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> *This paper argues that religious beliefs should not be excluded from the public square and that the government could at times pass laws when religious arguments are presented. The opposing views of secularism are examined and criticized, and the concepts of freedom of conscious and freedom of choice are compared. The paper utilizes the controversy over abortion and gay marriage to illustrate why religious arguments could be included in the public square.*

> *This paper demonstrates that ungrounded assumptions in the evidentialist argument, which holds that the existence of gratuitous evils makes God's existence unlikely, render it a weak argument. Moreover, this paper counter-argues using a theodical approach that the existence of evil in the world does not conflict with and even points toward the existence of God. The author draws from philosophers Daniel Howard-Snyder, Michael Bergmann, Richard Swinburne, and Alvin Plantinga to argue against William Rowe's evidentialist position.*

> *This paper seeks to examine the validity and meaning of Epicurus' dictum, "all impressions are true." It begins with a brief background of Epicurean epistemology and an analysis of the terms ἀληθές, and φαντασία, and then moves on to an explanation of three interpretations of ἀληθές, followed by a breakdown and critique of each interpretation. Ultimately, the paper attempts to prove that the original dictum "all impressions are true" is in fact trivial and unable to provide insight into the material world.*

> *Though Friedrich Nietzsche's overwhelmingly negative conception of Christianity as a social and religious movement is well known, his more ambivalent, even positive, opinion of the "historical Jesus" has also elicited interest. Using three vital components of "master morality" as its chief interpretive lens, this paper argues for a more nuanced view of Nietzsche's Jesus based on his designation as "the noblest human being." By recouching the personality of Jesus in terms of will and nobility, the paper is able to present his actions and teachings as a model for Nietzschean philosophy lived out in the world.*

> *Why is it that, when we look at the world around us, it gives us no reason, prima facie, to believe that it is governed by a perfectly loving and omnipotent God? John Schellenberg's argument from this problem of Divine hiddenness posits that the answer is quite simple: no such God exists. The question must take a different—and more difficult—form for the Christian theodicist, who, if he maintains that union with God is (1) the greatest of all possible goods, (2) the only good which can decisively defeat evil in an individual's life, and (3) only accessible through faith in Christ, must account also for why so few people seem to have such faith. By examining the arguments of several theodicists who have addressed both Schellenberg's argument and the expanded problem of hiddenness, this paper pursues a rational, Biblical solution to the latter issue.*

FOREWORD

The purpose and mission of the Pulse is to promote excellence in undergraduate research and writing while striving to engage a wide variety of academic disciplines. For the past six years, the Pulse has chosen to use its Fall edition to highlight a specific academic discipline or topic. This fall, we have had the opportunity with students engaging in the study of Philosophy.

The papers published in this edition reflect the diversity of philosophical engagement, ranging in topic from ancient and modern concerns to political and theodicial questions. In Ross Irvin's paper, entitled "Religion in the Public Square," the author carefully considers the ramifications of barring religious discourse in civil society. Thomas McGraw's paper also draws on religious questions, demonstrating the ways in which the problem of evil may not be a substantial threat to theistic claims. The Epicurean claim that "all impressions are true" is problematized in Michael Nichols' thoughtful paper, in which he draws on his knowledge of Classical Greek to make his claims. Recent graduate Samuel Pomeroy attends to Nietzsche in his paper, promoting a more temperate reading of Nietzsche's own interpretation of the "historical Jesus." Finally, in David Welch's paper, we return to the problem of evil with his examination of why currently circulating theodicies may fall short of the ends they seek to achieve.

This edition reflects the hard work and dedication of our entire staff, for whom we are grateful. We are also thankful for the cooperation of the Philosophy Department, whose enthusiastic participation was instrumental in the production of this edition. We are particularly indebted to Dr. Todd Buras, who generously gave us his encouragement and guidance at every turn.

The gracious support offered to us has been particularly appreciated this past semester as we have striven to be good stewards of the legacy of excellence and care left to us by our greatly missed faculty sponsor, Dr. Susan Colón. Her successor, Dr. Jeff Hunt, has been an invaluable resource, and we cannot overstate the help he has been to us. Nevertheless, we do feel her loss and hope that, in whatever way possible, we may continue to promote her vision for

the Pulse. We look forward to the opportunity in the spring semester to offer a more formal tribute to her memory and to express our appreciation for her work with the Pulse.

Joy Freemyer   Wylie Wyman
President   Chief Editor

This paper argues that religious beliefs should not be excluded from the public square and that the government could at times pass laws when religious arguments are presented. The opposing views of secularism are examined and criticized, and the concepts of freedom of conscious and freedom of choice are compared. The paper utilizes the controversy over abortion and gay marriage to illustrate why religious arguments could be included in the public square.

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Religion in the Public Square

Ross Irvin

In any society, controversies over public policy are inevitable. This is due to a potentially wide variety of factors, but often controversy results from discrepancies in people's moral judgments, which result from diverse factors, including religious beliefs. So the question necessarily arises, should the government be able to pass laws that coerce citizens to take certain actions when these laws are motivated by religious beliefs and should people in public debate use religious arguments to back the government acting in this way? This paper argues that the government could consider religious arguments when making or debating new laws. By this I do not mean that laws should be passed that support or establish any religion, but rather that arguments of any kind could be given to support or reject certain public actions. In order to support this position, it is necessary to examine legal secularism and the arguments for religious inclusion. It is also beneficial to attend to the issues of abortion and gay marriage as pertinent examples.

Legal secularism is a relaxed view of secularism and widely accepted, even by those who hold religious beliefs. This type of secularism holds that government and our legal institutions should be secular in the sense of being non-religious or religiously neutral.[1] Legal secularism simply holds that these views should be kept out so that government can remain neutral. Any reference to a "secularist" from this point on in this paper refers to a legal secularist. Within legal secularism, it is possible to respect religious beliefs while also realizing that combining such beliefs with public policy can be dangerous because it may restrict the

religious liberty of others. Political philosopher John Rawls points out this problem well when he explains that "the duty of civility requires us in due course to make our case for the legislation and public policies we support in terms of public reason."[2] It becomes the duty of civility to support and defend legislation with public reason. If legislation not backed by public reason disagrees or contradicts with a particular person's religious beliefs, then the government would be using its power of coercion to force people to adhere to a moral code with which they do not agree. In this way, it is necessary to separate religion from politics so that religious liberty may be upheld.

Another reason legal secularists give for separating religion from politics is that reliance on premises based on religious beliefs does not further political discussion. Richard Rorty is one such secularist and argues that religion is a "conversation stopper."[3] He contends that making arguments based on religious beliefs "is far more likely to end an argument than to start an argument."[4] Rorty does not mean that religion is an awkward subject that people prefer to avoid, but rather, when a person brings in an argument supported by religious beliefs, there is not much that can be said by either party to convince one another that their position is the correct one. This is simply because a religious person cannot rely on religious arguments to convince a non-religious person (or even a person of a different religious belief) of a particular viewpoint. This then causes the conversation to promptly stop without any sort of resolution. An argument like this can only progress toward the debate between theism and atheism, which does not address the particulars of the original issue. It is for these reasons that Rorty believes that religious beliefs and arguments cannot function in the public sphere and must therefore remain privatized. Although legal secularism is an attractive solution, it is not without its problems and is ultimately an untenable position.

Legal secularism can be challenged in two ways. First, it indirectly leads to a devaluation of religion, and, second, by requiring neutrality can actually infringe upon religious liberty. It leads to a devaluation of religion because it is inevitable that the government at some time will have to legislate morality. This sort of legislation might include laws regarding abortion, gay marriage, redistribution of wealth, or the death penalty. Somewhere along the line people will be obligated to use their moral judgments in order to determine not only their own response to ethical issues, but what they think the government should do. While

one's moral beliefs can come from different sources—such as one's culture, past experiences, or personal reflection—religion often plays a large role in determining those moral beliefs. If religion is a significant influence on one's moral views, why, then, must one look to secular arguments to justify them? Though no single religion influences the moral views of an entire population, it is not therefore evident that secularist morality should become public morality. To value a secular moral argument over one rooted in religious beliefs devalues religion. Religion should not disqualify a moral argument's validity any more than a secular position should ensure it. Even Rorty, a secularist, holds that it is not any less appropriate to bring up arguments that are based on religion than it is to bring up arguments set forth by a moral philosopher. He concedes that it "is right to insist that both law and custom should leave him free to say, in the public square, that his endorsement of redistributionist legislation is a result of his belief in God."[5] The problem with secularism is that religion, broadly speaking, is not intended to be private. It affects the way people live, including the opinions they form on certain political questions. Therefore, any attempt to say that a person cannot rely on religious arguments or that he or she must look to another source to justify a belief in the public square devalues that person's religious beliefs and may also violate religious liberty.

Michael Sandel shows how this violation can happen by establishing a distinction between the freedom of conscience and the freedom of choice. He explains that "For Madison and Jefferson, freedom of conscience meant the freedom to exercise religious liberty—to worship or not, to support a church or not, to profess belief or disbelief—without suffering civil penalties or incapacities."[6] This is important because there is no freedom for people to *choose* their beliefs, because beliefs are not something people simply choose, but that people have a right to hold their own beliefs. This is why religious liberty is so essential. One cannot compel another to believe something, for an individual may only believe what is dictated by his own conscience. Accordingly, freedom of conscience becomes an unalienable right because a person cannot simply give it up. By contrast, freedom of choice is something that we decide for ourselves, something that we have direct control over. The distinction arises in that a person exercising religious liberty is exercising a duty of their beliefs, not simply a choice. Sandel goes on to argue that because this distinction is not drawn, the pursuit of interests and choices are equated with the pursuit of duty and conscience. This failure

to distinguish freedom of conscience and freedom of choice "confuses the pursuit of preferences with the exercise of duties and so forgets the special concern of religious liberty."[7] Sandel cites a number of court cases in the United States to show how this effort to gain neutrality has infringed on the right to free exercise. One of these cases, *Thorton v. Caldor Inc.*, deals with a statute that guaranteed those who observed the Sabbath a right not to work on the Sabbath while also giving all employees the right to one day off each week. In this particular case, the court took a secularist approach and struck down this statute, reasoning that it was unfair that, although all employees got one day off each week, only those who observed the Sabbath got to choose the day that they did not have to work. The court argued that those who did not observe the Sabbath may also have reasonable, secular reasons for wanting a weekend day off, but these people were taken to be less important than those who observed the Sabbath. Sandel argues that this is exactly when the distinction between the two types of freedom needs to be made. In this case, those who observe the Sabbath do not choose the day they do not have to work. Rather, they rest when their religion requires them to observe the Sabbath. They do not receive the special privilege to choose the day they do not have to work through this statute. Instead, they are given the right to freely exercise their own beliefs. Due to the court's attempt to make the government neutral to religion, religious liberty was undermined. If secularism leads to a devaluation of freedom and infringes on religious liberty, then religious inclusion must be considered as a viable option for dealing with religion in the public square.

People should be able to use religious arguments in the public square for several reasons. Primarily, it would allow for a truly free exercise of religion. Contrary to Rorty's thinking, this kind of discussion would foster new ways of thinking. Although it may seem counterintuitive that allowing religious beliefs to function as arguments in the public square would create a truly free exercise, it does, in fact, promote this liberty. Religious inclusion does not mean that laws should be passed that support or establish any religion. It rather refers to the idea that religious belief should be viewed as the freedom of conscience and that arguments of any kind may be given to support or reject certain public actions. Again, we can refer to Rorty, a secularist, who seems to support this notion. He agrees that it is acceptable to refer to a belief in God and to cite Psalm 72 when trying to support redistributive social legislation, but he argues when, "someone says that his reason for opposing legisla-

tion that supports same sex marriage, or that repeals anti-sodomy laws, is his commitment to the belief that Scriptures. . .[they] trump all the arguments in favor of the legislation."[8] Thus, Rorty finds that it is acceptable to bring in arguments in particular cases, but he does not in others. I propose that the difficulty in refuting a religious argument on secular grounds is an insufficient justification for excluding religious arguments from public discourse. Thus, people should be permitted to use religious arguments in the public square. Whether or not they are to be taken seriously is a different question, but that should be left to individuals to decide. This is the point of public discussion—ideas should be presented regardless of their source; people may then discuss and decide for themselves what is appropriate for society. People change their minds about questions of morality by hearing the story from another side and discussing and identifying with others in the open public forum.

Jeffery Stout, a friend and colleague of Rorty, responds to his critique of the inclusion of religious arguments. On the issue of same-sex marriage, Stout argues that although there are homophobes who try to mask their fear behind Christianity and Scripture, "the best way to persuade sincere believers that legalizing same-sex marriage would not be the end of the world is to encourage them to have their say on what Leviticus 18:22 means and then challenge them on their own ground."[9] Stout suggests that if you can point out the inconsistencies in another person's beliefs, then that person will rethink the way he or she feels about certain issues. Once these people realize that their beliefs are not completely founded in their religion, they have the opportunity to reform those beliefs. Stout points to the ways in which both secular and religious organizations worked together during the civil rights movement in order to accomplish change, and he argues that this kind of cooperation and discussion is the means to achieve real progress.

Oftentimes when questions of morality are raised in a public forum, a stalemate results. This is largely due to the devaluation of religious belief by the American political system, which carries as a consequence a fear of persecution by those who might otherwise voice their moral convictions, which are based on religious beliefs. If, however, religion were encouraged to truly be present in the public sphere, and people were to acknowledge all arguments with an open mind, meaningful discussion could take place. Discussion such as this would not only foster real progress, but would also guarantee that all citizens could freely exercise their religious beliefs. If all religious arguments are to

be included in the public sphere, though, how does one recognize how much weight to give them? The best way to answer this question is to look at particular issues and decide what is at stake.

The issues of abortion and same-sex marriage are two of the most controversial topics that have appeared in the public forum over the last several years. It is not a coincidence that their controversies are rooted in moral questions. Support for both issues requires tolerance of particular acts, which legal secularists argue for on the grounds that one ought not impose one's own religious beliefs upon another. It is necessary, then, to demonstrate why religious arguments should be included in public debate and how much weight these religious arguments should carry.

The two sides of the abortion issue are often termed "pro-life" and "pro-choice." Many religious adherents find themselves on the pro-life side of the debate because they view the unborn fetus as alive, making the destruction of the fetus an immoral action. Those who are on the pro-choice side believe that the moral decision to abort, lies with the individual. I argue that those who place a value on the life of the fetus because of their own religious convictions should be able to voice these beliefs in the public square without being met with the harsh criticism that they are not separating their religious beliefs from their opinions about how the government should act. This is because those who hold this position cannot simply tolerate the termination of a fetus. Hadley Arkes makes a parallel argument that "one can be 'pro-choice' on the torture of children only if there were nothing in principle or illegitimate about the torture of innocent people."[10] If one thinks that something is morally wrong, then he or she should be of the same opinion that people should not be allowed to perform that action. This becomes especially true if a person takes the fetus to be a living person. If the fetus were a living person, then to abort it would be to kill a person. In other words, it would be committing murder. A person cannot say that murder is morally wrong but people should be free to murder. Therefore, those who are pro-life should be able to express these kinds of opinions in the public sphere. Rorty and others would say that the conversation would stop here, but I do not think that is the case. From here public discussion can further examine the idea of life, which could very well result in a change of opinion for either party. The issue of abortion most often

comes down to the idea of whether or not the fetus is alive, so it seems it would be best to include all types of arguments in order to best decide what to do about the situation.

Same sex marriage is an issue in which it is even more difficult to justify the inclusion of religious arguments. This is in part because some of the arguments against it are often baseless and rooted in prejudice. That being said, religious arguments could be taken into consideration due to the entanglement that marriage has with religion. Allow me to present an illustration of what I intend by "entanglement:" same-sex marriage has been legalized and a same sex couple wants to be married at a church that is well known for its beautiful wedding ceremonies. This couple asks the church if they could get married there, and the church, because of its religious beliefs, does not want to accommodate a ceremony for same sex couples so church officials reject the proposal. Is the church's rejection due to their religious beliefs acceptable, or ought it be considered a discriminatory practice? On one hand, it is apparent that if the church were forced to marry this couple then it would be an affront to the religious liberty of the church itself. On the other hand, however, if the government afforded to same sex couples the right to be married and thus have equal marriage rights, it would seem that same sex couples ought be able to get married anywhere that they choose without facing discrimination. If the legalization of same-sex marriage were to lead to the scenario outlined above (which seems plausible), it appears as though religious arguments could be taken into consideration due to the fact that many religious institutions would be affected by this change. Then, with the inclusion of these arguments, public debate could take place and perhaps change the views of the religious population, similar to how people's beliefs were changed during the civil rights movement. This is not to say that the attitudes of the people need to be changed before the law is changed, but rather that these types of arguments must be presented in the public sphere in order for people to have the opportunity to be persuaded. Perhaps, through this discussion of ideas, both parties can find a common ground and agree on a solution, such as a separation of the legal rights marriage gives and the religious concept of marriage.

Deciding what role, if any, religion should play in the political sphere is clearly a complicated matter. However, after a thorough examination of the idea of legal secularism and the arguments for religious inclusion, a strong case for the idea of religious inclusion has been made.

People's religious beliefs should not be excluded from the public square, and the government can at times pass or refrain from passing laws when religious arguments are presented. Through the inclusion of religious arguments, I believe religious liberty can be protected while progress and discussion can simultaneously be encouraged.

NOTES

[1] Feldman, *Divided by God: America's Church-state Problem*, 8.

[2] Rawls, *Justice as Fairness: A Restatement*, 90.

[3] Rorty, "Religion As a Conversation Stopper," 168-174.

[4] Ibid., 171.

[5] Rorty, "Religion in the Public Square," 142-143.

[6] Sandel, "Freedom of Conscience or Freedom of Choice?" 87.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Rorty. "Religion in the Public Square," 143.

[9] Stout. "Rorty on Religion and Politics."

[10] Arkes. *First Things*, 362.

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This paper demonstrates that ungrounded assumptions in the evidentialist argument, which holds that the existence of gratuitous evils makes God's existence unlikely, render it a weak argument. Moreover, this paper counter-argues using a theodicy approach that the existence of evil in the world does not conflict with and even points toward the existence of God. The author draws from philosophers Daniel Howard-Snyder, Michael Bergmann, Richard Swinburne, and Alvin Plantinga to argue against William Rowe's evidentialist position.

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The Evidential Argument from Evil:
A True Problem for Theism?

Thomas McGraw

One of the greatest challenges for theism is the existence of seemingly gratuitous evils.[1] Many contend that gratuitous evils lessen the likelihood of God's existence.[2] Several theistic philosophers have argued against the evidentialist argument in two ways.[3] First, skeptical-theists such as Daniel Howard-Snyder and Michael Bergmann argue that there could be goods unknowable by humans that justify the existence of evil. Another form of argument, the theodicy, attempts to provide possible justifications for the existence of evil using known goods. In this paper, I will contend that the existence of evil is not only consistent with theism, but also that evil can point toward the existence of God. I will specifically focus on countering William Rowe's evidentialist argument. Before I consider how evil may suggest God's existence, I will first review Rowe's evidentialist argument from evil against theism. I will then discuss Howard-Snyder and Bergmann's objection to this argument as well as the theodical arguments of Swinburne and Plantinga. By building on these arguments, I will conclude with Swinburne and Plantinga that the present evils in the world do not provide a serious problem for theism.

William Rowe develops a case against theism from the existence of evils. He lays out his argument as follows:

(1)　There likely exist gratuitous evils that God would have no justifying reason to allow.

(2)　God would not allow an evil unless he had a justifying reason to allow it.

(3)　Therefore, it is likely that God does not exist.[4]

Rowe argues that his second premise is commonly accepted by atheists and theists alike, and that only three conditions would provide justification for an omnipotent God permitting certain evils: first, "there is some greater good" which can come only through the existence of evil; second, there is a good obtainable only if God allows a certain evil or "some evil equally bad or worse;" and third, the existence of an evil prevents "some evil equally bad or worse."[5] However, Rowe does not believe that a justification exists for every instance of evil in the world. Thus, his argument turns on the first premise.

As an inductive argument, Rowe's argument merely renders unlikely God's existence.[6] Rowe allows that humans cannot be completely certain that a particular instance of evil is unjustified for God because of our finite intelligence. Yet, Rowe contends that a lack of known reasons still lessens the probability of the existence of God. Before beginning his argument, Rowe asks the reader to assume a roughly .5 probability of the existence of God. Any instance in which a reason cannot be given for the existence of evil then lessens the probability of God's existence. Rowe argues that any set of justifications for the existence of evil, if excluded, can only reduce the probability of God's existence.[7]

To further support his first premise, Rowe attempts to provide concrete examples of gratuitous suffering. One of his primary examples is of a fawn in a forest fire:

> A fawn is horribly burned in a forest fire caused by lightning. It lies on the forest floor suffering terribly for five days before death relieves it of its suffering.[8]

Rowe offers this as an example of unjustified suffering because no apparent good is served by the fawn's continued suffering. He argues that this instance represents a natural evil not caused either directly or indirectly by humans and thus cannot be explained as the result of free individuals' moral choices. Rowe argues that one cannot see a justifiable

good served by this situation, and his first premise, that there are un-justified evils in the world, is therefore likely. Thus, he believes that it is likely that God does not exist.

One way of disputing this argument is by addressing its inherent assumptions, a method I will term the "skeptical-theist" reply because it relies on skepticism of human cognitive abilities. To make my argu-ment I will draw from the skeptical-theist arguments of philosophers Daniel Howard-Snyder and Michael Bergmann. They respond to two assumptions within Rowe's argument. The first response addresses what some philosophers see as the inherent "noseeum assumption" in Rowe's argument.[9] A "noseeum assumption" is the fallacious assumption that one would necessarily be able to observe something if it did exist and was present. Daniel Howard-Snyder and Michael Bergmann point out an assumption in Rowe's argument: if there are justifying goods, then humans should expect to see them. Rowe, however, neither addresses nor provides an argument in support of this assumption, significantly weakening his argument.[10] In addition to pointing out this problematic assumption, Howard-Snyder and Bergmann also provide two reasons that explain why humans should often not expect to understand the justifying good behind certain forms of evil. First, they argue that God's omniscience and omnipotence so far exceeds our finite minds that we should not expect to understand the reasons for evil.[11] Rowe does allow for this possibility of limited understanding, though only as an aside or a concession that is incidental to his argument.[12] Howard-Snyder and Michael Bergmann, in contrast, emphasize that not only is it possible that our finite minds could not grasp justifying reasons for evil, but we should expect this to be true. To give an analogy, a human assuming he or she would be capable of understanding God's justifications would be similar to a first-year student of physics assuming that he or she could explicate the intricacies of string theory. Also, the progressive nature of knowledge indicates that we may in the future understand the justifica-tions that God has for allowing evil in the world. In fact, the progressive nature of knowledge helps explain our present lack of understanding because "future progress implies present ignorance, [and] it wouldn't be surprising if there is much we are currently ignorant of."[13] Thus, by this view, our present lack of understanding is not evidence against belief in God.

Howard-Snyder and Bergmann also respond to a second assumption in Rowe's argument, namely that the probability of one understanding God's justification for evil is roughly equal to the probability of one not seeing God's justification.[14] However, since Rowe gives no argument in support of this point, the assumption that the probability of not understanding God's justifications is low is unfounded. Thus, Rowe's argument is not a strong argument against theism. By appealing to inherent human ignorance, the skeptical-theist view holds that the existence of evil does not reduce the likelihood that there is a God.

Besides addressing problematic assumptions, one can construct a theodicy as a counterargument to the first premise of Rowe's argument. This method goes further than the skeptical-theist argument by providing known goods which justify the existence of evils in the world. In the theodical argument, such goods actually provide evidence for the existence of a God, rather than merely making the existence of evil logically consistent with theism.

In order to construct a theodicy, I must first explain the connection between God's omnipotence and the response to the evidentialist argument. In support of his argument against the problem of evil, Alvin Plantinga argues that an omnipotent God could not "actualize states of affairs such that his actualizing them is logically impossible."[15] Because it is impossible for anything to exist that breaks the basic laws of logic, an omnipotent being cannot break such logical boundaries. An example of this restriction is the fact that God cannot actualize a world that does not include his existence. Similarly, although some people would argue that an omnipotent God could create a world in which humans had access to all variety of goods without suffering, this idea is not logically consistent with certain types of goods that possess as a necessary condition a certain amount of evil. Thus, belief in God's omnipotence is not incompatible with acknowledging the existence of evil.

Richard Swinburne begins his argument by providing specific goods that God could not achieve without allowing significant evils into the world. He writes that "showing sympathy…, helping the suffering, and showing courage" all represent significant goods which could not be achieved without the existence of various types of evil in the world.[16] Most people would agree that these three states of being represent goods. However, these goods by nature require that evil exist. Sympathy cannot be given in a world in which no sorrow exists; suffering cannot exist in a world without pain; courage requires adversity that

one may combat. Although this is only a short list of possible goods, this thought experiment shows that some significant goods can only be achieved through the existence of evil. Thus, in order for God to create the best possible world—the one with the greatest range of goods—he must create a world in which significant, but limited, evil exists.

Though some assert the existence of limitless suffering, which most would consider a great evil, Swinburne rightly emphasizes that evil is in fact limited. Limitless earthly suffering and pain would be too evil to justify any goods that come from it, and thus could be called a gratuitous evil. However, in the world as it exists there are physical limits to pain, both the natural constraints of human bodies and the restraint of time in the length of the human life. Thus, limitless suffering and pain for an individual does not exist, and therefore cannot be used to support the evidentialist argument or atheism in general. Yet, some individuals may object to these limits by arguing that death is an evil in itself. One could respond to this objection in two ways. First, Swinburne responds by contending that death is not in itself evil, but rather meaningless deaths are evils.[17] This idea is illustrated by the comfort a family receives by knowing that their loved one's death served some greater purpose.[18] In some ways, a sacrificial death for the good of others can actually be a good insofar as it continues to accomplish good after an individual's death. Second, even if one allows, as some Christian philosophers do,[19] that death is an inherent physical evil, one could argue that God has justifying reasons for allowing it to exist, thereby rendering it a non-gratuitous evil and removing it from consideration in the evidentialist argument. For example, if a parent dies in rescuing his children, the good that results could provide a justified reason for God to allow the death.[20]

The central point to Swinburne's theodicy is what he calls the "free-will defense."[21] This argument relies on the idea that free will is a significant good. Through the use of free will humans can partake in the creative work of God in the world by making significant choices. However, free will cannot exist without humans having the ability to choose to do evil, which helps explain the moral evil, caused by humans, in the world. Some contend that God could have given free will, but only given humans the ability to choose between good options for each other. Yet, free will is not as significant if humans are free to choose between only good options. For choices to have true meaning, they must have the ability to significantly impact other humans in real, negative ways.

The free will defense also helps provide an explanation for the natural evils as well as the natural tendency of humans to do evil rather than good. Individuals learn of evil in the world through the observation of natural evil. For example, by being poisoned accidently by a plant, humans can gain the knowledge of how to poison another if they choose.[22] Also, in order to have a significant free choice, "agents need already a certain depravity" of nature.[23] If agents acted guided by logic alone, they would always choose the best option. Therefore, humans must have a passionate nature that encourages them to act irrationally, doing evil rather than good. One further addition to this argument comes from Plantinga, who says that "it is clearly possible that every creaturely essence suffers from transworld depravity."[24] Transworld depravity is the idea that in order for a creature to truly have free will it must have a natural tendency towards evil in any possible created world, not merely the one that exists. Thus, moral evil can be explained by the great good of free will that can only exist with the possibility of evil in the world; evil then exists because humans choose this evil.

Additionally, the existence of natural evil can be accounted for because of the goods that can exist only in the presence of evil. Theoretically, God could have actualized a world with less natural evil, but in order to provide similar opportunities for goods such as compassion and sympathy, he would have to increase the allowed amount of moral evils. There is no reason to think that such a world would be better than our own. Some sort of evil is necessary in order for the goods of compassion, empathy, or helping people in need. Thus, the evils existing in our world point toward the existence of a God who created a world in which the maximum number and variety of goods is possible to achieve.

In conclusion, William Rowe, along with other proponents of the evidentialist argument, argues that it is unlikely God exists due to gratuitous evils. However, the skeptical-theist reply shows that Rowe does not provide sufficient evidence in support of his claim that there are not justifying reasons for the evil in the world. In contrast, by exploring the avenue of theodicy, one can provide justifying reasons for the existence of many evils, rendering the claim that they are gratuitous unlikely.

NOTES

[1] "Gratuitous evil" refers to an evil without
a justifying good or purpose.
[2] The term "God" refers to a perfectly good, omniscient,
omnipotent being. The belief in God is termed "theism."
[3] The argument against theism based in gratuitous evil is
often called the "evidentialist argument from evil."
[4] Rowe, "Evil is Evidence Against Theistic Belief," 5.
[5] Rowe, "The Problem of Evil and Some Varieties of Atheism," 336.
[6] A sound deductive argument, by contrast, would
definitely disprove God's existence.
[7] Rowe, "Evil is Evidence Against Theistic Belief," 4.
[8] Ibid., 5.
[9] Howard-Snyder and Bergmann, "Evil Does Not Make
Atheism More Reasonable than Theism," 19.
[10] Ibid., 17-18
[11] Ibid., 18-19.
[12] Rowe, "Evil is Evidence Against Theistic Belief," 7.
[13] Ibid., 19.
[14] Howard-Snyder and Bergmann, "Evil Does Not Make
Atheism More Reasonable than Theism," 22.
[15] Plantinga, "Which Worlds Could God Have Created?," 540.
[16] Swinburne, "Some Major Strands of Theodicy," 40.
[17] Swinburne, *Is There A God?,* 85.
[18] Swinburne, "Some Major Strands of Theodicy," 42.
[19] Sharpe, "Evil."
[20] This argument especially holds true with respect to the
Christian who believes that eternal reward and life await
after death, causing the momentary evil of death to pale
in comparison to the goods that it could bring about.
[21] Swinburne, *Is There A God?,* 86.
[22] Swinburne, "Some Major Strands of Theodicy," 32.
[23] Swinburne, *Is There A God?,* 88-89.
[24] Plantinga, "Which Worlds Could God Have Created?," 551.

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This paper seeks to examine the validity and meaning of Epicurus' dictum, "all impressions are true." It begins with a brief background of Epicurean epistemology and an analysis of the terms ἀληθές, and φαντασία, and then moves on to an explanation of three interpretations of ἀληθές, followed by a breakdown and critique of each interpretation. Ultimately, the paper attempts to prove that the original dictum "all impressions are true" is in fact trivial and unable to provide insight into the material world.

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What If All Impressions Were True?

Michael Nichols

Sextus Empiricus attributes to Epicurus the dictum "all impressions are true."[1] The exact meaning of this claim is uncertain. This essay will first consider the various uses of and possible parallels between the terms φαντασία and αἴσθησις, drawing largely from Gisela Striker. Next the possible meanings of the term ἀληθές will be examined. Several interpretations of ἀληθές have been proposed, each attributing various amounts of strength to the Epicurean claim of truth. The three most prominent interpretations will be considered, presented in an order corresponding to the increasing strength of their claims. First is the interpretation that ἀληθές can only be attributed to a proposition and not a perception or impression, and so the dictum does not refer to any sort of external truth but only to the truth of a proposition corresponding to a particular impression. Second is the understanding of ἀληθές as meaning "real" rather than referring to some sort of propositional truth. The third of the most prominent interpretations is the claim that the truth of an impression is evaluated based on its accuracy in reflecting an external cause. None of these interpretations, however, rescue the dictum from triviality. When placed within the context of the Epicurean epistemological system, the claim that "all impressions are true" becomes vapid. The problems of varying perceptions of the same object and reliance on εἴδωλα restrict the power of Epicurus' dictum to such a degree that it becomes insignificant. So, the Epicurean dictum

"all impressions are true" falls into triviality, which is to say, becomes meaningless, as it does not present an epistemological perspective that provides any sort of clarity for understanding the external world.

Regarding the various formations of the claim "all impressions are true," Striker posits that the terms φαντασία and αἴσθησις became interchangeable within the discussion of Epicurean epistemology. She distinguishes between the different meanings of the two terms; αἴσθησις usually refers to "sensation," which she calls the process of being acted upon by a sensible object, or "perception," which she calls the recognition of a sensible object.[2] Φαντασία generally refers to a "sense impression," which would be the result of sensation. Striker notes that Epicurus and his pupils predominantly used αἴσθησις, while later writers such as Plutarch and Aristocles used φαντασία.[3] In light of this, she understands Epicurus to have used αἴσθησις in an uncommon way, which was later interpreted as a type of φαντασία, or "sense impression." Therefore, when Striker discusses the claim "all impressions are true," she understands it to mean "all sense impressions are true," referring to the result of a sensation.[4] This essay will follow Striker's understanding of the claim with regards to the terms φαντασία and αἴσθησις.

Given Striker's definition, the weakest of the truth claims will now be examined. This position interprets Epicurus' claim "all impressions are true" as something along the lines of "all propositions made based on sense impressions are true." The position is based on the premise that only propositions may be assessed within the categories of truth or falsity, and so the only logical understanding of the use of the term ἀληθές is that it is applied to a proposition corresponding to a particular sense impression. Striker finds this position to be entirely untenable. Citing DeWitt, she says this is an underestimation of Epicurus' intelligence and education. Epicurus would have been aware of such a fallacy had it been held as such in his time.[5] Everson seems to think even less of this position than Striker, as he does not even identify whom the "commentators" are who claim this interpretation.[6]

Further examination of the position within the context of Epicurean writings shows it to be even more problematic. The Epicureans sharply distinguished between the senses and the mind. Lucretius instructs his reader not to be so foolish as to attribute error to the eye when such an accusation can only rightly be made against the mind. The mind's duty is to make distinctions and identifications, for

"the eyes cannot discover the nature of things".[7] All error is found in the mind and in opinion, not in the senses or impressions. Now, since to make distinctions is the duty of the rational mind, and not the duty of the irrational senses, it would also seem that the creation of propositions would belong to the mind, not to the senses or their respective impressions. Propositions require language, and the senses, being irrational and incapable of language, are thereby incapable of producing any sort of proposition.[8] So, with such a sharp distinction between sense impressions and propositions, the interpretation of "all impressions are true" as "all propositions made based on sense impressions are true" would seem to be contrary to the Epicurean understanding of the senses and the mind. The question of whether this interpretation makes Epicurus' dictum trivial is not even worth asking, since the interpretation itself is suspect as to its accuracy in reporting Epicurean belief.

The second interpretation, that by ἀληθές Epicurus meant "real" rather than "true," follows naturally from the previous interpretation. Everson and Striker hit upon the same point, saying that this argument was made as a way of avoiding the objection that was at the heart of the interpretation discussed above.[9] The argument says that if truth is a category that can only be applied to propositions, and if Epicurus was aware of this, then he must have meant that all impressions are "real" rather than "true." The result of this interpretation is that it turns Epicurus' dictum into a claim that sense impressions actually happen (i.e. When a person perceives that he is cold, his experience of coldness is an actual event.). Under this interpretation, Epicurus is not making any sort of truth claim about the external world, saying that they accurately report anything about the external world. This interpretation does help make sense of the Epicurean claim that even hallucinations are ἀληθές. A madman does experience a hallucination, but that does not mean that the hallucination accurately reports anything that exists in the external world.

As comfortable as this interpretation may be, it makes Epicurus' dictum entirely trivial and seems to attribute too light a claim to the Epicurean writings. There seems to have been little doubt that sense impressions were real; even the skeptics, the Epicureans' philosophical rivals, agree to this. If not, then they would have spent their time running into walls and going towards a mountain instead of a bath when they wanted to wash.[10] Where the skeptics drew the line was that although they recognized that a certain thing may probably be a door,

wall, bath, or mountain, they would not claim to know anything about the object as a door, wall, bath, or mountain. Epicurus wanted to step over the skeptical line and make claims to knowledge concerning such objects. That Epicurus desired to acquire knowledge of the external world is clear in his *Letter to Herodotus,* where he describes the process of sensation.[11] Key to this process is what Epicurus calls εἴδωλα, which are films of atoms emitted from objects that retain the characteristics of their source. These films are produced quickly and continuously. Due to their great speed and fineness, they are able to avoid collisions with other atoms, which would cause distortions. Although Epicurus admits that sometimes distortions do occur, the fact that these films are continually and rapidly produced ensures that these occasional distortions are negligible. As a result, the εἴδωλα are, for the most part, accurate representations of their sources. Because the εἴδωλα, which accurately represent their sources, strike the senses and create impressions, the mind can come to knowledge of an external object based upon the information it receives from the senses.[12] By explaining the process of sense impression in this way, Epicurus creates a tenuous connection between the mind and the external object. This connection allows him to discover knowledge of the external world. A little further on in the passage Epicurus explains that this doctrine, that of the εἴδωλα and sense impressions, is important to grasp, otherwise falsehood would be "equally established and confound everything".[13] Epicurus wants to be able to hold up something as true, and unless knowledge is possible through the senses, then there seems to be no alternative to the skeptical approach of withholding assent, which establishes truth and falsehood as equally likely.[14] Therefore, an interpretation that stipulates that Epicurus simply meant that all impressions are real does not seem sufficient to fulfill Epicurus' purposes of understanding the external world nor to make sense of his explanation of sensation in the *Letter to Herodotus*.[15]

With the first two major interpretations explained and put aside, only the third interpretation remains to be considered. This interpretation understands the dictum "all impressions are true" to mean that all sense impressions accurately report the characteristics of an external cause. The paragraph above has laid a good groundwork for the argument in support of this interpretation. The notable point to recall is that εἴδωλα are the cause of sense impressions. The argument that sense impressions accurately report the εἴδωλα is based on the idea that the senses are irrational, a concept well drawn out by Diogenes Laertius.[16]

Because the senses are irrational, they neither add nor subtract anything from the images they receive. They retain no memory, and they do not move themselves. These characteristics allow sense impressions to be accurate reflections of the εἴδωλα that strike them. When this is connected with the argument above, that the εἴδωλα provide a tenuous connection between the mind and the source of the images, Epicurus' dictum seems to be given its due amount of force.[17] As this interpretation seems to make better sense of Epicurean writings than the first two, it seems likely that Epicurus may have meant something along these lines.

Yet even under this interpretation, which gives Epicurus' dictum the greatest amount of force, the claim falls flat when faced with the internal difficulties of Epicurean epistemology. Two objections pose major threats to the importance of the claim that "all impressions are true": 1.) The objects of sense impressions are εἴδωλα and not their source, and so nothing can be known about the sources, only the εἴδωλα; 2.) If all impressions are true, what is to be made of contradictory impressions created by multiple perceivers of the same object at the same time? It will now be shown how these objections force Epicurus' claim into triviality.

The first objection shows the severe limitations of Epicurus' claim. In a strict, empirical sense, Epicurus cannot claim that the εἴδωλα accurately represent the source from which they came.[18] Further, in light of the possibility of distortions, and given that every object is producing a seemingly infinite number of images, the probability of an image reaching the sense organ unscathed seems incredibly small. Epicurus' reply to this may be to point toward the fineness of the atoms. The fineness of the atoms, however, does not alleviate the problem. The near infinite amount of images produced from every object would seem to make the fineness of the atoms a negligible factor. Further, their fineness may even be problematic. In describing how it is that the image of a centaur comes about, which Epicureans say does not come from an existent centaur, Lucretius says that it is the melding of the images of a man and horse.[19] If such a phenomenon can occur in regard to these images, what is to prohibit such a thing happening to all images? The senses are only able to report that which comes to them, and there seems to be no way of validating that the εἴδωλα match their sources. Therefore, even if "all impressions are true," Epicurus cannot guarantee that the causes of the impressions reflect the external world.[20]

The second objection, that of contradictory perceptions by different perceivers of the same object at the same time, is equally as devastating to the power of Epicurus' dictum, if not more so. If wine seems warming to one person and cooling to another, and if both impressions are true, then wine must be both warming and cooling. Plutarch notes that the result is that every object must contain all qualities, or that there must at least be left open such a possibility.[21] Plutarch's line of reasoning is this: senses are only able to detect what it is suitable for them to detect. Different senses are suited to different atoms, even to such a degree that certain atoms may fit one person's vision but not another's.[22] As a result, every attribute that is perceived by a person must be an attribute of the object. This factor carries along with it the possibility that every person could perceive the same object differently. There seems to be, then, no way to determine the limit as to how many qualities an object may have. Epicurean epistemology can only detect qualities in a nonexclusive manner. The only reasonable stance for the Epicurean is what Plutarch quotes Epicurus as saying, that each person senses only what is particular to him, and that to generalize from one's own particular impression is foolish.[23] As a result, a person is left with his own perceptions and impressions, which may reflect only a miniscule fraction of the qualities of the various objects in the external world. Theorizing about the nature of things from those precious few impressions, as true as they may be, seems a fruitless venture, as there is no way to know how many qualities one is missing. Epicurean epistemology leaves a person in a position barely discernible from that of the skeptic. All his statements must be relativized, and he must recognize that no matter how much he may learn about the external world it could be completely different from how he perceives it. Epicurus' dictum that all impressions are true seems only to have muddied the water.

In the tenth chapter of his work, O'Keefe makes a valiant effort to save the Epicureans from this conclusion. He claims that their purpose is not necessarily to find out all knowledge or to know something in a holistic way, but rather to provide a foundation for personal action, which they saw lacking in the skeptics' worldview. This defense, however, leads to a sort of isolationism. Each person would be living in his own world, not shared with anyone else, since they have different sense perceptions of what are purportedly same objects. Such isolationism would be self-destructive for any philosophical tradition that rests on empirical knowledge in the way that Epicureanism does. Each person, since he

has only his own sense perceptions on which to base his knowledge of the outside world, has no share in the experiences or knowledge of any other person. Since they cannot have shared knowledge, they cannot have shared philosophical doctrines either. O'Keefe's accomplishment, then, is to deliver the Epicureans out of the infinite sea of qualities an object might possess and to place each person into a private world, in which any sort of agreement would be epistemologically impossible.

The goal of this essay was to show that Epicurus' dictum "all impressions are true" is a trivial claim when placed within the framework of Epicurean epistemology. After a preliminary establishment of Epicurus' terms, three main interpretations of his claim were inspected: the interpretation that Epicurus was only speaking of the propositions corresponding to sense impressions as true, the interpretation that Epicurus did not mean impressions were propositionally "true" but rather "real", and the interpretation that all sense impressions accurately represent their external causes. The first interpretation was shown to provide an inadequate understanding of Epicurus' teachings. The second interpretation, while coming closer to an acceptable understanding, still fell short and also turned the claim toward triviality. The third interpretation provided the dictum with the greatest opportunity of becoming significant, but even then it fell flat when faced with the internal difficulties of Epicurus' own epistemology. Two objections were presented highlighting these difficulties. The first was that that the senses, because they only perceive εἴδωλα, cannot report on the sources of the images themselves, and so cannot attest the accuracy with which the images represent the external world. If it is possible that the images do not correspond to the external world, then what good is it that impressions accurately represent the images? The second objection emphasized that if all impressions are true, then when varying impressions of the same object are made by different perceivers, such a high degree of relativism is enforced that the few truths a person can gather are worthless for theorizing about the universe. Even O'Keefe's defense fails to deliver the Epicureans from this massive degree of relativity, creating private worlds that cannot possibly merge with one another. The Epicurean stands in no better position than the skeptic. Because the claim that "all impressions are true" does not seem to bring knowledge of the world any closer than the skeptics' theories, it must be seen as trivial.

NOTES

[1] Long and Sedley, *The Hellenistic Philosophers,* 16E6.

[2] Striker, *Essays on Hellenistic Epistemology and Ethics,* 77-78.

[3] Ibid., 79.

[4] Taylor, "All Perceptions are True", 105-108. Taylor comes to a similar conclusion as Striker, although his method of reaching that conclusion differs slightly.

[5] Striker, *Essays on Hellenistic Epistemology and Ethics,* 80.

[6] Everson, *Epistemology*, 165, 169.

[7] Long and Sedley, *The Hellenistic Philosophers,* 16H.

[8] Striker, *Essays on Hellenistic Epistemology and Ethics,* 80. Striker has a similar argument. This argument, however, was constructed independently, and it was only later that the similarities between the arguments were discovered.

[9] Everson, *Epistemology*, 165; Striker, *Essays on Hellenistic Epistemology and Ethics,* 80.

[10] Einarson and De Lacy, Moralia, 283-285.

[11] Long and Sedley, *The Hellenistic Philosophers,* 15A.

[12] Ibid., 16B6.

[13] Ibid., 15A13.

[14] Ibid., 16D.

[15] Taylor, "All Perceptions are True", 113-116. Taylor gives an extensive argument that this interpretation fails to make sense of several key Epicurean writings, even those used as support by proponents of this position.

[16] Long and Sedley, *The Hellenistic Philosophers,* 16B1-2.

[17] Everson, *Epistemology*, 181-182. Everson provides a similar argument, arguing that Epicurus may think that a person perceives the εἴδωλα in such a way that it is comparable to perceiving the source of the images itself.

[18] Long and Sedley, *The Hellenistic Philosophers,* 16B6. As the Epicureans claim that reason is founded on the senses, it seems fair to judge Epicurus on the grounds of empirical evidence. Also, it is difficult to imagine that Epicurus could argue for the integrity of the images in a way similar to his argument for void, which is undetectable in an empirical sense and only perceived through reason.

[19] Ibid., 15D3.

[20] Einarson and De Lacy, *Moralia*, 273. Plutarch highlights this objection in order to undermine Colotes' jab at skeptic phrasings, which was that a person is "horsed" when they see a horse or "walled" when they see a wall. Plutarch shows that the Epicurean is forced to speak in a similar way, since only the εἴδωλα are available for the senses and not the sources themselves. Everson tries to avoid this difficulty by isolating Epicurean epistemology from skepticism, saying that it is not fair to judge Epicurus's epistemology on these grounds (Everson 1987, 162, 182). Such a move, however, does not seem warranted, as the Epicureans themselves set their arguments directly against the skeptics (Long and Sedley 1987; 15A13, 16A1-2).
[21] Einarson and De Lacy, *Moralia*, 203.
[22] Long and Sedley, *The Hellenistic Philosophers,* 16I.
[23] Einarson and De Lacy, *Moralia*, 205.

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Though Friedrich Nietzsche's overwhelmingly negative conception of Christianity as a social and religious movement is well known, his more ambivalent, even positive, opinion of the "historical Jesus" has also elicited interest. Using three vital components of "master morality" as its chief interpretive lens, this paper argues for a more nuanced view of Nietzsche's Jesus based on his designation as "the noblest human being." By recouching the personality of Jesus in terms of will and nobility, the paper is able to render his actions and teachings as a model for Nietzschean philosophy lived out in the world.

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Cultivating the Inward Man:
A Consideration of the Positive Character of Nietzsche's Jesus

Samuel Pomeroy

That Nietzsche's conception of the historical Jesus is in some senses favorable is not a novel interpretation.[1] While much scholarship has acknowledged this, there are few holistic treatments of the extent of Nietzsche's thought—perhaps idiosyncratic at times—on this issue.[2] Consider Stephen N. Williams's interpretation of Nietzsche's Jesus in his work, *The Shadow of the Antichrist: Nietzsche's Critique of Christianity*. He writes,

> It is certainly true that he [Nietzsche] placed Jesus in a certain antithesis to Christianity and that he did not feel toward him the hostility provoked by the religion that bears his name. Surely the intrusion of irony does not cloud the transparency of Nietzsche's description of Christ as the 'noblest human being.' Yet what Nietzsche has to say about Jesus is predominantly and strongly negative.[3]

While Williams duly observes Nietzsche's admiration, his general analysis of a "strongly negative" tone toward Jesus as historical figure does not give fair consideration to the breadth of Nietzsche's thought. To be certain, there is a great deal of ambiguity concerning this issue. Accordingly, while I do not intend to argue that Williams's thesis lacks serious consideration, there is significant textual evidence to indicate that Nietzsche's conception of Jesus was not dominantly polemical.

As Eugen Biser notes, any consideration of Nietzsche's Jesus cannot be divorced from his function as the generator of Christianity.[4] Yet, paradoxically, when Christian religion is the subject, Nietzsche often sharpens his axe without mention of Jesus; on the contrary, Christianity as a socio-religious movement—the founder of which is exclusively Paul the Apostle—is rarely held in tandem with the person of Jesus.[5] Thus, while Nietzsche repudiates Christianity as an invention of Paul based solely on the personality of Jesus, he also credits the Jews as providing the world with, "the noblest human being (Christ)."[6] This dichotomy calls for further reflection. If Christ is the "noblest" human, and Christianity is the embodiment of "decadence," "*ressentiment*," and "slave morality," then how are we to understand such a positive description of the historical character Jesus?[7]

Several studies are devoted to comparing Nietzsche and Jesus, but the present work will address neither this rich topic, nor the distinction between Jesus and Christians, nor the distinction between Paul and Jesus.[8] I shall confine myself to a consideration of why the characteristics of Jesus resonate so closely with "nobility," or "master morality," and why we cannot conclude that Nietzsche ultimately paints a scornful picture of Jesus. I shall demonstrate that Jesus embodies Nietzsche's master morality in three distinct components: first, Jesus is "value-creating;" second, he possesses a certain power of "overflow, the happiness of high tension;" and finally, he cultivates the form of what Nietzsche calls "inwardness," a purely spiritual way of life.[9] Nietzsche stitches these qualities together to illustrate Jesus as one who, as an everyday habit of being, embodies a certain faculty of consciousness by which he enhances the horizon of meaning concerning the human condition. He is a great expounder of the human condition, a role that requires both vital affirmation and self-knowledge. In light of these considerations, we can use Nietzsche's philosophy of master morality as a guiding hermeneutic by which to understand the full implications of his interpretation for Jesus.

Jesus as Exegete of the Ordinary

The first positive aspect that we shall consider is Jesus as creator of values. At first glance, this ingenuity may seem purely negative: "This Jesus of Nazareth, the incarnate gospel of love, this 'redeemer' who brought blessedness and victory to the poor […] was he not this seduction in its most uncanny and irresistible form, a seduction and bypath to precisely those Jewish values and new ideals?"[10] But a careful reading demands Jesus's "seduction" to be a kind of creativity that requires intimate knowledge of the self and a tenacity of spirit. The weak do not possess such a life. In this, the quality that Nietzsche highlights is self-determination: Jesus needs the approval of no other. His life is a patchwork of freely shaped movements of the will, bursting forth from the strength of spirit that judges, "what is harmful to me is harmful in itself."[11]

Further in this vein, it is his instinct that Nietzsche admires. In his ironic chapter, "What I Owe the Ancients," Nietzsche indirectly associates the instincts he sees in Jesus with those of the ancients—poets like Horace in particular—who possess the "strongest instinct, the will to power […] trembling at the intractable force of this drive."[12] While he does not explicitly include Jesus in his praise of the Greeks and Romans, he ascribes to them values that are strikingly characteristic of not only Jesus's spirit but also his "irresistible form," which affected an entire civilization. Nietzsche writes, "This mosaic of words in which every word, as sound, as locus, as concept, […] this minimum in the range and number of signs which achieves a maximum of energy of these signs – all this is Roman and, if one will believe me, *noble par excellence*."[13] It is neither anachronistic nor presumptuous to read the character of Jesus alongside this description. Indeed, the production of the strongest instinct is exhibited through this "mosaic of words" that "achieves a maximum energy." It is an energy that propels the individual—in this case, the noble Jesus—to be a self-regulator of morals and values. In this way, it is apt to associate Jesus with those who have the "strongest instinct." Jesus was a kind of poet. Here, we discover another illuminating aspect of his character when we consider the force by which he uses words as a medium to convey and exercise his own will to power.

More specifically, Jesus dominates by his will to *moral* power. As an inventor of cultural values, Jesus's most powerful appropriation of his will is that of a "recognizer."[14] Primarily, Nietzsche envisions the

"noblest" Jesus as being "psychologically infallible in [his] knowledge of the average type of souls who have not yet recognized that they belong together."[15] While culturally and psychologically ordinary men are unaware of their inherent commonality, Jesus is able to enter into their consciousness with full understanding and thereby reproduce a philosophy by which he establishes a kind of psychological unity, and even a hope. It is a philosophy of the mundane. Jesus brings together the "modest, virtuous, pinched life" in the armpit of the Roman Empire.[16] From this point, Nietzsche expresses his clearest conception of Jesus as value creator: "He offered an *exegesis*, he *read* the highest meaning and *value* into it [human life]—and with this also the courage to despise every other way of life."[17]

When considered in conjunction with a point made by Christa Davis Acampora, the latter half of this phrase illuminates an apparent fissure in Nietzsche's thought. Acampora observes that in a journal fragment published in the late 1880s, clearly sometime after the 1882 publication of the *Gay Science*, Nietzsche writes that "Whatever kind of bizarre ideal one may follow (e.g., as 'Christian' or as 'free spirit' or as 'immoralist' or as *Reichsdeutscher*), one should not demand that it be the ideal: for one therewith takes from it its privileged character. One should have it in order to distinguish oneself, not in order to level oneself."[18] For Acampora, the Zarathustrian (as opposed to the Homeric) hero embodies these traits as one who loves and wills something "precious, rare, and valuable to existence."[19] He is a hero into whose archetype Jesus of Nazareth fits. Taking things one step farther, she deftly situates this thought in the context of Nietzsche's larger project of advancing the "meaning of human existence" and asserts, "[the fight for one's own ideal] has creative aims and facilitates the creative activity of rising above …"[20] But the journal fragment provides us with an important directive as we continue our study: there is neither a hint of altruism nor universal legislation in the character and thought of Jesus. If we are to read Nietzsche with Nietzsche and allow the journal fragment to serve as a kind of gloss to the fanaticism promoted in the *Gay Science*, then we must conclude that the noble man is a character who at once embodies a "despise [for] every other way of life."[21] In other words, for Nietzsche, the only concern of the noble is that he acts with such vigor that his own way of life is exalted over others.

What particularity of Jesus's life serves as such a distinction? Let us first consider at greater length what Nietzsche means by, as Acampora elegantly puts it, a man's "living poetic practice."[22] One's inner convictions and interpretation of existence give definition to his outer *praxis*. On this note, and critical for our discussion here, Graham Parkes observes that,

> The tendency of the drives toward tyrannical domination is reinforced when Nietzsche characterizes philosophy itself as a drive—and as will to power: 'Philosophy always creates the world in its own image, it cannot do otherwise; philosophy is this tyrannical drive itself, the most spiritual will to power, to 'creation of the world,' to the causa prima. Philosophy is 'the most spiritual will to power because it exemplifies at the highest level the *interpretive* function of the drives—and from this point on, when Nietzsche speaks of will to power, he will emphasize that it is fundamentally interpretation.[23]

Nietzsche presupposes noble instincts to the practice of philosophy. It is self-referential world-view creating. Individuals are like melting pots of ideals brooding with inherited worldviews, conflicting ideologies, and psychological responses to culture; but within all this, Nietzsche wishes to emphasize the courage that comes in selecting a particular vision of humankind and "*guessing* … to what use it can be put, how it [one's worldview] can be interpreted."[24] The interpretation and praxis of a worldview is the fruit of philosophy. Further, Nietzsche indicates that an individual does not fully realize his philosophy until he is willing to "fight … and under certain circumstances sacrifice one's life."[25] We have already seen that Jesus produces values out of his intimate knowledge and relationship to the "pinched-life," mundane existence in a minor corner of the Roman Empire. He chose to die when his worldview was at stake, when he had to choose between his vision of human existence or succumb to the label of "common." Jesus contained a certain "self-confidence that grows and grows and finally is ready to 'overcome the world.'"[26] Noble indeed. Jesus is an interpreter of human life in that he exercises a spiritual will to power. His strength is in a kind of retaliation, or a revenge of the "common man" that he himself instigates. He is their unifier; he is their inscriber of values; he is thus their "redeemer."

While the common man received the brand ("ordinary") without qualm, Jesus, from his dynamic and self-possessing will, rejects the label by inventing a new grammar, tailored especially to imbue the ordinary life with cosmic value and heavenly identity. He used "hell" in order to "send to it those who did not want to love him—and who finally, having gained knowledge about human love, had to invent a god who is all love, all ability to love—who has mercy on human love because it is so utterly wretched and unknowing."[27] What bears emphasizing here is Jesus's ability to reinvent a scheme, reinvent values, by which his own appropriation of morality and his conception of reality would inform the lives of a new humanity. By no means does Nietzsche praise him for the doctrinal content of his faith; rather, it is that Jesus produces such an influential and self-propelled reconstruction of the self.

In light of these considerations, one caveat remains. Nietzsche criticizes Jesus as an enfeebled individual because he "promoted the stupidifying of man, placed himself on the side of the poor in spirit and retarded the production of the supreme intellect: and in this he was consistent."[28] Yet viewed at another angle, this aspect of Jesus is more of a surprise than Nietzsche may give credit. What can be recast into a positive light by Nietzsche's own hermeneutics is that Jesus is not a split personality. He possesses the unique vitality and force of will to live in accordance with how he believes he ought. His will is not necessarily bent toward universalized maxims or dogmas as it is toward a higher condition of spirit. Admittedly, his beliefs extend toward others: "It was the founder of Christianity who wanted to abolish secular justice and remove judging and punishing from the world. For he understood all guilt as 'sin', that is to say as an offence against God and not as an offence against the world."[29] More specifically, his beliefs concern the inward dispositions of the human will: "He had eyes, moreover, only for the motives of an action and not for its consequences, and considered there was only one sole person sufficiently sharpsighted to adjudicate on motives: he himself."[30]

Jesus's values serve as a kind of antidote for the human soul, a remedy to counteract the disease of commonality and suffering endemic to the condition of oppressed and "slave class" consciousness that had cultivated the thirst for revenge. The forlorn state of consciousness was degenerating to human nature, an attitude of contempt toward life on the whole. Within this, we see the "noble human being help the unfortunate," though certainly not from pity. Rather, the noble is prompted

by "an urge begotten by excess of power."[31] He is a "physician of the soul" devoted to that unflinching but perhaps naïve and untutored faith (hardly a matter for Nietzsche when the will that drives the intellect is so forceful) in his "universal medicine."[32] Nietzsche understands Jesus as one who prescribes an antidote for the soul that is characterized by a genuine development of the inward recognition of the complexity and beauty of human life. Jesus did not pull the "teeth" of commonality, or as he (Jesus) puts it, "sin." A dentist pulls the problem out in one swift stroke, but Jesus gives a medicine for the entire condition. With Jesus's prescription, man can face his suffering with a vision of life embedded in the context of a rhetoric constructed for the purpose of uniting the downtrodden and informing their depravity by giving an underlying reason for their mutually held feelings of banality and commonplace. For Jesus, the medicine is administered out of the wellsprings of his own spirit and the tenacious affirmation of his own ego. Returning to Nietzsche's aforementioned criticism of Jesus, it is clear that he did so with the purpose of promulgating his own spiritual will to power.

Jesus as Exegete of the Ego

There is more to Jesus's inward state than value creating. Presently, I shall discuss how Jesus possesses a certain power of "overflow, the happiness of high tension."[33] Jesus's ego is not reducible to a tidy description; he is an enigmatic character, a polyphony of wills and values. The positive aspects of this "inward" equilibrium and complex humanity arise from a consciousness rooted in the manifold characteristics of the self. Nietzsche admires this self-knowledge as a sure sign of vitality and nobility. He writes, "egoism belongs to the nature of a noble soul … it knows itself to be at a height," and "the noble soul has reverence for itself."[34] All sources of self-guided moral construction are rooted in the ego. But Nietzsche's conception of Jesus's ego is not a self-indulgent, narrow-minded vice; it is the fruit of an inward recognition and "reverence" at the existence of the self as a human being. Indeed, Jesus is not a vain man: he is the "originally noble," who thinks well of himself from the recognition of innate value and the gift of life's phenomenal potential.[35] The vain man, on the contrary, "is delighted by every good opinion he hears of himself … just as every bad opinion pains him."[36] As Jesus neither sways to nor relies on the opinions of others, he determines to will for his own sake. This alone guides him, and has much to

do with what Acampora calls the "*an*agonistic practice."[37] Jesus exercises the discernment of when to speak and when to be silent; he recognizes those things that are valuable to die for and those things that are best disregarded. The point is that *he* himself is the measure of this mode of thought. Indeed, this account of the noble fits with Jesus's "universal medicine:" his "unshakable faith" in the value of himself, human *qua* human, draws others to follow him in faith.

Despite the context of Nietzsche's famous narrative retelling of the history of morality and its historical vocabulary, Jesus's egoism must be understood as type for neither the "slave" nor the "noble" class. Indeed, it is surprising to note that the "noblest human being" does not fully characterize the "noble" class defeated by the rise of the vindictive "slave" mentality as we see in the *Genealogy*. Rather, we must allow a reading of Nietzsche's Jesus to form a category separate from these two distinctions. Walter Kaufmann cites a key passage for our consideration: "In that which moved Zarathustra, Moses, Mohammed, Jesus, Plato, Brutus, Spinoza, Mirabeau—I live, too."[38] Nietzsche's inclusion of Jesus in this enumeration is paramount and intriguing. First, Nietzsche distinguishes Jesus from the vengeful and ultimately decadent character of the "slave" class. Their evolution into the "priest" type is the embodiment of *ressentiment*, which, as Michael Tanner describes, is, "meanness seeking … to live their lives wholly in accordance with the concepts of fear and loathing."[39] Nietzsche terms their invention of the values "good and evil" as emerging out of a certain "powerlessness," by which "their hate swells into something huge and uncanny to a most intellectual and poisonous level."[40] We have already seen that Jesus the "redeemer," "lives entirely without rancor or vindictiveness;" therefore, he cannot be included in the priestly class.[41] What is more striking, though, is how Jesus fails to fit the description of the "noble" class as well; it is a deep irony worth illuminating that in Nietzsche's thought, the noblest human differs from the archetypal noble depicted in the *Genealogy*.

In Nietzsche's *Genealogy*, the noble man meets the natural inclinations of being human with a resounding 'yes.' Furthermore, he "does not deny himself in contempt," but is rather upright and honest with himself, acquiring a triumphant "happiness from action." This fits Nietzsche's positive depiction of Jesus without discrepancy.[42] But the point upon which these "noble" men and the "noblest" of men differ is, as we have seen in the previous section, their dealing with the "common man." The "noble" of Nietzsche's retelling labeled the ordinary and

"pinched" life as the "priestly," in opposition to their own. The "noble" became increasingly high-minded while the "common" man was psychologically and even physically oppressed with the names "poor," "common," and "low." Indeed, Nietzsche writes that, "the concept of political superiority always resolves itself into the concept of *psychological* superiority."[43] On the contrary, as we saw in *Gay Science* 5.343, Jesus *redeems* the commonality of ordinary men by creating his own values; he ascribes their lot in life with nuanced meaning. He does not do so out of hatred or superiority—and, according to Jesus, probably not out of compassion either—but out of faith in and affirmation of himself.[44] In this way, Jesus is akin to the noble, but in no way participates in the paralyzing hatred common to such a man. There is no vindictive motive in Jesus's movement. Indeed, for Nietzsche, "it is not the works, it is the faith" that determines one's nobility.[45] Here, we see Nietzsche praise not the content of Jesus's doctrines but that object of his faith, namely, his own condition: "[Jesus'] soul grew full of that wonderful and fantastic compassion for a misery that even among his people, who had invented sin, was rarely a very great misery."[46] Jesus's egoism is a vigorous kind of self-affirmation, deriving from his philosophy, his spiritual will to power, and as such his nobility is of a purer kind. It is a nobility with a motive for paving the way toward an internally grasped spirit, exuberant to express itself through the recognition of the individual and therein the dignity of human life.

Because his categories for understanding Jesus are outside of the archetypes depicted in *Genealogy*, Nietzsche posits an alternative kind of magnanimity of soul. Jesus is "A ray of the sun," piercing through the dark clouds of the Jewish Jehovah, who for Nietzsche is a brooding tormentor over the countenance of Israel.[47] Even more, he is a beacon of light into the banality of common man. That his message was not just for the Jews but in fact spread to the 'Gentiles' of his day does not go unnoticed for Nietzsche; indeed, his phenomenal character can be categorized with neither the weakness of the Jews nor the vitality of the Greeks.[48] Considering the whole of the study thus far, this universality prevails because Nietzsche's Jesus possesses a greatness that "lies in the fact that he *expounds himself*."[49] His exegesis is an innovative read into the human condition that begins from the locus of the suffering self and proceeds outward into asserting unprecedented value into mankind. This characterizes the anomaly that Nietzsche—perhaps with Jesus in mind—describes: "Great men, like great epochs, are explosive material

in whom tremendous energy has been accumulated; their prerequisite has always been, historically and physiologically, that a protracted assembling, accumulating, economizing and preserving has preceded them."[50]

In a stunning description of his sacrificial "heroism," Nietzsche describes Jesus's greatness:

> [Jesus's greatness lies in] indifference to his own interests, his devotion to an idea, a great cause, a fatherland: all misunderstandings… He flows out, he overflows, he uses himself up, he does not spare himself – with inevitability, fatefully, involuntarily, as a river's bursting its banks is involuntary. But because one owes a great deal to such explosive beings one has bestowed … a higher morality.[51]

The instinct of self-preservation for its own sake is suspended in Jesus; the overwhelming force of the energies that emanate from him forbids him any such care. Rather, his spirit overflows into a kind of interpretation of the human condition that serves to liberate the value of the sufferer. And he makes that interpretation on the grounds of himself.

Jesus as Exegete of the Spirit

This higher morality leads to an aspect that we have hinted at briefly in this paper but are only now prepared to discuss at length. In this final section, I shall consider Jesus's cultivation of *inwardness*, and how his life took on the form of what I shall call *pure spiritual living*. Nietzsche puts forth a striking line that guides this interpretation: "If I understand anything of this great symbolist [Jesus], it is that he took for realities, for 'truths,' only *inner* realities [sic]."[52] In several cases, Nietzsche relates purity and inward living to the disposition of children, insisting that Jesus did not suffer from passions because he lacked those that accompany adulthood. Michael Tanner writes that "in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* … [Neitzsche] describes the three metamorphoses of the spirit and concludes that it is in its ideal state when, having shed the weights of the camel and the ferocities of the lion, it becomes like a child."[53] While it may seem that Nietzsche's conception of Jesus is one of childish ignorance or of insufficient knowledge (Jesus "stupidified

man"), Nietzsche firmly clarifies that Jesus's unique faith is "a return to childishness in the spiritual domain."[54] This, I think, can be usefully read alongside of the passage from Graham Parkes that emphasizes, "Philosophy is 'the most spiritual will to power' because it exemplifies at the highest level the *interpretive* function of the drives."[55]

Childishness, like philosophy, is a mode of spiritual interpretation for Nietzsche. It does not mean that Jesus is ignorant: "The most spiritual human beings, assuming they are the most courageous, … experience by far the most painful tragedies: but it is precisely for this reason that they honour life, because it brings against them its most formidable weapons."[56] This reverence for life is a perspective on the human condition exemplified in children. Due to their simplicity, their loves are singularly centered on the thrill of living and action as free spirits. Noble spirituality is in this sense tantamount to childlike spirituality. Indeed, the childlike disposition is thereby connected to the philosopher and, for the purposes of this paper, Jesus. Pure spiritual living is not an abstraction into an ethereal view of the self and the world. The noblest inward spirituality is a profound recognition that "Nothing is beautiful, only man."[57] In some senses Nietzsche admires the Jews as the most "fateful" nation in history, who upheld "*being* at any price: the price they had to pay was the radical falsification of all nature, all naturalness, all reality, the entire inner world as well as the outer."[58] What Jesus—and even the Jews—possesses is the tenacity for *being*, for existence, and for the full realization of the sanctity of human life. This is what Nietzsche ultimately identifies to be life affirming. Nietzsche admires Jesus as one who arose from the framework of a Jewish spirituality and thereby embodied a "being at home in a world undisturbed by reality of any kind, a merely 'inner' world, a 'real' world, an 'eternal' world … 'the kingdom of God is within you.'"[59] His focus of being is purely internal to his ego; external "reality" is only useful insofar as it turns him back inwards. For this, Nietzsche ultimately refuses to classify Jesus into any kind of archetype. He practices a kind of living that is directly informed by the manifold nature of his spirit. Intermediately throughout his T*he Anti-Christ*, Nietzsche goes to great lengths to describe the fundamental compositions of Jesus's particular "spiritual" inwardness. A principal example is worth quoting at length here:

> Among Indians he would have made use of Sankhyam concepts, among Chinese, those of Lao-tse—and would not have felt the difference. One could, with some freedom of expression, call Jesus a 'free spirit'—he cares nothing for what is fixed: the world killeth, everything fixed killeth. The concept, the experience 'life' in the only form he knows it is opposed to any kind of world, formula, law, faith, dogma. He speaks only of the inmost thing: 'life' or 'truth' or 'light' is his expression for the inmost thing—everything else, the whole of reality, the whole of nature, language itself, possesses for him merely the value of a sign, a metaphor [sic].[60]

This is the culmination of Nietzsche's conception of Jesus as the noblest human being. Jesus's spirituality reaches a freedom of taste, of inviolable ingenuity by enacting his will for what is most primal: human nature and existence within history. Despite his belief in "heaven" and Nietzsche's belief that ardent religious psychology is completely erroneous, Jesus's "faith" does not cause him to denigrate life but to value it principally. Therefore the positive aspects that Nietzsche finds in Jesus have everything to do with his way of life, not his doctrines.
Significantly, he differs from his contemporary Jews in that he does not do away with every sense of the inward life. The Jews rejected everything but the identity as the chosen people of God, or as Nietzsche puts it, "being;" Jesus, in his ingenious interpretation of human life, confronted the meaning of suffering—a suffering that had long plagued his people. He did so with a will to recast the long-suffering through his own inwardly directed interpretative lens. He understood suffering through a spiritual interpretation. He breathed meaning into it and into the light of human existence.

As we saw, Jesus represents a kind of *modus vivendi* within Nietzsche's retelling genealogy in that he carries both the affirmation of the "noble" and the compassion of the downtrodden "slave" in such a way that he does not conform to their characteristics of vengeance and oppression. In a marvelous spiritual movement, he plumbs the depths of *himself* so as to transcend the content and form of his existence only to return upon reality's *locus* with an enriched meaning. As Nietzsche explicates, "[Jesus] no longer required any formulas, any rites for com-

municating with God."[61] It is upon this point that we have reached the fullest extent to which Nietzsche considers Jesus "the noblest human being." Of course, Nietzsche was an atheist. But this fact does not deter him from admiring Jesus because of his "new way of living."[62] Communing and communicating with God was for Jesus a living habit by which he gave practical shape to the self-derived values that arose out of interpretive will to power. Nietzsche posits that Jesus died in order to "demonstrate how one ought to live. What he bequeathed to mankind is his *practice*: his bearing before the judges, before the guards … his bearing on the *Cross*. He does not resist, he does not defend his rights, he takes no steps to avert the worst that can happen to him—more, *he provokes it*."[63]

Conclusion

We have seen that Jesus's inward being is a kind of convex lens by which he willfully refracts all reality and re-converges it in a new conception of *true, good, and beautiful*: man. In this light Nietzsche inventively summarizes the whole Evangel through Jesus's words to the thief: "if thou *feelest* this—answers the redeemer—thou art in paradise … "[64] From here we see a human spirit capable of sustaining belief in God through an inward will to feeling. As A.H.J Knight outlines, the invention of the supernatural is ripe for Nietzsche to find kindred in Epicurean criticism of human culture.[65] Still, Nietzsche admires Jesus for the fact that God is for Jesus a transcendence of the self that ends in the affirmation of the self. Jesus lived in the light of God's affirmation upon his choices, value, and even his death. To live consistently with this kind of conviction is actually to give full flight to the spiritual wings of humanity. He writes, "[Jesus] had denied any chasm between God and man, he lived this unity of God and man as his 'glad tidings' … and not as a special prerogative!"[66] Thus, Jesus relies on the existence of God to find happiness, his fullest conception of life and meaning. But this is the same point where others would harbor dissonance and contempt for life. Their attempts to understand existence and suffering end in their despair; but for Jesus, such a quest ends in value.

Here, it is useful once again to return to our dialectic between the Jews and Jesus. Whereas the former feel that God has abandoned them, the latter is cheerfully united with a transcendent force because said transcendent force offers the ultimate exegesis of human life. It is a

hermeneutic of *value*, as apposed to a hermeneutic of *devaluation*. Where the Jews found their condition ugly and forlorn, Jesus recognized only beauty and meaning. Nietzsche wants to emphasize positively this "inward" potentiality. Indeed, far from being a kind of degenerate man because of his metaphysics and religion, Jesus's pure spiritual living is, for Nietzsche, an expression of life that lies beyond a vapid notion of "faith."

The inward disposition of Jesus is an interpretative state of consciousness that embodies an ascent beyond the self, while at the same time drawing his being onto that higher plane of meaning. In another sense, Jesus's will to life is an act of plumbing the depths of the self so as to transcend toward an ideal—the "heaven," or even "Divine life" that he proclaims—and yet maintain the self as the fulcrum by which this transformation of consciousness occurs. Indeed, he embraces his own condition with vigorous affirmation while simultaneously ascending to his "beyond," accessing "heaven" from the corporeality of his earthly state. Jesus, out of reverence for himself as human, lives with all the acuity and profundity of the Greek poets. In other words, he is natural in his alleged "unnaturalness" (what Nietzsche deems "faith" in a god). For Nietzsche, any conception of "heaven" or "God" is a fabrication; but for Nietzsche's Jesus, that "heaven" becomes immediate, even tangible, merely through the strength of his will and value for humanity.

The cultivation of his essential spirituality results in a remarkable body of tensions between the noble and slave mentalities, pride in self and compassion for suffering, angelic-like spirituality and the gaiety of grave humanity. His positivity lies in his interpretive power over human life and the will to insert value into seemingly meaningless human form. Indeed, Jesus's inner disposition is one of freedom, not rigid dogmatism; though in part expressing skewed moral dictums from weakness and submission, Jesus's essential spiritual nature is one of vitality and *self*-referential faith. Our assessment of this nineteenth-century philosopher's depiction of Jesus takes us far beyond the categories "nihilist," "humanist," or "egoist" that may be assumed on the basis of Nietzsche's disdain toward Christianity. Instead, we see that Nietzsche exhibits a surprising admiration for a thinker utterly different than himself in circumstance and attitude toward existence. Yet, within this *contra*, there lurks an exegete whose spirit is hauntingly akin to his, seeking the mysterious yet demanding dignity of human life.

NOTES

[1] By the term "historical Jesus," I do not intend to invoke the milieu of serious investigation into the figure of Jesus—his historical context, his actual involvement in the genesis of Christianity, or his true identity—within Biblical scholarship that has dominated the past century. The movement began largely with Herman Samuel Reimarus's *Apologie oder Schuzschrift fur die verünfügen Verehrer Gottes*, in which he called for an re-examination of the origins of Christianity. See Charles H. Talbert, ed., *Reimarus: Fragments*, Ralph S. Fraser, trans. (London: SCM Press, 1971). However, as an inheritor of higher German biblical criticism, Nietzsche's thoughts on the historically situated Jesus do not fall too far from the tree; through our investigation, we shall discover his own exegesis of the figure, and more, understand the philosophical lens by which Nietzsche saw Jesus.
[2] To name but a few examples of such favorable interpretations: Eugen Biser, *Nietzsche's Relation to Jesus*, 58-64; Franz Bentano, "Nietzsche als Nachahmer Jesu" in *Die Lehre Jesu und ihre bleibende Bedeutung* ed. Alfred Kastil (Leipzig, 1922), 129-132; Christa Davis Acampora, "Nietzsche Contra Homer, Socrates, and Paul," 25-53.
[3] Stephen N. Williams, *The Shadow of the Antichrist*, 187-190.
[4] Biser, *Nietzsche's Relation to Jesus*, 58-59.
[5] See Acampora, "Nietzsche Contra," 36. She succinctly notes that Nietzsche's Paul "distinguishes Christian doctrine and dogma from the life of Christ." There are an abundance of passages that describe how the Church perverted the person and message of Christ; but rarely does he lump the two in one category. In *The Anti-Christ*, he writes that, "One constructed the Church out of the antithesis of the Gospel." See Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Anti-Christ*,160.
[6] Nietzsche, *Human, All Too Human*, 175; For our purposes, *Christ* is the 'Messiah' of the Jews and Paul's central figure, his central invention; *Jesus* is the historical figure whom Nietzsche calls the noblest human being. The latter is the focus of the present paper.
[7] A line from Nietzsche's tirade in *Twilight of the Idols* will illustrate the point: "[the Church is] hostile to life" (52). Also, for the terms of "*ressentiment*" and "slave morality," see Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality*, 12. As Kaufmann points out, a further distinction between Christ and Jesus must be made. He criticizes the former as the source of Christianity (primarily seen

in Paul's thought), but tempers his words toward the latter with a spirit of kinship and restraint. See Walter Kaufmann, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*, 299-303. Therefore, I shall not fully engage with, as Kaufmann puts it, "Nietzshe's repudiation of Christ." (Kaufmann, *Nietzsche*, 341) Here, we are concerned with Jesus as historical figure, not the Christ of Paul's gospel.

[8] See in particular Biser, *Nietzsche's Relation to Jesus*, 58: "just as it was reported of Jesus that he spoke with authority, so too Nietzsche concentrated on giving orders instead of arguing; just as Jesus called people to conversion, so too Nietzsche demanded the 'transvaluation of all values'; and just as Jesus lived in the awareness that in him the fullness of the ages had come, so too Nietzsche perceived himself as an event of epochal significance that gave human history a new determination." For detailed discussions of these various distinctions, see also David Bentley Hart, *The Beauty of the Infinite*, 121, who clarifies: "This is no simple attack on Christian hypocrisy; not only does the church fail to live up to what it professes, but that very profession is diametrically opposed to everything Christ was." Further, in Nietzsche's words, "There has been only one Christian, and he died on the cross" (Nietzsche, *Anti-Christ*, 163).

[9] Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 205.

[10] Nietzsche, *Genealogy*, 35.

[11] Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, 5.354.

[12] Nietzsche, *Twilight*, 118. See also Kaufmann, *Nietzsche*, 125. Here, Kaufmann confirms this point when he recognizes that "Aeschylus and Heraclitus, Socrates and Jesus […] in them the events of history have truly been 'intensified into symbols.'"

[13] Nietzsche, *Twilight*, 116.

[14] Nietzsche, *Gay Science*, 5.353.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Ibid., 296, V.353.

[17] Ibid., emphasis added.

[18] Acampora, "Nietzsche Contra," 40 (quoting from WP, 349).

[19] Ibid.

[20] Ibid., 41.

[21] Nietzsche, *Gay Science*, 5.353.

[22] Acampora, "Nietzsche Contra," 40.

[23] Parkes, "Nietzsche on the Fabric(ation) of Experience," 21.

[24] Nietzsche, *Gay Science*, 5.353.

[25] Ibid.

[26] Ibid.; Nietzsche quoting from John 16:33.

[27] Nietzsche, *Good and Evil*, 220.

[28] Nietzsche, *Human*, 112.

[29] Ibid. 330.

[30] Ibid. As Kaufmann emphasizes, "What Nietzsche had in mind was not a repudiation of all existing rules." (Kaufmann, *Nietzsche*, 220).

[31] Nietzsche, *Good and Evil*, 205.

[32] Nietzsche, *Human*, 331.

[33] Nietzsche, *Good and Evil*, 205.

[34] Ibid., 215, 228.

[35] Ibid., 209.

[36] Ibid.

[37] Acampora, "Nietzsche Contra," 41. By the term "*ant*agonistic," I take Acampora to mean that quality by which Jesus discerns what is *not* worth fighting for, or not worth speaking about. She compares this quality to Socrates, saying, "This does not mean that one *never* fights, but rather that one does not fight simply in order to gain confirmation through the rejection of others … "

[38] Nietzsche, *Gay Science*, 151; Kaufmann citing from *Werke* (Musarion edition, 21), 98.

[39] Tanner, Introduction to Nietsche's *Twilight of the Idols and the Anti-Christ*, 20.

[40] Nietzsche, *Genealogy*, 17.

[41] Tanner, Introduction, 20.

[42] Nietzsche, *Genealogy*, 21.

[43] Ibid., 15. Emphasis added.

[44] Ibid., 12.

[45] Nietzsche, *Good and Evil*, 228.

[46] Nietzsche, *Gay Science*, 3.138.

[47] Ibid., 3.137. Further attempts to categorize Jesus run dry as well. Williams notes that, "These options [or classifying Jesus] are Jesus as genius and Jesus as hero. He is neither." (Williams, *Shadow*, 190).

[48] However, again we must be careful in portraying this entire enterprise as a positive aspect: the spread of the 'gospel' was largely because of the apostle Paul's efforts. Here, I make mention of the fact that the essence of *his philosophy was fit*—and I believe Nietzsche to mean that it still is fit—*to be a universal application to mankind.*

[49] Nietzsche, *Twilight*, 109.

[50] Ibid., 108.
[51] Ibid., 109.
[52] Nietzsche, *Anti-Christ*, 158.
[53] Tanner, Introduction, 22. Here, an interesting parallel can be made with Christ's dictum, "Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever then humbles himself as this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoever receives one such child in My name receives Me." (Matt. 18:3-5)
[54] Nietzsche, *Anti-Christ*, 156.
[55] Parkes, "Nietzsche on the Fabric(ation) of Experience," 21.
[56] Ibid., 88.
[57] Nietzsche, *Twilight*, 90.
[58] Ibid., 146, my emphasis.
[59] Ibid., 153; Nietzsche quoting from Luke 17:21.
[60] Nietzsche, *Anti-Christ*, 156-157.
[61] Ibid., 158.
[62] Ibid.
[63] Nietzsche, *Anti-Christ*, 159.
[64] Ibid., 160, emphasis added.
[65] See A.H.J. Knight, "Nietzsche and Epicurean Philosophy," 431-445.
[66] Nietzsche, *Anti-Christ*, 166.

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Why is it that, when we look at the world around us, it gives us no reason, prima facie, to believe that it is governed by a perfectly loving and omnipotent God? John Schellenberg's argument from this problem of Divine hiddenness posits that the answer is quite simple: no such God exists. The question must take a different, and more difficult, form for the Christian theodicist, who, if he maintains that union with God is (1) the greatest of all possible goods, (2) the only good which can decisively defeat evil in an individual's life, and (3) only accessible through faith in Christ, must account also for why so few people seem to have such faith. By examining the arguments of several theodicists who have addressed both Schellenberg's argument and the expanded problem of hiddenness, the paper pursues a rational, Biblical solution to the latter issue.

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The Expanded Problem of Hiddenness
for Christian Theodicies

David Welch

In a recent article titled, "What Divine Hiddenness Reveals, or How Weak Theistic Evidence is Strong Atheistic Proof," John Schellenberg provides an updated version of his paradigmatic argument from hiddenness. In the article, Schellenberg argues that if a perfectly loving God exists, He would ensure that all creatures capable of relationship with Him could participate in such a relationship simply by choosing to do so. Belief in God is, however, clearly required before any creature can choose to participate in a relationship with God. So, in order to guarantee that they can participate in a relationship with Himself simply by choosing, a perfectly loving God must ensure that they believe in Him; that is, He must provide evidence of His existence such that those who suspend judgment upon the question of His existence could only do so by actively ignoring that evidence. Yet not everyone believes in God—the evidence for His existence is not such

that those who suspend judgment upon the question of His existence are able to do so only by actively ignoring the evidence; there exists non-culpable non-belief. Therefore, a perfectly loving God does not exist.[1]

When dealing with specifically Christian theodicies, however, such as Marilyn Adams's theodicy of identification with Christ or Eleonore Stump's theodicy of redemptive suffering,[2] the problem of hiddenness must take a slightly different form. Both Adams and Stump conceive of union with God as the greatest possible good for humans and, in fact, the only good that can engulf and defeat every sort and amount of evil and suffering in an individual's life. Christian doctrine, however, maintains that such a union is achievable only through Christ's opening the way for people to have a relationship with God through His death on the cross: "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh to the Father, but by me."[3] Again, "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."[4] Thus, the sole victor over evil may be accessed only through faith in Christ. If this is so, divine hiddenness becomes an even more urgent problem. Not only must the Christian theodicist account for non-culpable non-belief in the existence of God, but he must also account for the even more widespread non-belief in the Good News of Christianity. Schellenberg's argument from hiddenness, then, may be modified to relate specifically to Christian theodicies in the following ways:

(1)   If there exists a perfectly loving God, then all creatures capable of relationship with God who have not culpably disbelieved in Him are able to participate in such a relationship simply by choosing to do so.

(2)   Belief in God *and affirmation of the central tenets of Christianity (the Atonement, the Incarnation, and the Resurrection as related in the Scriptures and taught by the Church)*[5] are prerequisite to being able to participate in a relationship with God simply by choosing to do so.

(3)   Thus, if a perfectly loving God exists, then all creatures capable of relationship with God who have not culpably disbelieved in Him believe that God exists *and affirm the central tenets of Christianity* (1, 2).

(4)   It is not the case that all creatures capable of relationship with God who have not culpably disbelieved in Him believe that God exists *and affirm the central tenets of Christianity.*

(5)   Thus, there does not exist a perfectly loving God (3, 4).

The question, then, is this: if there is a loving God who, as Christian doctrine holds, longs for relationship with people, then why do so few seem to have such a relationship? Why is it that "strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth to life, and few there be that find it?"[6] If the evils experienced by an individual can only be defeated by relationship with God, as Stump and Adams maintain, then it is the case that evils remain undefeated in many individuals' lives. I shall refer to this problem throughout this essay as "the expanded problem of hiddenness."

If a Christian theodicy is to be complete, it must provide a Biblical solution to this problem. Since the Bible is the Christian canon of truth, the only acceptable Christian theodicy is one whose tenets are to be found, or at the least not contradicted, in the Scriptures. The Word of God as revealed in the Scriptures and in the Incarnate Christ is inevitably the only satisfactory foundation upon which to base a truly Christian response to the problem of evil. This essay proposes to pursue such a solution and to suggest that it must take a broader form than that of mere argument. My discussion will involve, first, a Scriptural evaluation of Marilyn Adams's and Eleonore Stump's respective responses to the expanded problem of hiddenness; second, I will discuss the Scriptural merits of a response that parallels Richard Swinburne's reply to Schellenberg's standard argument from hiddenness; finally, I will attempt to tie together what stands up to Scriptural scrutiny in each of these responses with the answer that the teachings of Christ appear to provide, as suggested by Laura Garcia's essay, "St. John of the Cross and the Necessity of Divine Hiddenness." Lastly, I will turn to discussing what I take to be the fullness of a Biblical response to expanded hiddenness, and I will suggest that reason alone is an insufficient means by which to pursue this response.

I begin my examination of possible responses to the expanded problem of hiddenness with Adams's response. Her solution seems to be universal salvation, the doctrine that, eventually, whether in this life or the next, God will bring every individual into union with Himself. Adams argues that the only way that God may be said to love individuals is to guarantee that every individual's life will be, on the whole, a great good to him.[7] Now, the only good sufficient to defeat horrendous evils[8] is the incommensurate good of identification with Christ in His sufferings on the cross, along with vision of God.[9] Therefore, given humanity's radical vulnerability to suffering and participating in horren-

dous evils, it follows that the only way for God to guarantee that an individual's life will be, on the whole, a great good to Him is to guarantee that all individuals will achieve this identification and relationship.[10] Furthermore, Adams argues that even if a person did not have a relationship with God in earthly life, he may retrospectively identify with Christ's sufferings after death; this is only possible if individuals who do not believe in God on earth are eventually brought into union with Him.[11] Such a union will defeat every evil that an individual might suffer, including that of expanded Divine hiddenness.

But Adams's response becomes problematic when scrutinized through the lens of Scripture, which seems to indicate that it is not the case that all people will choose God in the end, and that at least some individuals will be eternally separated from God. Take, for instance, Christ's parable of the sheep and the goats in Matthew 25:31-46. After Christ has welcomed the righteous into His kingdom, He speaks to those who are condemned: "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels . . . And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal."[12] Consider also the revelation of Christ to John:

> I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.[13]

These passages seem to indicate two things: (1) that not all people will be united with God because they have not chosen Him, and (2) their separation from God will be eternal. It is true that God longs that we be united with Him, but He will not impose such a union upon us if we reject it.

It may be answered that because God has created each person for union with Him, our restless hearts, which never cease to search for their true home, will eventually, whether before or after death, turn to God, who never ceases to draw our souls to Him. Perhaps there is no

reason to believe that a person may not repent in hell. Furthermore, if a person does repent, then surely God will have mercy upon him as He has upon other sinners, even upon "such a worm as I," as one hymn says.[14] How else can God be said to have made "all things new"?[15]

In reply to this objection, I point out that in the above passage and in others, the punishments of hell are said to be everlasting.[16] But that is not an argument. The answer, perhaps, is that Adams's assertion about the love of God is overstated, namely, that a loving God must guarantee that each individual's life is, on the whole, a great good to Him. It may be more correct to say that a perfectly good Creator need only ensure that His creatures have the opportunity to participate in the process of making their lives a great good to them on the whole. Surely the devil and his followers were made as much for God as humans are, and yet the Scriptures are clearer still about the eternity of their punishment than of ours. I see no reason to assert that every person will eventually respond to God's offer of salvation, although such would indeed be a profoundly desirable and good end as well as a consummation for which we ought to hope and pray continually. Moreover, at worst, such a claim would create significant problems for maintaining that mankind has libertarian free will. The Scriptures seem to invest our free choices in this life with an immense and truly terrible significance, even with the power to determine our own eternal destiny.[17] Thus, under the scrutiny of the Scriptures, Adams's solution appears to fall short.

I move on, then, to discuss Stumps's response. After arguing that God is justified in allowing suffering insofar as He is able to use it to help turn the individual's will to the point where he desires that God transform his will (requisite for achieving the greatest good, union with God), she briefly addresses the expanded problem of hiddenness:[18]

> As for those who live and die without the religious knowledge necessary for redemption from evil, it is not incompatible with Christian doctrine to speculate that in the process of their dying God acquaints them with what they need to know and offers them a last chance to choose.[19]

One might ask why anyone would need to suffer at all to be moved toward union with God if such a union can be achieved in the moment of death. Stump replies that in any such deathbed decision, the dying

person's previous sufferings, which will have helped form his character, will certainly play an influential role. Nothing in the Scriptures appears to rule out such a possibility; in fact, God's evident desire to be found by people and to bring them into union with Himself seems to lend the suggestion some likelihood. For all we know, Stump is right. This defense is not yet a theodicy, however—Stump's argument provides us with a possible way in which expanded hiddenness and a benevolent God may be compatible, but nothing more.

Next we shall consider a different sort of response: one that parallels Richard Swinburne's answer to the standard problem of hiddenness in *Providence and the Problem of Evil*. Swinburne's response to Schellenberg's standard argument from hiddenness takes the following form: (1) given that we have the good of a desire to be approved of by the good, and given that we have the good of a desire to act for our own future well-being, and given that the existence of God makes probable that there is an afterlife in which the morally good are rewarded and the morally bad punished, the more certain it appears to us that God exists, the more inclined we will naturally be to choose good over evil.[20] (2) Our natural inclination to evil is necessary for the great good of significant libertarian free choice between good and evil.[21] Therefore, given (1) and (2), (3) if God's presence was evident to us, it would override our significant libertarian free will. It is not logically possible for God to give us the goods of clarity concerning His existence, significant libertarian free will, a desire to be approved of by the good, and a desire for our future well-being at the same time.[22] Additionally, God's hiddenness is prerequisite for many other goods, including the good of our choosing to seek Him, the even greater good of seeking Him in cooperation with others, the great good of relying upon God to help us in our search, and the great good of being of use to others in this most important of all matters by teaching others about Him and telling those who do not know Him about the possibility of relationship with Him. According to Swinburne, it was also necessary that many generations and cultures be ignorant of God in order to make possible the great good of evangelization.[23] A parallel response might be made to the expanded problem of hiddenness with a few modifications, namely, specifying that our free choice is between accepting and rejecting Christ and that our seeking and learning are concerned with the central tenets of Christianity as well as God Himself.

Swinburne's concern with keeping free choice intact, however, does not seem to be a plausible move when dealing with the expanded problem of hiddenness. Laura Garcia points out that, while Christ was on earth, He performed many miracles and even raised people from the dead; in none of these cases did all of the witnesses choose to believe in Him.[24] John writes, "But though [Jesus] had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him. . . . For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God."[25] Thus, even extraordinary evidence of Christ's divinity did not override the free choice of the individuals who were witnesses, and so this part of Swinburne's method of accounting for divine hiddenness appears to fall short.

As for the remainder of the Swinburnean response, however, it seems to be well-supported by the Scriptures. It is indeed good that we must choose to seek Christ: "Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."[26] Clearly, God also desires that we rely upon Him to help us in our seeking: "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you."[27] And the good of a community, seeking and praying together and teaching one another—namely, the Church—is surely interwoven with Christ's goal of drawing us to Him. Before His arrest, Christ prayed, "That they all [who believe in me] may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me."[28] It was through community that Christ worked from the beginning of His ministry, and it was upon the gathered disciples that His Spirit fell at Pentecost. These things are also related to Christ's desire for us to spread the Good News to the world; see also the Great Commission in Matthew 28:16-20. Additionally, there may well be goods which we cannot comprehend that God achieves through expanded hiddenness: "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."[29]

A Swinburnean response to the expanded problem of hiddenness demonstrates, then, that there are at least some goods that appear only to be possible through expanded Divine hiddenness. Such a response casts significant doubt upon the truth of premise (1) of the argument from expanded hiddenness (that a perfectly loving God must ensure that all of His creatures believe in Him and affirm the central tenets of Christianity) and therefore also casts significant doubt upon the conclusion (that such a God does not exist).

    The Swinburnean good of being of use to others is also suggested
by Garcia as a response to the expanded problem of hiddenness in her
essay, "St. John of the Cross and the Necessity of Divine Hiddenness."
First, she accounts for the standard problem of hiddenness by arguing
for its efficacy in drawing the human soul toward union with God—a
person who has encountered a mystery will seek the solution to that
mystery if it is of profound importance. Next, Garcia writes that the
further revelation about God's purposes with regards to the Christ event
"is especially entrusted to those who have already received the message
and are expected to share it with others."[30] Since God has ordained that
communion with Him involve communion with people, such a method
of disseminating knowledge about the central tenets of Christianity,
while certainly inefficient, is nevertheless instrumental to His purposes
on earth. He is not merely trying to usher people into heaven, but is
working to form a community of disciples who love one another.

    For God's intention is that the ultimate good of union with Him,
which alone defeats all evil, should be attainable only through a process
of sanctification that inevitably takes place in the context of a commu-
nity. It is in the life of the Church together that the truth of the Gospel
is revealed most fully to the individual, for God has chosen to incarnate
His Love through His Church in this age. Thus Paul wrote, "Now ye are
the body of Christ,"[31] and Christ prayed for all Christians, "that they also
may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me."[32]
That God reveals Himself to individuals through the life and words of
His Church, and that the process of attaining union with Him involves
that same community, is thus presumably a great good that would be
unattainable without expanded hiddenness. For the same reason, His
own ministry on earth was centered around teaching twelve disciples
and not on communicating the Gospel to the whole world. This He left
as a task for His Church: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations … "[33]

    Here, then, is where our discussion has arrived: Adams's theodicy
of identification with Christ will not do in the light of the Scriptures.
Stumps's suggestion of a deathbed revelation is not incompatible with
the Scriptures, and provides us with a state of things in which the argu-
ment from expanded hiddenness might fail. A Swinburnean approach
reveals that at least some goods are only possible through expanded hid-
denness, and combined with Garcia's emphasis on the profound impor-
tance of community in God's project of salvation, gives us good reason

to doubt the veracity of premise (1) of the argument from expanded hiddenness. Thus, the argument is rendered unsound and, indeed, quite improbable.

So much for a rational response to expanded hiddenness. Yet the problem, in a very real sense, remains unanswered. God's hiddenness is, like evil, not primarily an abstraction, but is something that individuals experience in a concrete way. And hiddenness, like evil, must be defeated by God, if it is defeated at all, in the life of these same individuals. God's absence cannot be fully answered by a rational argument, but only by His presence. And so it is not idly that Paul names the Church the Body of Christ: she is to be His presence in a world which seems void of Him. Unbelievers may encounter Christ "by meeting those in whom He dwells and in whom His love is again made incarnate, albeit imperfectly."[34] It is thus that Christ has chosen to make Himself evident to the world. Perhaps, then, we who call ourselves His disciples ought to ask ourselves whether it is we who are culpable in the disbelief of our neighbors. In any case, God Himself has chosen to answer the problem of His hiddenness through the life and work of His Church in the world; this demands the daily obedience of His disciples, that "ye love one another, as I have loved you."[35]

For in the end, the only complete answer given in the Scriptures to the expanded problem of hiddenness is for the follower of Christ to love his neighbor, to "Go, and do thou likewise," as Christ exhorted the lawyer after telling the parable of the Good Samaritan.[36] Let us return once more to consider Christ's parable of the sheep and the goats in Matthew 25. Its purpose, after all, was not to teach the reality of hell, but to exhort us to show charity to the suffering. This is why God welcomed the sheep into His rest:

> For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. . . . Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.[37]

Even as the righteous present the charity of Christ to the suffering, those suffering are as the presence of Christ unto the righteous. And that is the work of Incarnate Love indeed, revealing Himself to

the hopeless through His followers and to His followers through those to whom they show His love. Thus, He teaches us how it is that He is "with you always, even unto the end of the world"[38]: He is with us in one another, and in the love that binds this deep sort of community together.

As for those whom the message of Christ has never reached (e.g., the classic example of the tribe in the Amazon), it is obvious that they cannot be culpable for their non-belief in the message of Christ. In this case, we can only trust that God, who is good, wise, and just, will deal with them rightly. Perhaps, as Stump suggested, He will reveal Himself to them in their dying; perhaps He will hold them accountable, as Paul teaches, to "the law written in their hearts … In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel."[39] We must trust in Him to bring good out of this aspect of His hiddenness as He brings good out of all the rest.

The fullness of the Biblical response to the problem of expanded hiddenness may be summed up in the command of Christ to His disciples to love one another and His ordaining of the Church to be His presence to the afflicted. In responding, at last, to the situation of those who have never heard of Christ, our only response seems to be faith in the justice and goodness of God. The rational arguments of such philosophers as Stump and Swinburne are, of course, quite valuable to our search for an answer to this problem, but such arguments necessarily have a limit. Any response that claims to answer fully the problem of expanded hiddenness must be embodied in a way of living that brings that answer in word and deed to those from whom God is hidden.

At the end of all of our argument over goods and hiddenness, we would do well to remember the words of the Teacher:

> I have seen the burden God has laid on men. He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end. I know that there is nothing better for men than to be happy and do good while they live.[40]

There comes a point at which we recognize that there is a limit to our understanding, that we cannot not solve every problem, and that we must rely upon faith in God and His word. This limitation to human

thought is also a part of God's hiddenness, for, in addition to the goods enumerated above, He is hidden that we may be humbled. Our best response to the hiddenness of God is to live in faith in and obedience to that Word which God has revealed, in the understanding that we are small and weak and that He is beyond our ken, in expectation of the fulfillment of His promise to be with us and to bring us to live where He is, and in charity towards all of His children and towards those who are lost. For the truth is not, in the end, only the abstract coherence of a rational argument; those arguments must correspond to the cosmos as it is. And the fullness of that correspondence is that God's Word, which is truth,[41] brings the material world into correspondence with it, so that His Word is the supremely rational ordering principal of all things.[42] That ordering principle is that *logos* became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory.[43] And He is made flesh again in the life of the Church. Thus, there is a real way in which the Truth happens through the life of the Church, in which the world is brought again into correspondence with the Divine ordering principal through the Church. Christ, the Life who is the Light of men,[44] has chosen now to reveal Himself to the world through His people, whom He Himself called "the light of the world."[45] "This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you," Christ said.[46] Therein is the truth, better than all speech, which is so imprecise and insufficient. Is it not so that Christ is called both Truth and Love? That is a point worth reflecting upon. Nor should we forget the words of God to the prophet: "And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart;"[47] nor the words of Christ to the weary world: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."[48] His words are still truth; He will yet be found by those who seek.

NOTES

[1] John Schellenberg, "What Divine Hiddenness Reveals."
[2] For Adams's theodicy, see Adams, "Chalcedonian Christology,"173-198, and Adams, "Horrendous Evils and the Goodness of God," 297-323; for Stump's theodicy, see Stump, "Aquinas on the Sufferings of Job," 49-68; and Stump, "The Problem of Evil," 392-423.

[3] John 14:6 (KJV). All quotations of Scripture in this paper will come from the King James Version of the Bible, unless otherwise indicated.

[4] Romans 6:23.

[5] The Atonement should be understood for my purposes as the doctrine that Jesus Christ's death upon the Cross opened the way for us to have relationship with God, which we could not have achieved on our own. The Incarnation should be understood as the doctrine that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came to earth as a man of flesh, and is Lord of all. The Resurrection should be understood as the doctrine that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead; through Him we share in that Resurrection unto new life.

[6] Matthew 7:14.

[7] Adams, "Chalcedonian Christology," 178.

[8] Adams defines horrendous evils as, "evils the participation in (the doing or suffering of) which gives one reason *prima facie* to doubt whether one's life could (given their inclusion in it) be a great good to one on the whole" See Adams, "Horrendous Evils," 299.

[9] Adams, "Horrendous Evils," 306-307; and Adams, "Chalcedonian Christology," 184-185.

[10] Adams, "Chalcedonian Christology," 175-176.

[11] Ibid.,186.

[12] Matthew 25:41, 46.

[13] Revelation 21:6-8.

[14] Isaac Watts, "Alas! And Did My Savior Bleed?"

[15] Revelation 21:5.

[16] See also Daniel 12:2 and Isaiah 34:8-10.

[17] Richard Swinburne, in fact, calls such significant free choice a great good. See Swinburne, *Providence and the Problem of Evil*, 197-198.

[18] Stump, "The Problem of Evil," 230-235.

[19] Ibid., 235.

[20] Swinburne, *Providence and the Problem of Evil*, 204-205.

[21] Ibid., 134.

[22] Ibid., 206-207.

[23] Ibid., 210-212.

[24] Garcia, "St. John of the Cross and the Necessity of Divine Hiddenness," 88.

[25] John 12:37, 43.

[26] John 20:29.

[27] Matthew 7:7.

[28] John 17:21.
[29] Isaiah 55:9.
[30] Garcia, "St. John of the Cross and the Necessity of Divine Hiddenness," 94.
[31] 1 Corinthians 12:27.
[32] John 17:21.
[33] Matthew 28:20a.
[34] Garcia, "St. John of the Cross and Necessity of Divine Hiddenness," 94.
[35] John 15:12.
[36] Luke 10:37.
[37] Matthew 25:35-36, 40.
[38] Matthew 28:20.
[39] Romans 1:15-16.
[40] Ecclesiastes 3:10-12 (NIV).
[41] John 17:17.
[42] See Genesis 1, especially verse 3: "And God said, Let there be light: and there was light."
[43] John 1:14.
[44] John 1:4.
[45] Matthew 5:14.
[46] John 15:12.
[47] Jeremiah 29:13.
[48] Matthew 11:28.

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ROSS IRVIN is a senior Political Science and Philosophy double major with a minor in Business Administration. Ross has been a member of Dean's List every semester of his college career and is a Moot Court National Qualifier. He is also an active member of Alpha Tau Omega and Student Court. Ross enjoys hanging out with friends, constitutional law, playing racquetball, political philosophy, and being a member of ATΩ. Ross plans on attending law school in the Fall of 2013 and is currently in the process of sending out his applications.

THOMAS McGRAW is a sophomore in the Honors Program double-majoring in Philosophy and Religion. From Howe, TX, he is currently the service and ministry chair at Brooks Residential College and is involved in Reformed University Fellowship. After graduation, Thomas plans to attend graduate school.

MICHAEL NICHOLS is a senior University Scholars major concentrating in the Classics. He is the former Academic Chair of the Honors Residential College and is a literacy tutor with Mission Waco's Afterschool Program. He enjoys reading sports journalism and closely follows Baylor athletics. He is especially excited for this upcoming basketball season. Michael is currently applying to Masters Programs to continue his study of the Classics, with a particular interest in Latin and Education.

SAMUEL POMEROY graduated from Baylor in Spring 2012 and is currently pursuing his Masters and Ph.D in Scripture and Theology at the University of St. Andrews. His interests range from Pauline interpretation to studies of Dante, but most of all, he is concerned with the way Scripture has been read throughout the centuries. In December 2012, he will marry the lovely Cherie Bates with whom he hopes to start a family and explore the many hills of Scotland. He is an avid guitarist and can often be found with a collection of Wendell Berry or Gerard Manley Hopkins in his hands.

DAVID WELCH, a senior from Bastrop, Texas , is a Great Texts major with a focus in texts of the Western Tradition. His interests include reading and writing poetry and fiction, playing piano, and hiking. David stays busy with thesis writing and his involvement with William Carey Crane Scholars and the Green Scholars Initiative. In the future, he wants to pursue a master's degree and a Ph.D. in Medieval Studies and Old and Middle English and related literatures and hopes eventually to teach at the university level.