attributed to Jesus can be found in the Gospels, which contain the only evidence we have on such matters. But this is no impediment to their efficacy in the context of the Eucharist. In formulating the Words of Consecration, the responsible theologians obviously did not intend to reproduce Jesus' words verbatim. To attribute these exact words to Jesus is a claim

plainly not meant to be taken literally. These words, that is to say, are not employed with propositional intent.

This is relevant for present purposes because the figurative attribution of these words to Jesus is the only discourse in the Liturgy of the Eucharist that *prima facie* invites a propositional interpretation. The Eucharist thus joins the hymns, the readings, and the creeds, as components of the Mass that are not essentially bound up with propositions. (The homily is another matter, of no present concern.)

The present account identifies Christian belief as an incorporation of the Christian narrative into one's personal life-story. In keeping with its dramatic form, the Christian narrative has little or no propositional content. From a Catholic perspective, an essential ingredient of the narrative is the liturgy of the Mass. Our finding that the Mass itself is devoid of obviously propositional content is consonant with its inclusion in the Christian narrative. In effect, this finding might be anticipated as a consequence of the present account of Christian belief.

The advantage flowing from this result is that one may participate in the Mass without repeated distraction by questions of propositional truth. One may participate in the Mass, for example, without concern about Jesus' itinerary between Friday afternoon and Sunday morning. To be relieved of such concerns is like opening a window to receive a breath of fresh air. Reinvigorated by removal of propositional barriers, the worshipper can enter into the Eucharist with an unobstructed mind.

(6.5) The Eucharist Reviewed from a Nonpropositional Perspective

Concern remains regarding the nature of the Eucharist itself. There is concern in particular about what Christ meant when he took the bread saying “This is my body,” and took the cup saying “This is the chalice of my blood.” There are concerns as well about the import of these words and actions, and about what they mean for the people who enact them subsequently. Such concerns have been addressed time and time again during the long history of scriptural exegesis. Let us take a fresh look from a perspective eschewing propositions.

When Christ took bread and said “This is my body,” he clearly was not saying something about his physical presence at the supper (torso, arms, legs, etc., included). Nor was he saying something about the body of the infant Jesus, or the body yet to be scourged by Pilate’s soldiers. He was saying something about the body that subsequently hung on the cross. Similarly, when he took the cup and said (for short) “This is my blood,” he was not talking about the blood currently surging through his veins, the blood emitted by a cut finger while carving wood, or the blood that would be drawn by Pilate’s soldiers. He was talking about the blood soon to be shed on the cross.

The bread and wine were present at the table of the final meal. But the associated flesh and blood would not be present anywhere until the following day. How something present could be something future is part of the “mystery” (*mustērion*, *Colossians* 4:3) surrounding the Last Supper that needs to be resolved.

Mysteries aside for the moment, the identification of the bread and wine present at the table with the future occurrence of the flesh and blood on the cross means that Christ’s words (“This is my body,” “This is my blood”) could not themselves have

constituted an enactment of the Last Supper. When Christ spoke at the table, the body and blood in question did not yet exist. And his pronouncing those words could not have brought them into existence before their time. The nub of the matter is that, when Christ spoke those words, there was no flesh and blood with which the bread and wine could be identified. Christ's words and actions during that final meal instead were a demonstration of how the Eucharist should be celebrated after his death. Not an enactment themselves, his words and actions established the protocol that future enactments should follow.

In the original Greek, Christ's words (*Touto estin to sōma mou, Luke 22:19; touto ... estin to haima mou, Matthew 26:28*) in both cases employ the verb *estin*. Like its English equivalent, *estin* can mean simply "is" (the 'is' of existence), can attribute a property to an object (the 'is' of predication), or can express sameness of some sort (the 'is' of identity). In a previous discussion of his topic, it was argued that the sense of *estin* engaged in Christ's locutions is that of identity. As part of that previous discussion, it was observed as well that claims of identity require contexts in which the objects identified can be unambiguously designated. In the case of the Eucharist, the context of identification is the New Covenant between God and humankind. The objects to be identified are the body and blood of the crucified Christ, whose death initiated the New Covenant, and the bread and wine that Christ taught the disciples to consecrate in his name. This context is essential for specifying the objects to be identified.

What needs further clarification at this point is the term 'identity'. In the present context, this term has two relevant but quite distinct senses. In one sense, a thing's identity is what that thing is. The identity of the number 2 is that of being the second member of the series of positive integers. To identify that number is to specify its

identity in the sense of what it is. Taken in the other sense, a thing may be identified with something else. To say that X is identical with Y is to say that X and Y are the same thing. Thus the number 4 is identical with the product 2×2 , inasmuch as 4 and 2×2 are the same quantity. What is relevant for present purposes is the manner in which something can be the same as another thing. Once Christ's body and the bread have been identified in the first sense by their roles in the New Covenant, the question remains of the manner in which the bread (wine) of the final meal can be the same as Christ's body (blood) on the cross.

Despite centuries of commentary, this question is not easy to answer. One difficulty has to do with transitivity of identity. Standard treatments of identity in logic hold that if $a=b$ and $b=c$, then $a=c$. But transitivity does not apply in the case of identity between the bread of the Eucharist and Christ's body on the cross. Consider two celebrations of the Eucharist in different places, say R (Rome) and C (Constantinople). For sake of argument, grant that both the bread at R (r) and the bread at C (c) are identical to Christ's body (b) on the cross. But the bread at R clearly is not identical with the bread at C. Put symbolically, $r=b$ and $c=b$, but r and c clearly are not identical with each other. In whatever manner, the identities of both r and c with b avoid the logical transitivity of identity.

Another difficulty involves difference in times of existence. *Prima facie*, at least, it seems far from clear how two things can be the same if they exist at different times. Christ's body existed on the cross for a few hours one fateful Friday afternoon around 33 AD. The pieces of bread said to be the same as this body exist on any number of occasions after the New Covenant went into effect. But on no occasion does the bread of

the Eucharist coexist in time with Christ's body on the cross. This failure to coexist is not merely coincidental. The nature of their relation is such that they are precluded from ever coexisting.

Both difficulties can be resolved with the help of Plato's conception of participation in eternal Forms. For a mundane example, consider the participation of red objects in the timeless property of being red. In the changing world of sense perception, being red is a necessary property both of stoplights and of mature cranberries. A given stoplight and a given cranberry are particular objects, both characterized essentially by the general property red. In Plato's language of Forms and participation, both stoplight and cranberry participate in the general Form Red. Being red is part of their identity in the sense of what they are, so that participation in Red contributes essentially to their respective identities. Regarding identity in the second sense of sameness, however, it is obvious that shared participation in Red does not make stoplight and cranberry the same object. Although the color properties of both stoplight and cranberry are the same as the general color associated with the Form Red, the particular objects that instantiate this general color are obviously different.

In a previous discussion of the Eucharist, we distinguished the body (1) of Jesus sitting at table with the twelve disciples, his body (2) hanging on the cross, his body (3) involved in the timeless significance of his crucifixion, his body (4) in the form of consecrated bread in the Eucharist, and his body (5) constituted by members of his church. Bodies (3) and (4) pertain directly to our present topic. Particular instances of body (4) are present in every celebration of the Eucharist. In the context of the New Covenant, the role cut out for these particular instances is the role specified in Jesus'

inauguration of the Eucharist during his last meal with his disciples. This role identifies the bread in question by specifying what it is.

Platonic participation comes to the fore in clarifying the sense in which instances of body (4) are the same as body (3). As the color of a particular cranberry is the same as the general color it instantiates, so a particular piece of bread in the Eucharist is the same as the body (3) implicated in the universal significance of Christ's death on the cross. Consider carefully the way this works in the case of the cranberry. Being red is a distinctive property of the cranberry. Having power to produce its distinctive color by instantiation is a characteristic of the Form Red. The distinctive property red of the cranberry is the same as the distinctive color the Form Red is empowered to produce by instantiation. This is the sense in which the red color of the cranberry is the same as the Form Red which it instantiates.

This is the sense also in which a piece of body (4) (the consecrated bread of the Eucharist) is the same as body (3) (the body involved in the universal significance of Christ's death on the cross). Being an occurrence of body (4) is a distinctive property of a particular piece of consecrated bread in the Eucharist. Having power to produce a concrete occurrence of body (4) by instantiation is a characteristic of the abstract body (3) implicated in the universal significance of Christ's crucifixion. The distinctive property of a piece of body (4) is the same as what the universally significant body (3) is empowered to produce by instantiation. In this respect, a body (4) is the same as the body (3) which it instantiates.

In brief, just as Red is a universal property in which many different objects can participate, so Christ's body (3) is universally available for participation by bread

involved in the celebration of many different Eucharists. Due to its universal significance, body (3) is open to participation by many pieces of bread at many different times and many different places. In the (augmented) words of *1 Corinthians* 11:26, “as often as [and whenever] you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes (Greek above).

The sense in which the color of a cranberry is the same as the Form Red it instantiates is not captured by logical identity. Although the colors both of a cranberry and of a stoplight are the same as the Form Red, the two are not the same occurrences of the Red they instantiate. Similarly, although pieces of consecrated bread in Rome (r) and in Constantinople (c) are the same as the universally significant body (b) they instantiate, r and c obviously are not the same as each other. The above difficulty in this regard is resolved by a conception of sameness based on Platonic participation rather than on strict logical identity.

Such is the case as well with the difficulty regarding sameness of entities existing at different times. As noted above, the bread of the Eucharist is precluded by nature from coexisting with Christ’s body on the cross. The nature of this proscription is exemplified by the relation between particular red objects and the Form Red which they instantiate. Particular objects exist in time, whereas Platonic Forms are timeless in being eternal. In like manner, the significance of body (3) is eternal, which prevents its coexisting with pieces of consecrated bread in time. Thinking of the relation between body (3) and body (4) in terms of Platonic participation removes this anomaly of temporal disparity.

(6.51) Changes in Bread and Wine Effected by Consecration

Instantiating the eternal significance of body (3) requires consecration of the bread involved. The same, of course, is required for the wine to instantiate the eternal significance of Christ's blood. Before consecration, bread and wine bear no relation of interest to Christ's death on the cross. By undergoing consecration, however, they take on an identity to which Christ's death is essential. Consecration effects a change in the identity of the bread and wine. We need to consider not only the nature of this change, but also the procedure by which it comes about. Consider the latter first.

Future importance of the topic notwithstanding, the NT lacks a vocabulary pertaining to consecration in any relevant sense. The nearest approximation comes at *Hebrews 7:28*, which refers to the Son who has been "made perfect forever" (*eis ton aiōna teteleiōmenon*). The verb *teteleiōmenon* here is sometimes translated "consecrated," notably in the King James Bible. This consecrated state of the Son, however, bears no obvious relation to the procedures of consecration in the Eucharist. Lacking further guidance, we can only assume that, in the early years of Christianity, any Christian in good standing could enact the protocol established by Jesus for changing bread into flesh and wine into blood.

This paucity of scriptural guidance on consecration encouraged attempts by later theologians to fill in the gaps. Central to these attempts have been issues regarding the further topic of the differences in bread and wine before and after consecration. Short of a historical survey of such theological attempts, we should note that these differences may be addressed with various questions in mind. And answers vary significantly with the questions addressed. One straightforward question concerns due respect. After

consecration, the bread and wine merit deference not due their preconsecration counterparts. In academic circles, analogously, someone with an advanced degree usually merits deference not due a person without college training. The deference merited by consecrated bread is consistent with keeping it in a locked tabernacle.

Another question has to do with the context in which consecration occurs. The significance of a wedding band on one's ring finger varies with the circumstances under which it is put in place. A ring placed on one's finger during a wedding ceremony has a much different significance than one slipped in place during a jeweler's fitting. In similar fashion, the bread and wine acquire their unique significance when they undergo consecration during a Eucharistic celebration. There may well be contexts in which an ordained person could recite words of consecration irreverently over bread and wine (at a drinking party, for example) without consecration actually taking effect.

More vexed is the question of the change in makeup undergone by the bread and wine as a result of consecration. The official view of the Roman Catholic Church is that the "*whole Christ is truly, really, and substantially*" contained "*in the Eucharistic species*" (entries 1373 and 1374 of the 1994 *Catholic Catechism*, italics in original). This is the doctrine of transubstantiation, also known as the "real presence." A brief account of the evolution of this doctrine is given in our previous discussion of the topic.

The 1994 Catechism is silent on the question whether the whole Christ is really present under either species apart from the other. In Canon 3, June 4, 1562, of the Council of Trent, it was affirmed that (in translation): "Christ ... is received whole and entire under the one species of bread." But uncertainty remained about the species of wine by itself. This uncertainty appears to be removed by a doctrine articulated in the

recent *Catholic Encyclopedia* (<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/04175a.htm>), namely: “Christ is really present ... and is received whole and entire, body and blood, soul ... and Divinity, under either species alone.” To wit, Christ is wholly present not only in the bread and wine together, but also in the bread and wine each taken separately.

One problem with this doctrine is an apparent redundancy. Following Christ’s protocol of the Last Supper, it is customary to receive the bread and then the wine in that order. Given that Christ is wholly present under both species, the purpose of the Eucharist is already accomplished by partaking of the consecrated bread. Partaking of the wine after that would appear superfluous. Someone who partakes of both bread and wine would receive the real presence of Christ twice on the same occasion. In a word, receiving both bread and wine would seem redundant.

It would appear redundant as well for the priest to consecrate both bread and wine. Having consecrated the bread during a particular Eucharist, the priest has done everything necessary to make Christ really present on that occasion. Proceeding to consecrate the wine would seem gratuitous. Alternatively, the priest could consecrate the wine and skip the bread entirely. Although eliminating the bread might seem weird to anyone who participates regularly in Holy Communion, it is consistent with the teaching that Christ is “received whole and entire” under each of the two species.

A related anomaly has to do with the doctrine of transubstantiation itself. Regarding the bread as such, transubstantiation holds that its substance is transformed by consecration into the substance of Christ’s body. In like fashion, the substance of the wine is transformed into the substance of Christ’s blood. According to the Council of Trent (1562), moreover, to receive the consecrated bread is to receive Christ himself,

“whole and entire.” In terms of transubstantiation, this means that the substance of the bread is transformed into the substance of Christ as a complete Person. According to the recent *Catholic Encyclopedia*, in turn, the substance of the wine is transformed into the substance of the entire Christ as well. The upshot is that both the substance of the bread and the substance of the wine become the substance of the risen Lord. Two substances, in effect, are exchanged for one. What we are left with is a doctrine of dual transubstantiation, an anomaly seemingly left unexamined during centuries of theological disquisition.

(6.52) The Terminology of Transubstantiation

A different kind of problem has to do with the terminology in which the doctrine of transubstantiation is expressed. The Latin term *transubstantiatem* came into use around the 12th century AD, and played a role in the Fourth Council of the Lateran (1275). The doctrine was elaborated and defended in St. Thomas’ *Summa Theologica* (mid- to late-13th century), and was officially proclaimed by the Council of Trent (1545-1563). In the 17th century, the Greek Orthodox Church adopted the term *metousia* to express the same meaning. In English dictionaries, the term ‘transubstantiation’ is defined almost exclusively with reference to this doctrine of the real presence. Given its history, the term clearly is a theological artifact stemming from the prime years of medieval scholasticism.

A consequence is that use of the term is bound up with the scholastic philosophy championed by St. Thomas. It is no accident that recent popes (e.g., Leo XIII, John Paul II) have burdened Catholic philosophers with the duty of being conversant with the teaching of the “Angelic Doctor.” A collateral consequence, however, is that the doctrine

of the real presence makes little sense outside a scholastic context. Since a vast majority of practicing Catholics today are unfamiliar with medieval scholasticism, this seems to render that doctrine obsolete.

These difficulties demonstrate the need to find an alternative way of thinking about the relation between the bread and wine of the Eucharist and Christ's body and blood on the cross. An alternative is available with the account laid out above, according to which the bread and wine are instantiations of the eternally significant body and blood of the crucified Christ. This alternative sets aside the Aristotelian-inspired theology of St. Thomas, and draws on the thought of Plato instead. In the Platonic relation of participation, the main terms are (1) the universal Form (e.g., Red) and (2) the many particular things (e.g., stoplights, cranberries) that acquire properties by participating in it. In participation as it pertains to the Eucharist, the main terms are (1) the universally significant body and blood of Christ on the cross and (2) the many instances of bread and wine present in innumerable Eucharistic celebrations.

The body and blood of the crucified Christ are both implicated in his timelessly significant death on the cross. By partaking of the consecrated bread and wine, a Christian believer participates in Christ's timeless and universal death. In effect, the believer takes part in the death by which he or she was redeemed from Adam's original sin. Such at least is the message of the Christian narrative.

As far as the consecrated elements themselves are concerned, the bread instantiates Christ's timelessly significant body, and the wine instantiates his timelessly significant blood. Put otherwise, the bread is an instance of his eternal body and the wine an instance of his eternal blood. By partaking of these respective instantiations, the

believer shares in the eternally significant death by which he or she was released from Adam's sin.

The scholastic doctrine of transubstantiation traces back to Aristotle's use of the term *ousia* (as at *Metaphysics* 1028b34-36); hence the Greek Orthodox adaptation *metousia*. Adopting a Platonic conception of the Eucharist to replace one deriving from Aristotle in no way affects the individual believer's enactment of the Mass. Both celebrant and communicant say the same words as before, and engage in the same characteristic actions. The main difference lies in the significance attached to those words and actions. Instead of dealing with bread and wine that has been subjected to change in substance, the believer deals with elements that have come to instantiate the body and blood of the crucified Christ.

There is change as well in the way one thinks of the epiclesis (Greek *epiklēsis*) by which the priest invokes the Holy Spirit to sanctify the elements he is about to consecrate. According to the 7th century Saint John Damascene, the Holy Spirit not only sanctifies the elements but also is responsible for their becoming the body and blood of Christ (see entry 1106 of the *Catholic Catechism*). The priest invokes the Holy Spirit to bring about the transformation in question. According to John Damascene, at least, the priest's words and action provide the occasion on which the transformation is accomplished, but the accomplishment is due to the Holy Spirit itself.

In the Platonic view of the matter, the Holy Spirit is responsible for the bread and wine becoming instances of Christ's eternal body and blood. This role of the Holy Spirit is similar to that of the Demiurge in Plato's *Timaeus*, who fashions things in the world after eternal and unchanging paradigms (28A6-B1). The priest sets the stage by enacting

the protocol of consecration, and then the Holy Spirit makes the bread and wine veritable instances of Christ's eternal body and blood.

Regardless of how its contribution is viewed, the role of the Holy Spirit in the Eucharist is too essential to be overlooked. In the Catholic canon, as noted previously, sanctification of the elements about to be consecrated is requested of God instead. The Holy Spirit typically is mentioned only in the final doxology: "Through him [Christ], and with him, and in him, O God, almighty Father, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honor and glory is yours, for ever and ever." The current canon could be improved, one might suggest, by returning the Holy Spirit to an explicit role in the epiclesis.

(7) Why Catholic?

The question "Why are you Catholic?" should be preceded by "Why are you Christian (in the first place)?" Let us put the question in a conversational setting, as one posed by a genuinely interested friend. By way of prompting an answer, the friend mentions several possibilities. Included are (i) to find solace in circumstances of distress ("opiate of the masses"), (ii) to hedge one's bets (Pascal's wager), and (iii) to enjoy companionship of like-minded people (a shared meal after worship service). A general response that might be offered to these suggestions is that adopting Christianity is not a means to an end. Appropriate reasons for adopting Christianity are not utilitarian. A more appropriate reason would be to find guidance that helps keep one's spiritual life in order.

My friend may be excused for requesting a more informative answer. A more helpful response would address the elusive but persistent topic of the meaning of life. At this point in the study, resources are at hand for making that topic tractable. In one sense

of the term, ‘meaning’ designates purpose. The meaning of a puzzling move in chess, for example, might be the purpose of trapping the opponent’s Queen. In this sense of meaning, a life without purpose is meaningless.

Of the four kinds of belief discussed previously, belief(s) (symphoric belief) pertains directly to the issue of purpose and meaning. Belief(s), briefly reviewed, is acceptance of a comprehensive worldview as a context for pursuing a meaningful human life. Accepting a Christian worldview enables an individual believer to conduct his or her life in pursuit of characteristically Christian purposes. Pursuit of such purposes engages a characteristically Christian narrative.

Christian belief(s) becomes active when the Christian narrative has been intermingled with the life-story of the individual person concerned. In merging his or her life-story with the Christian narrative, the individual adopts the purposes inherent in the narrative as guides for the conduct of his or her personal life. The life of an individual believer takes on meaning in pursuit of those guiding purposes. Although statements of Christian purpose vary, the most direct is that of the Westminster Catechism: the chief end of a human individual “is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever.”

Eternal enjoyment of God is possible only in a timeless state of existence. To enjoy God forever requires participating in eternal life. Eternal life is defined in Jesus’ prayer to the Father in the hour before his capture in Gethsemane: “And this is eternal life, that they [his followers] know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent” (*John 17:3*, Greek above). It is argued at length above that knowing God in the relevant sense (that of *ginōskō*) is equivalent to enjoying him forever.

Other worldviews provide other purposes for their adherents to pursue. The worldview projected by the OT centers around the Old Covenant. According to the understanding reached between Moses and the Lord God on Mount Sinai, the Lord accepted the Jewish people as his own and the people accepted the obligation of obeying him. The purpose of an individual human life under the Old Covenant, accordingly, is to obey God's commands. According to the Quran, for another instance, the purpose of a believer in Islam is to acknowledge Allah in service and worship. Although theologians of both Islam and Judaism speculate about an afterlife in which God will exact a final reckoning, eternal life appears not to be a basic tenet of either faith.

Not all purpose-laden worldviews are religious in character. One example explored in earlier sections of this study is that of secular humanism. According to *Humanist Manifesto I* (1933), "the central task for mankind" is "the quest for the good life." The same document goes on to say that "the end of man's life" is "the complete realization of human personality." Secular humanism endorses the pursuit of "an abundant and meaningful life" (*Humanist Manifesto II*, 1973). In its rejection of the supernatural generally, however, secular humanism has no place for eternal life.

Another nonreligious perspective on the world is nihilism, according to which life has no purpose and hence no meaning. As with the worldviews of secular humanism and of the monotheistic religions alike, nihilism is not a set of propositions that lends itself to acceptance in the form of belief(d). Accordingly, it is not a perspective that can be established and maintained by rational argument. Nihilism results instead from declining other available views of the world at large. In a word, nihilism is a view of the world one arrives at by default.

Belief(s) is acceptance of a worldview as a setting in which one can pursue a meaningful life. Unlike belief(d), this form of acceptance is not a result of propositional argument. Accepting a worldview results rather from the realization that one feels comfortable taking part in the world it represents. Actually to accept the worldview in question is to act upon that realization.

My answer to the question “Why are you a Christian?” is that I feel comfortable leading my life in accord with the Christian worldview. Put otherwise, I feel comfortable participating in the Christian narrative. I feel at ease with a personal life-story tuned in to the flow of that narrative from a fixed past into an indefinite future. In contrast with other available perspectives, I find Christianity amenable to the kind of life I want for myself.

Next in order is the question “Why are you Catholic (in particular)?” In posing the question, my friend might mean to ask why I remain affiliated with a church besmirched with widespread immorality (hundreds of thousands of children abused by priests, tens of thousands of unmarried priests having sex with women). If this were my friend’s intent, I probably would respond on two fronts. For one, I would agree that the Catholic Church is seriously remiss in matters involving sexuality. Beyond predator priests, another shortcoming is its resistance to effective birth control. This causes hardship for many Catholic families and exacerbates the problem of runaway population growth. My second response (perfunctory at best) would be to point out that, for almost any organization, continued membership is not contingent upon its never doing anything wrong. Despite its troubles, I remain a member of the Catholic Church because (for me, at least) it represents the Christian narrative more effectively than do alternative denominations.

A less perfunctory response would be due if the question “Why are you Catholic?” were posed with the intent of learning something about what led me to join the Church originally. A brief answer might be that the Holy Spirit led me to do it. But a longer answer is needed to satisfy my friend’s curiosity. The longer answer that follows should help the shorter answer make sense.

I was born into the Presbyterian Church. My father’s grandfather was a Presbyterian missionary and scholar who translated parts of the Bible into Hindustani. My grandfather was born in India, and returned to the United States to settle in Morrill, Nebraska. Although records are missing, it may be assumed that my father and mother were married in Morrill’s recently constructed Presbyterian Church. In later years, my father served as elder in the Presbyterian Church of Torrington, Wyoming. I delivered a sermon in this latter church at the unlikely age of thirteen.

My college and graduate years were largely nondenominational. Grinnell College was established by a group of Congregational ministers, but had severed denominational ties decades before I enrolled. Harvard University, my graduate institution, likewise had Congregational roots, but had become religiously unaffiliated decades before I arrived. During my first year at Harvard (1952), I attended its eclectically protestant Memorial Church. From 1953 to 1956, I served as Assistant Dean of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences.

Lucille Margaret Shea was my first secretary in the Assistant Dean’s office. Before coming to work, Lucille would attend early Mass at St. Peter Church in Cambridge. After two years, Lucille resigned to earn a degree from Boston College. My next secretary, Patricia Casey, was also Catholic, as was my supervisor Dean Francis

Rogers. A fellow graduate student, Fr. Zeno Vendler SJ, became a close friend, as did visiting scholar Fr. Henri Dulac from the University of St. Thomas in Minnesota. A few years after receiving his PhD, Zeno was laicized and married Helen Hennessy (still known professionally as Helen Vendler). Fr. Dulac was directly instrumental in my being offered a teaching position at the University of Notre Dame.

Lucille and I were married in St. Joseph Church, Medford, Massachusetts, in 1958. Classified as Protestant, I had been required to receive instruction from a priest before marrying. My friend Zeno filled the bill, although he was already dating Helen (Lucille and I once double-dated with them). A few weeks after the wedding, we loaded essential belongings on a U-Haul truck and headed for Notre Dame. Our first son, Gregory, was born in 1959, followed by Christopher in 1960 and Jeffrey in 1963. All three sons were baptized and confirmed in Notre Dame's Sacred Heart Church. Their catechesis, however, was perhaps inadequate, consisting of occasional one-half hour conversations with a goodhearted but overworked graduate student nun. By the time Lucille died in 1980, all three sons had effectively withdrawn from the Church.

While my sons were drifting away from the Church, it now seems in retrospect, I was gradually drawing closer. Lucille attended Mass regularly up to her death, and I always went with her. Although I didn't receive the Eucharist initially, people started treating me as if I were Catholic. I sang in Church liturgies and attended parish events. The first time I received the Eucharist caught me totally by surprise. A child next door to our house had cerebral palsy, and the family sometimes had home Masses for her convenience. One day my family was invited to join them. I remained standing with the rest of the congregation after the consecration of the elements. Moving one by one down

the row, the priest stopped before me and offered the consecrated bread. I accepted immediately without thinking. The wine followed, which I accepted as well. Figuratively speaking, the Holy Spirit may have been chuckling in the background. I was a regular recipient of the consecrated elements from that time forward.

At Lucille's funeral, I delivered an ecomnium and partook of Holy Communion. I was thankful that she had died suddenly, without pain. Sacred Heart Church (literally) was filled to overflowing. My sons were all there with female friends to support them. I shared the support of my oldest son's fiancée.

After their mother's death, I was responsible for my sons' livelihood. I learned to cook pot roasts, to clean house, and to advise them (not always auspiciously) in financial matters. I also did what I could to reinvigorate their religious lives. As part of my premarital instruction, Zeno Vendler had said I would be responsible for my children's Catholic upbringing. Here I was, a non-Catholic, making serious efforts to return my children to their Catholic faith. Although occasionally they would accompany me to Christmas and Easter Vigils, these efforts by and large were ineffective.

Patricia Ann White was a graduate student of philosophy with a Lutheran background. We first met in a graduate class I gave on Plato, during the fall of the year Lucille died. Already skilled in such tasks, Patti responded when I issued a general call for help cleaning my house. After a few sessions of housecleaning, we found that we were unusually comfortable with each other. The following year we began to spend deliberately arranged social time together. There always were chaperones present, ranging from roommate nuns, to famous philosophers (Bernard Williams, Carl Hempel), to sympathetic priests (Ernan McMullin, David Burrell). By the end of 1982, Patti and I

had found enough time to ourselves for her to suggest we might want to get married. Duly surprised, as with my first communion, I accepted her suggestion. Again, there might have been unheard chuckling in the background.

Patti had been raised a Lutheran, and I was a Catholic fellow traveler. We compromised by attending St. James, the local Episcopalian Cathedral. I sang in the choir, and for a brief period served on the Church Advisory Board. Chair of the Board was Fr. Gerhart Niemeyer, on his way to converting to Roman Catholicism. Unable to serve as a Catholic priest (perhaps because of age), Fr. Niemeyer donated his portable Mass kit to Fr. Jose Martelli, CSC, that wily fellow who eventually tricked me into joining the Catholic Church.

The Dean of St. James Cathedral at the time was Fr. Robert Bizarro. Dean Bizarro kindly agreed to officiate at Patti's and my wedding. The wedding was held in the chapel of Zahm Hall, which Patti had selected after visiting all other chapels on campus. The wedding service began with several dozen friends and relatives in attendance. When Fr. Bizarro came to the Liturgy of the Eucharist, Fr. David Burrell came up from the audience and joined him behind the altar. By prior arrangement, unknown to us, the Eucharist of our wedding was concelebrated by an Episcopalian and a Roman Catholic priest.

While Patti was finishing her thesis, after an extended honeymoon in England, she taught at St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota. Her church of choice there was the Catholic Church of St. Dominic. In the meanwhile, I had continued to attend St. James Cathedral. Since this seemed rather eccentric (neither of us was either Catholic or Episcopalian), we decided to attend Catholic services together when she returned from

Northfield to teach at St. Mary's. At first we split time between Little Flower Church in South Bend and ND's newly gilded Basilica. Then, overstimulated by the glow in the Basilica, we moved to the less effulgent Crypt in the basement. We continued to worship in the Crypt until after Michael was born.

In the mid- to late-1980s, Fr. John Gerber CSC organized a group called "Quiet Place." Its general purpose was to help ND faculty sort through the aftermath of the Second Vatican Council. John and I had been friends for decades, and often played squash together. He was burdened by failure to complete a PhD in English from Yale, and was a resolute member of Alcoholics Anonymous. John had legendary status at ND for his extraordinary skill in counseling people burdened with psychological or spiritual difficulties. Patti and I were among Quiet Place's founding members, probably because of my longstanding friendship with John.

Quiet Place meetings usually began with a potluck supper (Patti's innovation), and proceeded with scripture readings, prayer, and general discussion. Although discussion usually began with the readings, it soon shifted to personally more engaging topics. Included were topics ranging in general category from "my institution's failure in affirmative action" to "great places I have been and important people I have known." During its peak years in the early-1990s, two-dozen or more people might attend a given meeting. John sometimes had his hands full keeping the more loquacious among us from monopolizing the conversation.

After John's death from melanoma in 1995, leadership of Quiet Place was taken over by Fr. David Burrell. And when David left for Tantur (near Jerusalem) in 1997, Fr. Patrick Gaffney CSC took the helm. Fr. Pat was an accomplished anthropologist,

unassuming by nature, who resolutely kept the group going for two or three more years. By the late-1990s, however, things had begun to go noticeably sour. One problem was two or three people who used the group as an opportunity to compare personal accomplishments. Another was that personal issues of certain members became so dominant that they couldn't talk about anything else. I can't remember exactly when Quiet Place was discontinued, but it must have been close to the turn of the century.

During the 1980s, I was burdened with private issues of my own. Although I led the Philosophy Department in number of books published, I had repeatedly been passed over for a chaired position. I conjured up theory after theory about why that had happened. One (indefensible yet) persistent theory was that advancement was being blocked by my non-Catholic status. I started fancifulizing about possible remedies. Should I wait for the powers-that-be to give me a chair, after which I would acknowledge their generosity by turning Catholic? Or should I convert first, with the expectation that a chair would then be conferred as a reward? As became apparent later, my real problem was not remaining unchaired but rather a pride-driven conviction that I had been treated unfairly. Foolish as it appeared in retrospect, the quandary would not go away.

About the time his cancer had been diagnosed, I took the quandary to my friend John Gerber. John sat me down and started talking about the opposing attitudes of resentment and gratitude. I resented not receiving a chair as reward for my scholarly work. He once had resented not receiving a PhD as reward for years spent in graduate school at Yale. With disciplined help from AA, he had reversed course to find a role in life for which he was manifestly grateful. I should follow suit by taking steps to overcome my foolish pride. John said all this without a hint of preaching. In his self-

effacing and friendly way, John helped me see something I had not seen previously. Pride distorts everything that is meaningful in life. When preparing to depart, John gave me a piece of marble he had brought back from the Parthenon. Early in our friendship he had nicknamed me “the man from Athens.”

Before leaving John’s quarters, however, I pushed things a bit far by asking if he would hear my confession. He chuckled and suggested I get in touch with Fr. Jose Martelli, then pastor of Sacred Heart Crypt. As already noted, Patti and I had been going to the Crypt for several years previously. I dutifully booked an appointment with Jose, primarily to raise the question of confession. No one could have guessed at the time that my first confession would take place in St. Peter’s Basilica a full two years later.

I had come to admire Fr. Jose for a story he once told in a homily. The gist of the story is that rumors had been circulating to the effect that Jesus was coming to visit Notre Dame. The University’s grounds were manicured, its Security Police was alerted, and the Basilica was readied for its greatest Mass ever. Even its television contract was altered to provide for this unparalleled event. When the day arrived, however, Jesus showed up in a nearby homeless shelter instead. And no cameras were available to provide proof of his presence. Patti and I were among the few people in the Crypt who ventured to laugh at Jose’s spoof.

When I arrived for my appointment, Jose launched another spoof by saying he had been banned from the Basilica for speaking of it irreverently. I swallowed this new hoax, hook, line and sinker. Here was a man with integrity I could trust, come what may. What came next was a series of probing questions about why I had not yet joined the Church. I don’t remember details, but part of my answer was that I could not in good

conscience say certain things one has to say to gain membership. How could I possibly say, for instance, that I believe everything the Magisterium of the Church teaches? In my estimation, to say this would border on absurdity. Quite apart from problematic things it teaches currently, I couldn't possibly commit in advance to every doctrine it might come up with in the indefinite future.

The wily trickster's response caught me totally off guard. Speaking softly, and looking me straight in the eyes, Jose said "I can admit you into the Church here and now." Acknowledging that certain things must be said (like a password) to gain admission through the front door, Jose showed me a back door that was already open. I stepped inside without further ado. There was an eerie feeling that my stepping inside was indistinguishable from a flexible enclosure expanding to include me in its compass. A companion feeling was that I had been in the Church all along, and that Jose had just helped me realize it. To set the seal, we repeated the Nicene Creed together. Perhaps a bit flustered himself, Jose skipped the part about Jesus ascending into heaven. We picked it up again by professing our shared belief in the Holy Spirit. Jose's composure may have been interrupted by an imperceptible chortle in the background, which he heard as an unvoiced "good save." I heard it as an unspoken "about time."

My session with Jose coincided with a brief working vacation shared by Patti with a colleague in a nearby state park. Patti was tutoring her fellow team-teacher on the beauties of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*. In the process, someone's menstrual cycle was thrown off rhythm. Michael was born less than a year after my session with Jose.

In the estimation of his 35-year old mother and 65-year old father, Michael was as close to perfect as a baby can get. He literally was born to be a ballet dancer. His first

steps were on his toes, and he was doing beautiful pirouettes while still in diapers. He started formal dance training at age three, and turned professional at age seventeen.

Michael's religious upbringing was closely bound up with my adjustment to life as a professed Catholic. Michael received baptism from Fr. Jose, with water drawn from the River Jordan. Fr. David Burrell and Sr. Elena Malits stood with him as godparents. Michael completed the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd at ND's University Village, where we attended Mass after Jose left the Crypt. Village Masses featured skillfully played guitars and dozens of noisy children. I participated sometimes as cantor, sometimes as reader, and more regularly as Cup Minister. Since University Village was not a regular parish, Michael's confirmation was arranged through ND's Sacred Heart Parish. Fr. Jose concelebrated his Confirmation Mass at South Bend's St. Matthew Cathedral.

With Michael launched as a practicing Catholic, Patti and I continued to attend Mass at the University Village. My experience as Cup Minister there changed my perception both of the Eucharist and of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. For year after year, confession had been a routine matter of speaking with a priest about abstract failures of pride and charity. The priest would absolve me of abstract sin, and assign a Lord's Prayer as penance. But then one year the routine gave way and I confessed not really knowing how to confess. The priest understood and tasked me with meditating on certain NT passages about contrition. Among them, I believe, was *Acts 2:38*, where Peter tells the afflicted Israelites: "Repent and be baptized ... in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit"

(Metanoēsate ... kai baptisthētō ... epi tō onomati 'Iēsou Christou eis aphesin tōn

amartiōn humōn kai lēmpsesthe tēn dōrean tou hagiou pneumatos). Immediately upon absolution, I experienced a buoyant sense of wellbeing. My previous dealings with the Holy Spirit, while never frivolous or disrespectful, had always been lighthearted. Now I felt that the two of us were getting down to business.

My understanding of the Eucharist was undergoing similar transformation. In part, it was a matter of overcoming a certain “hardness of heart.” For years, I had been trying to understand it rationally without emotional engagement. Now I was coming to realize that the Eucharist could not be understood in abstraction from sentiments of affection commonly attributed to the heart. While following the words of consecration, my mind still would be distracted by musings on what was happening. But when holding the consecrated cup and offering it to other people, my mind would step aside as my heart took over. I would become affectively immersed in the contents of the cup. Something like this happened recently during the words of consecration themselves. I was present at a funeral Mass in the Basilica for a friend of fifty years standing. Although I could not see what was happening at the altar, hearing those words actually brought tears to my eyes.

My wife, Patti, provided counseling and support in most of these developments. Upon returning from the state park, she was delighted to hear I had joined the Church. When Michael was born, she nourished him in every relevant respect. And nurture provided Michael nourished me as well. She read him many books by many authors (Tolkien was a favorite), and told him many fascinating stories of her own devising. She taught him to speak kindly and to be charitable toward others. While I tutored him in

music, she tutored him in the art of living. With her expert help, he became adept at peacemaking, and at seeing things from another person's perspective.

When time came for preprofessional training in Chicago, she drove him there and back five days a week. He did homework for South Bend's Trinity School in the back seat. When he had to leave school in South Bend for full-time dance training, she rented a flat for him in Chicago's Joffrey Tower. After he moved to Chicago, she still drove there several times a week to provide home schooling. Patti tutored Michael in the classics (Thucydides, Herodotus, Plato), supervised his reading of the Bible cover to cover, took him through the history of mathematics, and over the years brought him to the point where he could earn a GED with honors at age twenty.

Nurture, one might say, is part of Patti's nature. For my own part, she enlightened me in matters of both mind and heart. She had received excellent training in Notre Dame's graduate philosophy program, and taught two years at St. Olaf while completing her PhD thesis. After leaving St. Olaf, she was fortunate enough to land a teaching job at Saint Mary's, across from Notre Dame. By the time Michael was born, she had prepared and taught more than a dozen different courses, in most of which she scored off the scale in Teacher-Course Evaluations. A substantial number of her students have gone on to do graduate work in philosophy. One currently holds an endowed chair in a major midwestern university.

Patti's favorite classroom topics are logic and Wittgenstein. Her logic courses typically start with informal fallacies and end with Gödel's incompleteness proof. Each year, she spends days scouring news media for up-to-date examples of fallacious reasoning. Despite my urging, she refuses to publish her carefully honed class notes in

the form of a logic text. This probably is as it should be, since the excitement she imparts to logic could never be captured in print. Her Wittgenstein courses are regularly attended both by Philosophy majors and by students outside the department. It is not uncommon for groups of former students to continue reading the *Tractatus* with her after their formal course has ended. One former student is known to have the words “The world is all that is the case” tattooed on her arm.

When Patti leaves the classroom after a day’s teaching, she often continues talking philosophy with me at the dinner table. Our styles are different, to say the least. Mine tends to be technical and systematic, while hers is more personal and existential. As she puts it, I approach topics with an eye toward how things work, whereas her concern is with implications for personal life. Regarding the *Tractatus*, for instance, I tend to focus on things like “the general form of a proposition” (6), whereas she is more taken by Wittgenstein’s remark that, even when all scientific problems are solved, “the problems of life remain completely untouched” (6.52).

Patti’s dominant concern with what is humanly valuable traces back to early interests in literature and the arts. Leaving high school, she seriously considered a career in literature. Even after that gave way to philosophy, she remained a voracious reader. Her all-time favorite authors are probably Tolstoy and Proust, although there are hundreds of books she knows almost by heart. She typically has four or five novels going simultaneously. I have seen her pick up a book to read on her way from the sink to the kitchen table. Sometimes she reads to me after dinner.

After basic painting lessons in high school, Patti took up her brushes with renewed interest after Michael was born. About the time he moved to Chicago, she began

work on a BFA degree from St. Mary's College. Semester after semester, without interruption, she added another three credits toward the number needed for graduation. She was a straight-A student throughout, graduating in 2016 at the top of her class. She has won cash prizes in several art competitions, and has earned a place among South Bend's professional artists. While still evolving in style, she hones her skill by producing a meticulously rendered pencil drawing every evening before bedtime. She has hundreds of these stored under cover in her basement studio. Some are extraordinarily beautiful.

This is a thumbnail sketch of the woman who sustained me during the latter half of my journey from a Presbyterian choirboy to a practicing Catholic. In recent months, as the present study nears completion, our dinner conversations have tended to focus less on philosophy and more on NT scholarship (in which she is well versed). And when we drive to Columbus to see Michael dance, we sometimes fall into heated arguments on issues of religious significance. Among such issues are: (i) how God could have such apparently different expectations for his people in the contexts of the Old and the New Covenants; (ii) what Wittgenstein meant when he said in *Culture and Value* (64e): "It strikes me that a religious belief could only be something like a passionate commitment to a system of reference" (I like to read 'system of reference' in this quote as 'worldview'); and (iii) whether one can undertake a study of religious belief like this without relapse into the deadly sin of pride.

With the hesitant permission of our pastor, Patti started receiving Holy Communion the year before we left the University Village. I encouraged her by explaining that, in my case at least, receiving the Eucharist seems to enhance my relation with the Third Person of the Trinity.