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At the dawn of Industrialism in the United States, Walter Rauschenbusch and Dorothy Day founded movements to combat social injustice and aid the poorest members of society. Ultimately Rauschenbusch's Social Gospel movement dissolved while Dorothy Day's Catholic Worker movement obtained longevity. This paper explores the life and thought of Rauschenbusch and Day to explain and contextualize the difference in outcomes of these two movements.

The Scottish Enlightenment is often associated with the atheist David Hume; however, the Enlightenment in Scotland was actually much more varied and church-friendly than the skeptical writings of its most famous thinker. On the one hand, a number of Scottish church leaders adapted to the Enlightenment or adopted some of its values. On the other hand, some Christians used church discipline or reasoned arguments to combat writers whom they considered to be threats to the church. In the long term, the Scottish Enlightenment helped to contribute to the evangelical revival toward the end of the eighteenth century, an event with significant repercussions for Scottish church history.

This paper reconciles Dante's remarkable view of the potency of the free will with his consignment to Limbo of those who had no freedom to choose baptism and avoid such a fate, with reference to the theology of Thomas Aquinas and the legend of the Emperor Trajan.

BROCK SCHELLER

> *Gerard Manley Hopkins wrote a number of beautiful reflective poems which were deeply philosophical as well as religious. Particular themes of Hopkins's poetry reveal the extent to which his philosophy and his theology each reinforced and required the other. Hopkins's Marian poems show his debt not only to the Catholic Church which ordained him, but also to the work of the medieval scholastic Duns Scotus in particular.*

At the dawn of Industrialism in the United States, Walter Rauschenbusch and Dorothy Day founded movements to combat social injustice and aid the poorest members of society. Ultimately Rauschenbusch's Social Gospel movement dissolved while Dorothy Day's Catholic Worker movement obtained longevity. This paper explores the life and thought of Rauschenbusch and Day to explain and contextualize the difference in outcomes of these two movements.

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Two Perspectives on Changing the Social Structure: Walter Rauschenbusch and Dorothy Day

Austin Almaguer

The early twentieth century brought increasing awareness of the suffering of the poor under industrial capitalism. Christian leaders such as Walter Rauschenbusch and Dorothy Day were prominent among those calling for reforms to eliminate social injustice. Rauschenbusch's Social Gospel movement and Day's Catholic Worker movement both combated injustice and created numerous programs to aid the poorest members of society. Following World War I, however, the Social Gospel movement led by Rauschenbusch seemed to disappear from the public forum, while the Catholic Worker movement continued to thrive. A study of the two leaders' theology and methodology reveals the reason behind the different fates of each movement. Rauschenbusch's emphasis on reforming the entire social organism resulted in the Social Gospel's eventual absorption into other American institutions, whereas Day's grassroots approach of individual change allowed the Catholic Worker movement to continue to exist as a distinct organization.

Historical Context: Industrial America

The late nineteenth and early twentieth century was a period of radical change in the United States. Emerging from the Civil War, a fragile union began the process of reconstruction. The most drastic changes occurred after the Civil War and were first experienced in business and industry. At the close of the Civil War, the United States was primarily

an agrarian society in which more than half of its citizens were self-employed. However, by 1920, industrialization had created an urban society in which the majority of individuals worked for employers.[1]

The sweeping change, which began prior to the Civil War, resulted in increased industrialization. The introduction of "the telegraph, steamship, the railroads . . . led to the widespread adoption of the factory system with its mass-production methods."[2] As a result, the national market of the United States rapidly expanded. However, the resulting wealth was not distributed equally throughout society. Rather, a key feature of the Industrial Revolution was the increasing concentration of money and power in the hands of a few powerful business companies. Tycoons such as Jim Fisk, Commodore Vanderbilt, John D. Rockefeller, Charles Schwab, and Andrew Carnegie exemplify men who built their fortunes upon the labor of the poor working class.[3]

While business moguls like Rockefeller and Schwab enjoyed great wealth, the vast majority of workers lived on wages that did not meet the basic standards of living. In fact, a New York State Factory Investigation from 1911 to 1915 reported that "the vast majority [of workers] earned under $10 a week, and 15 to 30 percent of the work force, classified as learners, received only $3 to $6."[4] In response to these outrages, workers sought to unionize and force companies to provide adequate wages. However, the easy availability of minority and immigrant workers often meant striking workers were replaced, leaving countless laborers jobless. Furthermore, the massive influx of immigrants into the United States created a large population of unemployed workers. Those who did find work in the factories, including children, were subjected to long hours only to find themselves unable to afford decent housing.[5] Historian Philip Bagwell describes the socioeconomic conditions for the working class:

> The growth of large industrial cities spelled poverty of a different kind for many thousands of unskilled workers. Overcrowding in slum tenements, without ready access to fresh air and healthy relaxation, produced squalor and disease, care-worn adults and stunted children . . . inadequate housing, diet, and sanitation spread epidemic disease.[6]

The harsh realities of life for the working class of American society eventually led to the founding of numerous social work movements in the early twentieth century. These groups were determined to call attention to the injustices experienced by workers despite the negative

perceptions most Americans in the upper classes had of the unemployed. Indeed, urban newspapers and public officials believed "unemployed workers were lazy" rather than victims of systemic social injustice.[7] This environment of class struggle, economic slavery, and social injustice became the backdrop for the emergence of two of the most prominent Christian leaders of the twentieth century. Walter Rauschenbusch (1861-1918) and Dorothy Day (1897-1980) reacted to the plight of workers in industrial America by founding movements aimed to reform the systems which created injustice. However, the two leaders' approaches and methods to solving the problem were significantly different. A closer look at each figure will help us understand these differences.

Walter Rauschenbusch and the Social Gospel

Walter Rauschenbusch was a Christian theologian and Baptist minister. After studying at Rochester University and Rochester Theological Seminary, Rauschenbusch pastored the Second German Baptist Church of New York City. Surrounding the church were factories and crowded tenement buildings which the Industrial Revolution produced. The church "was on the edge of Hell's Kitchen, a neighborhood noted for its gangs, and the Tenderloin, noted for prostitution and gambling."[8] Rauschenbusch's ministry in Hell's Kitchen exposed him to the social injustices and inequalities of laissez-faire capitalism. Beginning in 1907, Rauschenbusch published various written works, including *Christianity and the Social Crisis* (1907) and *A Theology for the Social Gospel* (1917), which attempted to awaken the conscience of Protestant Christianity in order to change the social structures creating the rampant injustices and inequalities in industrial America.

Rauschenbusch's theology began to center on the conviction that the gospel was ethical, demanding a response to injustice by Christians. As such, Rauschenbusch began to apply his faith to the social setting of his church.[9] Encountering poverty caused him to reconstruct his theology, seeing the Kingdom of God as the central focus of Jesus' ministry. Indeed, Rauschenbusch taught that all doctrines must be evaluated according to the all-inclusive mission of devotion to the coming Kingdom. Individuals must strive to further the reality of the coming Kingdom by creating good and just societies.[10] Consequently, Rauschenbusch "attacked corrupt politics . . . secure[d] playgrounds, fresh air centers, decent housing, [and] helped organize The Brotherhood

of the Kingdom to give voice to the Christian revolt against social wrongs."[11] Rauschenbusch's teachings came to be known by the term the "Social Gospel": an application of the Gospel to change the social structures responsible for creating poverty.

Due to the work of the Social Gospel movement, Rauschenbusch remains a towering figure in American Christian history; his work challenged Christians to work to create a better society. However, soon after World War I, the shelters and soup kitchens founded by the movement became secular institutions, and liberal Protestant activity in social work faded away. In spite of the absence of Social Gospel activity in the United States, the continued influence of the life and thought of Rauschenbusch begs the question of why the institutions founded by the movement ceased to be distinctively Christian. The answer may lie in the life of Christian leader Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker movement.

Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker Movement

Dorothy Day was an American journalist, social activist, and Catholic convert. Unlike Rauschenbusch, her childhood was marked by events in which Day explored faith and piety. After two years attending the University of Illinois at Urbana, Day dropped out to move to New York City to write for the socialist paper *Call*. Her work as a journalist focused on covering demonstrations, and she interviewed people ranging from butlers to labor organizers. Day worked for other publications such as *The Masses* and the *Liberator*.[12] Her work at these various publications introduced her to anarchism and pacifism, both of which became central themes in her work.

One day, upon returning from a reporting job, Day discovered Peter Maurin waiting for her outside her apartment.[13] Maurin began to outline his ideas for starting a movement aimed at influencing the Catholic Church to address social and economic injustices taking place in America. Day biographer Rosalie G. Riegle writes, "[Maurin's] three-point program called for informed social criticism, houses of hospitality for the homeless, and communal farms where the unemployed could learn a skill."[14] Maurin sought to engage Day's passion and her journalism skills to help launch a newspaper which would present Christian responses to contemporary social issues. Soon the pair settled on titling the paper *The Catholic Worker* and began publishing in May 1933.

From the beginning, *The Catholic Worker* sought to engage readers with unpopular or ignored social issues. In each publication they addressed the inequalities and injustices of laissez-faire capitalism, the destructive force of violence in war, and the status of minority workers.[15] Soon Day's apartment was transformed into a newspaper printing office as well as a house of hospitality. Indeed, Maurin began to bring in homeless people he had befriended on the streets. The influence of *The Catholic Worker* continued to grow over the next few years as numerous houses of hospitality opened and farms for economic empowerment developed.

The Catholic Worker movement founded by Day and Maurin continues to thrive with approximately 180 houses worldwide.[16] The programs of the Catholic Worker movement exhibit a longevity not seen in the institutions founded by the Social Gospel movement. The reason for the different histories of the two movements lies in the central ideas and concepts of the two prominent leaders.

Comparative Study of Rauschenbusch and Day

The Catholic Worker movement and the Social Gospel movement each possessed strong leaders whose ideas shaped American theology in the twentieth century. However, Rauschenbusch and Day were notably different figures. Rauschenbusch was an intellectual who spent most of his life in the scholarly circles of Rochester. By contrast, Day remained a reluctant scholar who was uninterested in the academic world. According to author Mel Piehl, Day "always sought out the company of writers and artists . . . [A]lthough she loved her intellectual friends, she felt they often substituted glibness . . . for deeper moral and spiritual insight."[17] Day rebelled against intellectual life cut off from the difficulties and complexities of ordinary human concerns and needs. Throughout her life Day preferred to be actively involved in the street-level activities of the Catholic Worker movement rather than teach in the classroom. Even so, a distinction between Rauschenbusch and Day as intellectual versus non-intellectual is inaccurate. Both leaders were well-read and prolific writers. The distinction arises rather in the manner in which each expressed the thoughts and ideas of their respective movements. Rauschenbusch's approach appealed to the intelligentsias and power holders in the same way a university works for the betterment of students. Conversely, Day's emphasis on experience in her personal life caused her

to emphasize the lowest members of society as the catalysts for change. Both Rauschenbusch and Day recognized the degree of responsibility that the larger social structures of society possessed for the inequalities and injustices affecting workers. However, the underlying premises for how to change these structures differed. The experiences of each leader created fundamentally different approaches which influenced the practical measures taken to create a better society.

The Kingdom of God

While Rauschenbusch and Day articulated different approaches for social change, the leaders used similar language in their articulation of their theologies. However, the meaning of important terms such as "the Kingdom of God" was different in each leader's writings. During a sabbatical in Germany in 1891, Rauschenbusch was influenced by Adolf von Harnack's concept of the Kingdom of God. Adopting Harnack's argument, "Rauschenbusch explained that the ideal of the Kingdom of God represented the core impetus for the early church."[18] The restoration of the doctrine of the Kingdom of God was paramount to rejuvenating the church's efforts to transform the evil structures existing in society. Indeed, Rauschenbusch envisioned the doctrine as a powerful force providing incredible motivation to Christians.[19] Rauschenbusch stressed the importance of the Kingdom of God over the Church. In his opinion, the church existed for worship while the Kingdom bound members together through righteousness. This distinction is crucial to understanding the history of the Social Gospel. Rauschenbusch argued that the Kingdom of God existed outside and above the Church. The Church was not the manifestation of the Kingdom of God, but merely an agent designed to bring about a society which reflected God's coming reign.

The Kingdom of God envisioned by Rauschenbusch existed both as a present and future reality. The Kingdom was always coming as the *telos* of human history.[20] Rauschenbusch wrote, "every human life is so placed that it can share with God in the creation of the Kingdom, or can resist and retard its progress."[21] As such, the Church's main purpose was to make the Kingdom of God a reality on earth. In order to make the Kingdom of God a reality, by necessity, the social structures of society required transformation. The change had to come from the seats of power able to evoke radical change for the lowest members. As for the

Church, Rauschenbusch argued for a shift from a paradigm of baptizing individuals to baptizing society. His works express the conception that the Church does not exist merely to save individual souls, but to change the entirety of the social organism.[22] The reign of the Kingdom of God, brought about by the Church, would result in the end of class struggle, economic slavery, and religious bigotry.[23] Consequently, *A Theology for the Social Gospel* challenged readers to work for top-down change in society. Class struggle and economic slavery could be achieved by the conversion of corporate and government policies creating social evils.

Day also urged Christians to transform society and create better living conditions for the oppressed. Nevertheless, Day diverged in her concept of how the transformation takes place. Day's ideas were influenced by Russian writer Fyodor Dostoevsky, particularly as expressed in his work *The Brothers Karamazov*. In Piehl's analysis of this influence, Dostoevsky "suggested that all forms of committed social idealism constituted a Christian heresy: the attempt to set up a heavenly kingdom on earth, which was also one of the temptations of Christ."[24] Day modified the teachings of Dostoevsky to argue that selfless Christian love was integral to an active commitment to creating a more just society. While Rauschenbusch placed emphasis on the rich acting more Christ-like, Day sought change through individual commitment to love in action.

The task of Christian Worker movement members was practicing love in action without placing materialist aims above spiritual ones in the pursuit of helping the poor. Day believed that freedom could only be achieved in the practice of loving and being responsible for the world.[25] The houses of hospitality which the Catholic Worker movement built are models of the ideas Day advocated. In these homes, individual workers brought love to the lowest members of society. As a result, the transformation was from the bottom up rather than from the top down. Furthermore, the rhetoric of Day and her colleagues did not center on creating a Kingdom of God on earth. Rather, the Catholic Worker movement sought to transform society through the practice of love and suffering in daily, personal relationships.

Anti-Structuralism versus Structure

The differences in the two leaders' conceptions of the Kingdom of God are best expressed in the avenues by which each engaged the

social structures. While Rauschenbusch sought to baptize the structures, Day sought change as an external agent. Day's thought was influenced not only by Dostoevsky but also the anarchism she acquired while working for the *Call*. The anarchism Day advocated is best described in terms of cooperation and love. The doctrine, according to Day, "would abolish the state and other established social and economic institutions and establish a new order based on free and spontaneous co-operation among individuals, groups, regions, and nations."[26] Indeed, Day's ideas regarding anarchy may be better classified as "anti-structuralism." Day's vision of society resembled communities of equal individuals dedicating themselves to a unified mission for the common good. The small Christian community in Georgia that Day visited during the Civil Rights movement, the houses of hospitality, and the Catholic Worker farms are all examples of Day's social vision. In her view, the Church was not meant to be part of the power structure within the larger framework of society, nor was the Church meant to control the social machine, but rather to exist outside of this structure, in the marginal spaces.[27]

Day's vision for society radically differed from Rauschenbusch's conception. Day envisioned "a society in which the 'godly' gathered into communities of prophetic witness and common concern, making significant claims on the culture precisely by serving it 'on the margins' of power and prestige."[28] Rauschenbusch saw social structure as integral to betterment; Day argued for a society without structure dependent upon love in action for cohesion. Her conception also produced discomfort with the rich patronage that Social Gospel leaders like Rauschenbusch sought out.

During the early twentieth century, countless wealthy industrialists became patrons to local churches. The relationship of these business moguls and the church became a key question for Day. Although she knew the church needed resources, the idea of "dirty" money financing the church remained troublesome to her.[29] She reflected in *From Union Square to Rome* that the local nuns lived on property donated by ruthless capitalist Charles Schwab:

> I could not but feel that his was tainted money which the Sisters had accepted. It was, I felt, money that belonged to the workers. He had defrauded the workers of a just wage. His sins cried to heaven for vengeance. He had ground the faces of the poor.[30]

While the patronage of merciless business men would remain an obstacle for Day, she overcame the struggle by affirming both the divinity of the church and the sinfulness of its members. The sins of Charles Schwab and the failure of church leaders were indicative of a disease within the community instead of reflections of error on the part of the entire Catholic Church.[31] Nevertheless, Day sought to stay away from the influence and support of individuals she felt participated in unjust practices. As a result, the Catholic Worker movement mostly remained grassroots and was led by lay members devoted to lives of poverty.

In contrast, Rauschenbusch is widely noted for seeking wealthy industrialist John D. Rockefeller to aid his movement. Rauschenbusch and Rockefeller developed a relationship in Rochester when Rockefeller was a large benefactor to Rochester Theological Seminary. At one point, after appealing to Rockefeller, Rauschenbusch was able to raise eight thousand dollars for a new building for the Second German Baptist Church.[32] Fellow leaders like Washington Gladden also worked alongside Rauschenbusch "to appeal to the consciences of the rich, in hopes that their hearts would be moved to change their views."[33] The appeal to the rich was part of the liberal Protestant movement which sharply contrasted with the ideas of the Catholic Worker movement.

The Social Gospel movement advocated a new structure for American society not based upon capitalism, but founded upon the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Rauschenbusch argued for a society in which the business leaders and government officials made decisions based upon the reality of the Kingdom rather than financial gain. The optimistic ideas presented by Rauschenbusch did not fall upon deaf ears. In fact, the contributing business leaders delighted in the idea of working to create a unified, Christian America brought about by the efforts of the Social Gospel movement.[34] But the powerful aim of transforming the larger social structures eventually led to the decline of the movement.

Becoming the System

Unlike the Catholic Worker movement, the leaders and benefactors of the Social Gospel movement shared a common background in middle class, white American society. In fact, the class separation between the Social Gospel leaders and the marginalized people being helped became a common criticism of the movement. Inherent to the movement was a separation between the leaders and the recipients of the Social Gospel's

programs. The top-down transformation of society was reflected in the leadership of the movement. Nearly all of the major leaders of the Social Gospel movement were clergy members like Rauschenbusch. Furthermore, the major financial supporters of large-scale Social Gospel programs were the business leaders controlling the economic framework of society. As members of hierarchical institutions, the key figures of the Social Gospel believed in the strength of social structure and order. In their opinion, possessing a strong framework and order was the best way for the Social Gospel to bring about the coming Kingdom. The relationship of church leaders and business leaders created a natural marriage of the Kingdom of God with society.

The relationship was not without benefits, as the powerful figures in the movement could evoke substantial change. The pairing of the establishment and the Social Gospel led to the movement becoming part of the system.[35] The shift occurred naturally, as Rauschenbusch's own theology of juxtaposing the Kingdom of God and the Church placed emphasis on change arriving outside of the local churches. Indeed, the inheritors of the Social Gospel movement after Rauschenbusch no longer sought to speak in terms of the Church making the Kingdom of God a reality. Newer leaders such as Reinhold Neibuhr and Norman Thomas "began to locate the meaning of the Gospel and the Kingdom outside the churches…[leveling] class-conscious criticisms at the community that bred them."[36] Finding meaning away from the church in the larger society became a growing trend in the years surrounding World War I. The pessimism created by trench warfare and the countless horrors of the Great War led Protestant Christians in America to question the optimism expressed by Rauschenbusch and the Social Gospel.

While the optimism in the possibility of great social change had been eroded by World War I, the pessimism created by the tragedy was not the death blow of the Social Gospel.[37] In fact, Protestant leaders continued to speak in terms of the Kingdom of God in the aftermath of the war. However, the Social Gospel ministers began to see "that their goals could be achieved only by the stimulus of national direction and funds."[38] Protestant leaders became critical of the Church as an institution, leading congregants to question the importance of participating in the work of the Church.[39] The disappearance of the visible aspect of the Social Gospel following the death of Rauschenbusch occurred because of the natural tie of the movement with a system based on the theology allowing leaders to seek change outside the church. In addition, themes

of unity and peace in social order became more important to wealthy business leaders. As a result, continued desire for radical change by Social Gospel leaders was opposed by the financial benefactors who had originally funded the movement.[40]

The conflict between movement leaders and wealthy benefactors, along with increasing blurring between church work and government programs, were not obstacles faced by the Catholic Worker movement. In contrast to the Social Gospel movement, the Catholic Worker movement "was almost exclusively a lay movement because its leader was a layperson."[41] From its inception, Day's movement existed on the fringes of society involving leaders with little to no political power.

The difference between the movements was rooted in the foundation of anti-structuralism in Day's teaching. By not attempting to save the Christian hegemony envisioned by Rauschenbusch, the Catholic Worker movement did not depend on the social structure. Indeed, Day's "approach to social Christianity was never top-down, but always looked to a radical egalitarianism, an approach to theology with distinctive Catholic precedents."[42] Prominent strands within the Catholic tradition, such as monasticism and the mendicant movement, provided strength to Day's approach in ways unparalleled by her Social Gospel counterpart. The traditions influencing Day sought radical change by never becoming an integral part of the positions of power and prestige. Always distinctive and grass-roots, the Catholic Worker movement did not experience any need to seek government support. Like their Franciscan forbearers, the Catholic Worker devoted themselves to love, charity, and poverty seeking identity outside the structures of power in American society.[43] The separation of Day's movement from the seats of power founded an identity serving culture to create a better society. According to Mark Massa, "Catholicism, in…Day's vision, would neither stand above nor completely acculturate to American society: it would, rather – much like the pope – become the *servus servorum Dei* to the first children of the church, the poor."[44]

Arguing that the Social Gospel movement died after World War I and the Catholic Worker movement survived would be an overstatement of the historical evidence. However, the Social Gospel movement's programs became secularized after the programs began to draw upon government aid. While Social Gospel organizations still exist today, their foundations in the image of the Kingdom of God have shifted to humanitarian values such as "caring, honesty, respect and

responsibility"[45] rather than theological and Christological statements. The soup kitchens and homeless shelters are examples of Social Gospel programs becoming secular institutions operated outside of the church. In sharp contrast, the Catholic Worker movement remained on the margins, alongside the people the movement served, in a way not duplicated by the Social Gospel movement.

Conclusion

The Industrial Revolution changed the landscape of society from a primarily agrarian society to an urban society. The rapid growth in the industrial cities and the excesses of laissez-faire capitalism created countless injustices experienced by the working class.[46] In response, Christian leaders Walter Rauschenbusch and Dorothy Day devoted their lives to combating social injustice. Rauschenbusch's approach centered in his liberal Protestant background which emphasized the present and coming reign of the Kingdom of God. In contrast, anti-structuralism and the practice of love in action became the cornerstones to Day's liberal Catholic teaching. The difference created unique problems for the Social Gospel that were not experienced by the Catholic Worker movement. Rauschenbusch's vision of the Kingdom of God led subsequent followers to seek assistance from the social institutions they sought to change. As a result, the structuralism present in Social Gospel thought caused the movement to be absorbed by the larger social organism. In contrast, the Catholic Worker movement continued to survive as a separate identity because of the fundamental emphasis to the margins of power and prestige inherent in Day's thought. Nevertheless, both leaders remain important figures in the history of American Christianity. Rauschenbusch and Day challenge Christians of all generations to actively embody Christ's message of love and justice in order to transform society into one more reflective of the divine.

NOTES

[1] Dubofsky, *Industrialism*, 3.
[2] Bagwell and Mingay, *Britain and America*, 169.
[3] Gutman, *Power and Culture*, 70.
[4] Dubofsky, *Industrialism*, 17.

5 Gutman, *Power and Culture*, 80-85.

6 Bagwell and Mingay, *Britain and America*, 221.

7 Gutman, *Power and Culture*, 86.

8 Lewis, "Walter Rauschenbusch," 5.

9 Tillman, *Baptist Prophets*, 14.

10 Rauschenbusch, *Social Gospel*, 131.

11 Fosdick, "An Interpretation," xvii.

12 Day, *Long Loneliness*, 67.

13 Anderson, *The Catholic Reformers*, 200-1.

14 Riegle, *Dorothy Day*, 5.

15 Massa, *Catholics and American Culture*, 118.

16 Riegle, *Dorothy Day*, 7.

17 Piehl, *Breaking Bread*, 21.

18 Evans, *Kingdom is Always but Coming*, 103.

19 Rauschenbusch, *Social Gospel*, 23

20 Ibid., 140.

21 Ibid., 141.

22 Lewis, "Walter Rauschenbusch," 11.

23 Rauschenbusch, *Social Gospel*, 142.

24 Piehl, *Breaking Bread*, 72.

25 Ibid., 73.

26 Day, *Long Loneliness*, 54.

27 Massa, *Catholics and American Culture*, 110.

28 Ibid., 111.

29 Zwick and Zwick, *Catholic Worker Movement*, 8.

30 Day, *From Union Square*, 133.

31 Zwick and Zwick, *Catholic Worker Movement*, 8.

32 Evans, *Kingdom is Always but Coming*, 80.

33 Ibid., 81.

34 Ibid.

35 Piehl, *Breaking Bread*, 32.

36 Ibid., 33.

37 Evans, *Kingdom is Always but Coming*, 318.

38 Piper, *American Churches*, 197.

39 Jefferson, *Old Truths*, 119.

40 Evans, *Kingdom is Always but Coming*, 318.

41 Trawick, "Dorothy Day," 145.

42 Ibid.

43 Ibid.

44 Massa, *Catholics and American Culture*, 124.

[45] YMCA, "History," 2009.
[46] Bagwell and Mingay, *Britain and America*, 169.

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The Scottish Enlightenment is often associated with the atheist David Hume; however, the Enlightenment in Scotland was actually much more varied and church-friendly than the skeptical writings of its most famous thinker. On the one hand, a number of Scottish church leaders adapted to the Enlightenment or adopted some of its values. On the other hand, some Christians used church discipline or reasoned arguments to combat writers whom they considered to be threats to the church. In the long term, the Scottish Enlightenment helped to contribute to the evangelical revival toward the end of the eighteenth century, an event with significant repercussions for Scottish church history.

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The Scottish Church and the Enlightenment

Nathan Hays

When Voltaire visited Britain in the late 1720s, Scottish Presbyterianism was still considered synonymous with intolerance and overbearing piety.[1] By the end of the eighteenth century, though, the Scottish Enlightenment had transformed Scotland's capital of Edinburgh into the much more tolerant and liberal "Athens of the North." Scottish thinkers became renowned for their deep thought on a wide range of issues, causing Voltaire famously to conclude that "today it is from Scotland that we get rules of taste in all the arts, from epic poetry to gardening."[2] However, this transition did not necessarily come easily. Like its counterparts on the continent, the Scottish Enlightenment sometimes sat uneasily with the established church, leading some to equate enlightened ideals with danger to Christianity. As a result, a number of Christian writers lashed out at Enlightenment thinkers whom they considered threats to the Church of Scotland by attempting both to punish the thinkers themselves and to refute them with reason. Although this negative reaction to the Enlightenment is well-known, the established Scottish church actually had a more complicated relationship with the Scottish Enlightenment. Many members of the church openly embraced the Enlightenment, and many ministers were subtly influenced by Enlightenment ideas. In the long term, the Scottish Enlightenment helped spark the evangelical revival toward the end of the eighteenth

century, an event bearing significant repercussions on Scottish church history.

Church of Scotland

Before discussing the Enlightenment and, ultimately, the Scottish Christian response to the movement, one must note the eighteenth-century Scottish intellectual environment. The Church of Scotland after the Reformation had developed a strong Calvinistic outlook under the influence of John Knox and Andrew Melville. During the seventeenth century, Scotland adopted the Westminster Confession as its chief standard of doctrine. A Puritan document, the confession has clear Calvinistic influences. Thomas Torrance, a late Scottish theologian and professor of Christian Dogmatics at the University of Edinburgh, states that the Westminster Confession's necessitarian doctrine of God and abstract view of God's activity is "an inveterate problem of Scottish theology inherited from a logicalised and rationalistic Calvinism, which laid it open to sceptical attack."[3] Whether or not Torrance's conclusion is accurate, Scotland certainly experienced a surge of rationalistic accounts of faith in the early eighteenth century. Many Scots read *Christianity as Old as the Creation,* published by Matthew Tindal in 1730*,* which emphasized nature and reason over revelation.[4] John Simson, a professor of Sacred Theology at Glasgow University, continued this tradition by declaring that, among other things, revelation must pass the test of rationality.[5] Another Glasgow professor, Francis Hutcheson, taught ideas heavily influenced by the Earl of Shaftesbury, an English deist writer.[6] A number of people, such as Archibald Campbell of St. Andrews University, still defended revelation; nevertheless, Alexander Stewart, professor at the University of Aberdeen, saw an overall "tendency, common among educated orthodox divines during the eighteenth century, to move to a middle ground on natural religion."[7] Natural religion relies more on reason than on supernatural revelation. Traditional Calvinism, with its emphasis on revelation in scripture, sits very uncomfortably with ideas of natural religion. The eighteenth-century intellectual environment in Scotland was eroding the strictly Calvinistic emphasis on revelation.

At the same time, the Scottish Church was beginning to divide along the issue of patronage, a system in which a wealthy landowner had the right to appoint a minister to a parish. Patronage had been discontinued in Scotland in 1690, but the British Parliament reasserted

it in 1712. At first, the reinstated practice did not cause many problems. After 1729, though, the courts began to back patrons more strongly which led to more conflicts.[8] Eventually, this issue would tear the Scottish Church asunder with the Great Disruption in 1843. During the eighteenth century, the conflict over patronage had not yet become as divisive as it would be during the 1840s. The Popular party, which opposed patronage, was not yet a theologically complex group and had a number of ministers who agreed with much of the theology of the Moderates, or those who supported patronage.[9] The Moderate party, unlike the Popular party, was united around certain issues besides patronage. Historian Callum Brown defines them as the party which emerged by the 1750s and "sought a rational basis for religious belief in view of Enlightenment thinking, and which despised 'enthusiasm' and excess in religion."[10] Although the majority of Scottish ministers were never Moderates, the latter party was much better represented in the leadership of the church and the academy. For instance, from 1762 to 1780 the Moderate William Robertson was leader of the General Assembly, the chief governing body of the Church of Scotland.[11] Similarly, other Moderates attained a number of teaching posts, especially at the University of Edinburgh.[12] Therefore, the eighteenth-century Scottish Church was beginning to divide between the Moderates, who eventually gained power in church and university leadership, and those who opposed them.

Scottish Enlightenment

During this critical period for the church, the Scottish Enlightenment was blooming. According to Scottish historian Alexander Broadie, the Scottish Enlightenment occurred from the 1740s to the 1780s and emphasized independent thinking and the virtue of tolerance.[13] Thinkers of the period, called *literati*, often met together to discuss ideas in Edinburgh, the center of the Scottish Enlightenment.[14] They were part of a larger Enlightenment movement throughout Europe that valued reason, a mechanistic view of the universe and an optimistic perception of humanity.[15] Although Scottish *literati* were part of this larger movement, they differed substantially from the more famous *philosophes* of Paris, such as Voltaire, in that they were usually quite congenial toward religion.[16] As David Bebbington writes, "Nowhere was the Enlightenment more fully assimilated by an

established Church than in Scotland."[17] This integration makes sense given the fact that the Enlightenment was dear to the Moderates who held power in the church. Therefore, the *literati* of Scotland tended to be relatively friendly toward the church while still assenting to a number of the beliefs of the international Enlightenment.

Although the Scottish Enlightenment tended to be friendly to religion, some *literati* undermined the church's authority. For instance, the influential philosopher Adam Smith promoted state-funded education which would have taken away power from the church, the body that traditionally administered education in Scotland.[18] Smith also believed that conscience sprung from an imagined ideal of an impartial spectator. This philosophical idea conflicted with traditional theological doctrine concerning the conscience as a gift from God.[19] Thus, Adam Smith posed some problems for the traditional Scottish church, not only by challenging their administration of education but also through his philosophical beliefs.

The most direct critic of Christianity, however, later became the most well-known of the Scottish philosophers of the period—David Hume. Writing his *Natural History of Religion*, he argued that religion is calamitous and born of fear. The posthumously published *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* then questioned conventional proofs for God.[20] Together, those two works were very problematic to the traditional arguments for religion because they undercut believers' attempts to fall back upon miracles as proofs of their faith. Hume targets these miracles in *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding,* famously concluding that "the *Christian Religion* not only was at first attended with miracles, but even at this day cannot be believed by any reasonable person without one."[21] Presumably, Hume would still be open to a religion, but only one that would conform to his terms. Broadie claims, "Hume would not object to a rational religion, a religion which exists entirely within the bounds of reason and which is therefore able to survive such cross-examinations."[22] However, natural religion was not only foreign to the Enlightenment-era Church of Scotland, but also completely foreign to the Scottish Calvinistic tradition. Thus, the Scottish Enlightenment, particularly as expressed through Hume, entailed some significant intellectual threats to Christianity.

Disciplinary Actions Against Enlightenment Threats

Some Christians responded to such heretical or heterodox writers by threatening the authors themselves. They had precedents for doing so: in 1697, Thomas Aikenhead had been executed for blasphemy.[23] Eighteenth-century Scotland, though, was not the Scotland of Aikenhead's day. Although Christians accused various people of heresy throughout the century, their attempts to punish heretical thinkers met with little success. Professor Campbell of St. Andrews was charged with unsound doctrine in 1736, as was Professor Leechman of Glasgow in 1743. Neither was found guilty.[24] Professor John Simson was similarly accused of various heresies twice but acquitted.[25] Mark Noll notes that the General Assembly's "investigations of rationalistic theological professors John Simson and William Hamilton were leisurely and hindered at every point by the influential friends of these professors."[26] Although these professors were prosecuted before the zenith of the Scottish Enlightenment, the Church's failure to punish them indicates that it was already more comfortable with rationalistic and doctrinally dubious teachings than was the Church of the previous century.

The attacks on David Hume later in the century were more intense. Due to his ideas on religion, he was denied the Professorship of Moral Philosophy at Edinburgh in 1745 and the Professorship of Logic and Rhetoric at Glasgow in 1752.[27] Moreover, Hume's opponents moved to excommunicate him in the 1750s. After all, the Westminster Confession clearly urged excommunication "for the reclaiming and gaining of offending brethren."[28] Nevertheless, that attempt failed. Hume was able to find other work, though not as a teacher.

One might assume that the Popular party as a whole was launching these attacks while the Moderates defended Hume. However, John McIntosh, who authored a detailed study of the Popular party during this period, states, "There is no evidence that the attack on Hume…was supported by the Popular party as a whole."[29] Instead, smaller groups of mostly Popular-leaning ministers were bringing the charges. The Popular party was generally distracted by other issues, such as the controversial play *Douglas*, which was written by a clergyman in the 1750s.[30] Also, the party was embroiled in the running dispute over patronage.[31] The patronage dispute not only distracted many in the Popular party, but also hampered the efforts of the group that tried to excommunicate Hume. McIntosh says, "The Moderate defence of him was based on

the same principle of liberty which the Popular party had been using in discussion on patronage."[32] The Popular party, unable to renounce their own principles, was silenced.

Furthermore, Hume's ironic style made him easier to defend. Although widely considered to be an atheist, he even pretended to subscribe to Christianity, writing, "Our most holy religion is founded on *Faith*, not on reason."[33] Hume's writing here is clearly ironic, but he is not nearly as overt as Voltaire in criticizing the church. This quality made him easier to defend among the Moderates. Already distracted, Hume's would-be opponents found it difficult to provide much evidence against him of overt blasphemy. Thus, the attempts by some Christians to silence heretical or heterodox authors themselves met with little success.

Rational Arguments Against Enlightenment Threats

Another common response to rational arguments against the church was to defend the church with reason, but this reasoned response developed gradually. Toward the beginning of the Enlightenment, many Christians believed that atheism was irrational and consequently posed no fundamental danger to their exceedingly rational Christianity.[34] As already noted, many Christian professors of the period concentrated on proving their doctrine from reason. Consequently, Christians wrote only casually against atheism. George Anderson, an old and relatively obscure chaplain, was one of the first to write a riposte to Hume and Henry Home, Lord Kames, whom he saw as heretical.[35] Kames, though considered unorthodox by some Popular party members including Anderson, also wrote against Hume during this period. In his *Essays on the Principles of Morality and Natural Religion* (1751), Kames argues for an intuitive knowledge that God exists. Then, he states that the goodness of the world proves the benevolence of the Creator: "our discoveries ascertain us more and more of the benevolence of the Deity, by unfolding beautiful final causes without number."[36] Other writers followed the confident examples of Kames and Anderson. John Bonar, a pamphleteer of the period, asserted that infidels had not weakened Christianity whatsoever. Daniel McQueen, another popular writer, also attacked atheism as lacking rationality.

McIntosh states, "Virtually no prominent Popular author seems to have felt confident enough, however, to dismiss infidelity in quite such a cavalier fashion after the 1750s."[37] In fact, George Anderson's

death in 1756 marks the end of an era of less tolerant, scholastic Scottish Presbyterianism. Instead, believers gradually began to realize how serious some of the more polemical Enlightenment philosophy could be. At this point, Christian thinkers targeted skepticism more vigorously. George Campbell, an Aberdeen University professor, wrote his *Dissertation on Miracles* in 1762, which won Hume's respect.[38] In it, he attacks Hume's argument that one should naturally disbelieve testimony contradicting experience. He writes, "According to the explication given above, there is the strongest presumption in favour of the testimony till properly refuted by experience."[39] In other words, common sense usually leads a hearer to believe testimony. Campbell wrote this during the period in which the Common Sense school of philosophy was just beginning. A reaction to skepticism, the school included Campbell, Thomas Reid, Alexander Gerard, and others. They wrote responses to Hume and other skeptics using intuitive arguments. The Common Sense philosophy acted as a bridge between religious faith and reason by positing that morality is intuitive.[40] This was to become one of the most enduring reason-based reactions to the Enlightenment.

Of course, not all writers during this period were of the Common Sense school. James Beattie was one of the most popular writers against what were widely considered to be the more pernicious effects of the Enlightenment. In one satirical work, he describes a vision in which he sees a castle filled with skeptical philosophers. One man is trying to grow a tail on a four-year-old in order to make humans "live agreeably to nature" and "re-establish the golden age."[41] This critique targets not just one particular writer, but broader Enlightenment ideals such as stoicism and human progress. Beattie's 1770 work, *An Essay on the Nature and Immutability of Truth,* was very popular even though Stewart describes it as "unsubstantiated bombast."[42] This essay was written during a period extending from the 1760s until 1790, when theological interest in Scotland waned and the number of theological books plummeted.[43] Once this period ended and theological books regained popularity, many Christian writers seemed to have forgotten the power of skepticism again. For instance, in 1790, the writer John Dun dismissed atheism as irrational, just as the early ripostes to Hume had done.[44] By that time, though, Scottish theology was quickly moving away from much of eighteenth-century rationalism. Therefore, the latter half of the eighteenth century saw several waves of reasoned responses to skepticism.

Christian Supporters of the Scottish Enlightenment

On the opposite end of the spectrum from those who sought to punish erring Enlightenment thinkers were those Moderates who maintained close ties to them and even supported them. The Moderate reluctance to chastise potentially heretical *literati* indicated the party's desire to adapt to the new intellectual environment. Besides, the Moderate party was the source of many distinguished *literati*.[45] Clearly, Moderates did not wish to encourage dissension among themselves. Richard Sher writes at length about the relationship between the Moderates and the Enlightenment. He notes that when Anderson attacked Hume and Kames, the Moderates "intensified their ties with the lay literati of Edinburgh in the following year by taking part in the celebrated Select Society."[46] According to McIntosh, such Moderate support of *literati* like Hume was ironic: "although the Moderate leadership had accepted a rationalistic theology, they rallied to Hume's support, failing to realise that he was an exceedingly effective critic of their type of theology."[47] Nevertheless, they wished to exemplify the ideals of free expression and toleration that the Enlightenment uplifted. Such emphasis on toleration was largely foreign to the Scottish Calvinist religious tradition.

Indeed, although Moderates made much progress in forcing the church to become more tolerant, they also suffered one of their greatest defeats when they tried to take the ideal too far. The "No Popery" affair of 1778-1779 resulted from William Robertson's attempts to relax criminal laws against Catholics. At that time, Catholics still faced *de jure* persecution. Moderates in Scotland wished to lift the harsher laws against Catholics, but failed after violent riots and threats on their lives. Their failure to relieve the persecution of Catholics demonstrates that, even though Moderates officially held many positions of power, they could not always achieve their goals.[48] Thus, Moderates distinguished themselves by tolerating even Enlightenment writers like Hume who were critical of their faith.

Other Influences from the Scottish Enlightenment

The picture so far developed illustrates that some Scots attacked the apparently pernicious ideas of the Enlightenment while others largely embraced the movement. However, the Church of Scotland during this time was much more complicated than this dichotomy suggests. After

all, many ministers were subtly influenced by Enlightenment ideas, even ideas that went against their traditional Calvinistic tradition. For instance, the Enlightenment tended to have an optimistic view of humanity. This humanistic ideal was difficult to reconcile with the conventional Calvinistic doctrine of total depravity. Nevertheless, in response to this view, some ministers moved away from the long tradition of preaching on sin and grace and toward a more stoical doctrine of seeking to live virtuously.

Hugh Blair, the eventual St. Giles preacher and professor of rhetoric at Edinburgh University, is a perfect example of this movement.[49] In a sermon before the Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge (SPCK) in 1750, he claimed that religion was a socializing and humanizing force which helps to tame fierce passions.[50] Religion was no longer solely about saving souls. Instead, Blair praised it for its ability to achieve the goals of the Moderates—stability and the improvement of humanity through the stoical pursuit of virtue. Hugh Blair also preached in a later sermon, "Reason, it is true, suggests many arguments in behalf of immortality: Revelation gives full assurance of it."[51] This reflects the Enlightenment approach to faith in which revelation simply augments what is already known through reason. The ability for someone to learn so much about God through reason, once again, is connected to the enlightened humanistic ideal. Later in the same sermon, Blair states expressly that believers should achieve virtue through discipline.[52] His confidence in the human ability to act virtuously again reflects his elevated view of humanity and his departure from the Calvinistic view. As a friend of Hume, Blair delivered many sermons that, except for scattered scriptural references, "would have met with Hume's full approval."[53] In addition, since he was preacher at St. Giles, Hugh Blair had one of the most prominent pulpits in all of Scotland and thus was a model to a number of ministers. He, and other enlightened preachers like him, became the target of the 1753 satire *Ecclesiastical Characteristics*, by John Witherspoon. Witherspoon was a major opponent of the Moderate party, an academic, and an eventual signatory of the American Declaration of Independence. In his famous pamphlet, he "effectively made fun of the cultured 'nature religion' of the ruling party which tended towards deism and avoided traditional doctrines of sin and grace."[54]

John Erskine, the great Popular minister, also noted the growing idea among enlightened preachers that mankind's moral state is generally

healthy and improving.[55] In this way, the Moderates were often accused of sacrificing the most important doctrinal points of Christianity for the sake of moral preaching, secular learning, and the amusements of polite society.[56] Therefore, ministers in the church were influenced by the enlightened ideals of humanism.

The Enlightenment's influence on ministers was not limited to Moderates. Instead, scholars have increasingly noted that even members of the Popular party were sometimes imbued with Enlightenment values.[57] For instance, one of the most important Popular ministers, John Erskine, was certainly influenced by the Enlightenment. However, unlike some of the Moderates, he mostly changed the style (and not the content) of his sermons in response to the Enlightenment. He regarded many of his Scottish predecessors to have had good theology but bad style. A voracious reader of the newest theological works, he widely distributed his books to other like-minded ministers, including Jonathan Edwards in America. Moreover, some of the works circulated by Erskine were books with which he at least partly disagreed. The fact that he still suggested that they be read is evidence that he was influenced by the Enlightenment ideal of toleration.[58] Further, John Witherspoon, who was one of the most effective Popular critics of Moderates, displayed some leanings toward the Enlightenment. After moving to America to become the president of the College of New Jersey (later Princeton), he recommended to his students some of the very same writers whom he had originally criticized enlightened ministers for reading.[59] The fact that such eminent Popular ministers as Erskine and Witherspoon were influenced by the Enlightenment proves that accommodation to that intellectual movement was not limited to Moderates.

Evangelical Reaction to the Scottish Enlightenment

Some Scottish theologians also responded to the threats of skepticism by moving towards a more evangelical faith. The long-term effect, then, was that "Hume's skepticism produced within the Church a questioning of their position, a return to more scriptural thought, and a more Christocentric way of Christian faith."[60] This gradual process started because of certain ideas about the root of heresy and atheism. The intellectual response to skeptics detailed earlier was based on the assumptions that writers should respond to skepticism when it arises and that heresy and heterodoxy are traceable to intellectual mistakes.

However, some Christians believed that the church should be doing more to prevent skepticism before it starts and that the root cause of infidelity was depravity. Consequently, skepticism was to be fought by the encouragement of godliness and piety. Not only did many preachers take up the call to encourage morality more tirelessly, but writers and pamphleteers responded as well. John Bonar, writing in 1756, launched invectives against loose morals in society. Others spoke out against luxury, which was increasingly common in this period. This morally centered theology was certainly more scriptural than the metaphysical and design arguments wielded by rationalist theologians.

Besides tracing infidelity to intellectual mistakes or depravity, another theory concerning skepticism's origin proposed that the church was not preaching the gospel enough. This view reacted against such Enlightenment preaching as that of Hugh Blair. For instance, John Willison demanded in *A Fair and Impartial Testimony* a return to "purity of doctrine and worship."[61] John Snodgrass, another pamphleteer, argued in 1794 that watering down the gospel to a natural religion makes Christianity pointless.[62] This growing dissatisfaction with Moderate theology was reflected in the gradual ascendancy of the Popular party around 1800.[63] Preachers in that party "laid emphasis on the great Christian doctrines…and their aim was to awaken in their hearers a deeper personal religious experience."[64] Callum Brown notes that the evangelical revival in Scotland was at least partly because of the "reactions against perceived laxity in religion amongst the social élites."[65] In other words, the Moderate party lost favor due to their own reputation of compromising the church. Numerous contemporary writers identify this shift towards a more scriptural focus in faith as having long-term effects on Scottish theology. Torrance writes that the attack on rationalism in faith "made room for reinterpretation of the Gospel by freeing it from the rigid framework of a rationalist Calvinism in which it had become trapped."[66] Noll similarly writes that the Scottish Church was, in many ways, more thoroughly reformed after the Enlightenment than before it.[67] This new Biblical theology and preaching climaxed in the next century with Thomas Chalmers, the great evangelical and instigator of the Great Disruption of 1843. Therefore, over time Scottish theology reacted to the Enlightenment by returning to a more Bible-centered faith which emphasized morality and the gospel.

Conclusion

The Church of Scotland's reaction to the Enlightenment was multi-faceted. Christianity in Scotland did not die with the Enlightenment, nor did it simply ignore the movement. Instead, everyone from the church leaders to the laity interacted with the movement to some extent. Some people attacked what they perceived to be heretical and heterodox people and ideas. On the other hand, many ministers accommodated the Enlightenment, at least to some degree. Ultimately, the move at the end of the century toward a more evangelical faith was to have long-term effects on Scottish religious history. These responses to the Scottish Enlightenment illustrate that Christianity historically has been a very dynamic force, capable of surviving and thriving despite innovations in the background intellectual environment. In contemporary society, the emphasis on science and the alleged conflict between science and religion sometimes seems to threaten the church. This tension resembles the environment of eighteenth-century Scotland and, indeed, modern Christians are responding to the threat in ways similar to those of the Enlightenment period. The fact that the church survived and even grew in response to the Scottish Enlightenment can certainly provide hope to the church today.

NOTES

[1] Sher, *Church and University,* 152.

[2] Ibid, 3.

[3] Torrance, *Scottish Theology*, 231.

[4] Drummond and Bulloch, *The Scottish Church, 1688-1843*, 47.

[5] Broadie, *The Scottish Enlightenment*, 116.

[6] McIntosh, *Church and Theology in Enlightenment Scotland*, 9.

[7] Stewart, "Religion and Rational Theology," 36.

[8] Brown, *The Social History of Religion in Scotland since 1730,* 29.

[9] McIntosh, *Church and Theology,* 20. Although the term "Popular party" is somewhat anachronistic, this essay will use the term for those who opposed the Moderates. They were especially inimical to those in William Robertson's camp.

[10] Brown, *The Social History of Religion in Scotland since 1730*, 30.

[11] Drummond and Bulloch, *The Scottish Church,* 66.

[12] Sher, *Church and University,* 147.

[13] Broadie, *Scottish Enlightenment,* 1-2.

[14] Ibid., 28.

[15] McIntosh, *Church and Theology,* 9. Richard Sher includes a much more detailed definition of the Scottish Enlightenment. For the purposes of this essay, McIntosh's broad definition is sufficient.

[16] David Hume, although he is perhaps the best-recognized philosopher of eighteenth-century Scotland, was atypically hostile to Christianity.

[17] Bebbington, "Enlightenment," 294.

[18] Broadie, *Scottish Enlightenment,* 40.

[19] Haakonssen, "Introduction," 13-14.

[20] Broadie, *Scottish Enlightenment,* 121.

[21] Hume, "Of Miracles," 316, emphasis in original.

[22] Broadie, *Scottish Enlightenment,* 41.

[23] Drummond and Bulloch, *The Scottish Church,* 14.

[24] McIntosh, *Church and Theology,* 17.

[25] Torrance, *Scottish Theology*, 230.

[26] Noll, "Revival, Enlightenment, Civic Humanism," 51.

[27] Broadie, *Scottish Enlightenment,* 35.

[28] Westminster Confession XXX.iii.

[29] McIntosh, *Church and Theology,* 72.

[30] Drummond and Bulloch, *The Scottish Church,* 77.

[31] Ibid., 60.

[32] McIntosh, *Church and Theology,* 73.

[33] Hume, "Of Miracles," 315.

[34] McIntosh, *Church and Theology,* 58.

[35] Drummond and Bulloch, *The Scottish Church,* 98.

[36] Henry Home, Lord Kames, "The Benevolence of God," 349.

[37] McIntosh, *Church and Theology,* 59.

[38] Torrance, *Scottish Theology*, 237.

[39] Campbell, "Of Miracles," 321.

[40] Noll, "Revival, Enlightenment, Civic Humanism," 64.

[41] Beattie "The Castle of Scepticism: A Vision," 191.

[42] Stewart, "Religion and Rational Theology," 50-51.

[43] McIntosh, *Church and Theology,* 125.

[44] Ibid., 198.

[45] Broadie, *Scottish Enlightenment,* 118.

[46] Sher, *Church and University,* 61.

[47] McIntosh, *Church and Theology,* 18.

[48] Sher, *Church and University,* 292-297.
[49] Drummond and Bulloch, *The Scottish Church,* 101.
[50] Sher, *Church and University,* 63.
[51] Hugh Blair, "On our Imperfect Knowledge of a Future State," 333.
[52] Ibid., 337.
[53] Broadie, *Scottish Enlightenment,* 149.
[54] Kelly, "Witherspoon, John," 880.
[55] Yeager, "Puritan or enlightened?" 238.
[56] Sher, *Church and University,* 57.
[57] Bebbington, "Enlightenment," 294.
[58] Yeager, "Puritan or enlightened?" 247-252.
[59] Sher, *Church and University,* 160.
[60] Drummond and Bulloch, *The Scottish Church,* 107.
[61] McIntosh, *Church and Theology,* 58-61.
[62] Ibid., 200.
[63] Burleigh, *Church History of Scotland*, 335.
[64] Ibid., 328.
[65] Brown, *The Social History of Religion in Scotland since 1730*, 16.
[66] Torrance, *Scottish Theology*, 238.
[67] Noll, "Revival, Enlightenment, Civic Humanism," 50.

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This paper reconciles Dante's remarkable view of the potency of the free will with his consignment to Limbo of those who had no freedom to choose baptism and avoid such a fate, with reference to the theology of Thomas Aquinas and the legend of the Emperor Trajan.

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Dante, Aquinas, and Trajan:
Reconciling Freedom and Orthodoxy
in *The Divine Comedy*

Josh Jeffrey

Perhaps the single most debated question in the history of Dante scholarship concerns the justice of the fate of Virgil, Dante's guide through the realms of Inferno and Purgatory. Typically, however, this question is divorced from the larger one of which it is only a part: what is the standard of justice which determines the fate of all those who dwell in Limbo, both Virgil's fellow virtuous pagans and the unbaptized infants? Particularly, how can Dante, whose belief in the power of the free will is extraordinary, consign to eternal hopelessness those who had no freedom to choose the baptism that would have saved them? The reputed Dante scholar Manlio P. Stocchi has proposed that this apparent disparity indicates a shaky compromise between the ostensibly orthodox view, which would have condemned them to the *poena sensus*[1] of the deeper regions of hell, and Dante's own respect and love for these ancient writers and philosophers. In this paper I argue a contrary position, drawing upon the theology of St. Thomas Aquinas as a standard for orthodoxy in Dante's time. Dante's depiction of Limbo does not contradict his view of the strength of the *libero arbitrio*,[2] but completes it—and the legend of Emperor Trajan provides the key to this understanding.

The Power of Freedom

The aspect of Dante's own theology that is so difficult to reconcile with the portrayal of Limbo and its inhabitants is his belief in the potency of human free will. In Canto 16 of the *Purgatory*, Dante and

Virgil speak to Mark the Lombard, whose discourse on the nature and cause of evil clearly shows this principle:

> The heavens give your movements their first nudge—
> not all your movements, but let's grant that too—
> still, light is given that you may freely judge
> And choose the good or evil; and should *free will*
> grow weary in the first battles with the stars,
> foster it well and it will win the day.
> You men lie subject to the One *who made*
> *you free. . . .*[3]

This passage sets forth clearly and convincingly Dante's understanding of both free will and predestination. He affirms the existence of both, in accordance with scripture and the works of St. Thomas Aquinas, who discusses them both in the *Summa*.[4] However, while Aquinas discusses them as separate questions and does not focus on their paradoxical relationship, Dante specifically seeks to reconcile the way they interact with each other. The pilgrim Dante, when asking Mark the Lombard to illuminate the cause of sin and evil, points out that "some blame the stars, some fortune here below."[5] The astrologers of Dante's time claimed that the motions and interactions of heavenly bodies were the cause of all human action—thus blaming them for all sin and evil. Yet when Dante writes of the stars or of fortune he is not merely referring to astrology, for he cannot separate the movements of the stars from the Love that moves them.[6] The pilgrim Dante's real question to Mark the Lombard, then, is about the extent and power of divine predestination, and whether men really have freedom to choose the good or the evil. Mark's answer suggests that such predestination is not a rigid controller of human action but a set of initial conditions, within which human free will has almost complete control. All are predestined to certain circumstances and inclinations, but Dante argues that no matter how constraining these may seem, they only give actions "their first nudge;" free will when "fostered well" has the strength to overcome them. It is in light of this remarkable belief in the power of the *libero arbitrio* that Dante's depiction of Limbo is so surprising.

Limbo

Dante presents a unique view of Limbo in that he combines two conceptually different versions of Limbo into one: the *Limbus Patrum* and the *Limbus Infantium*. The *Limbus Patrum*, or the Limbo of the Fathers, is the Latin term for what is called in the gospel of Luke "Abraham's bosom"[7] and in the first letter of St. Peter is called the "prison"[8] to which Jesus descended after his crucifixion to free those who dwelt within. This Limbo, according to Catholic tradition, was emptied completely by the Harrowing of Hell.[9] Aquinas does not refer to it by name, but does make a distinction between the "hell" from which Jesus freed the "holy fathers" and the "hell of the lost" where Christ's visit did not bring liberation but confusion and shame.[10] Ultimately, the *Limbus Patrum* is considered a place of temporary happiness that is replaced by a condition of "final and permanent bliss when the Messianic Kingdom is established."[11]

The *Limbus Infantium* is a different concept entirely. Catholic theologians throughout history have discussed and debated this "children's Limbo" far more often than its counterpart. One of the first discourses on the notion of a *limbus infantium* was offered by St. Gregory Nazianzen in his fortieth oration, which cites three classes of the unbaptized:

> And so also in those who fail to receive the Gift [baptism], some are altogether animal or bestial . . . they have no reverence at all for this Gift . . . others know and honor the gift, but put it off . . . others are *not in a position to receive it,* perhaps on account of infancy, or some *perfectly involuntary circumstance* through which they are prevented from receiving it, even if they wish. . . . I think that . . . the third [of these] will be neither glorified nor punished by the righteous Judge, as unsealed and yet not wicked, but persons who have suffered rather than done wrong.[12]

Most of the other fathers of the church prior to Augustine accepted this or a similar teaching, notable exceptions being Tertullian and St. Ambrose, who go further to say, respectively, that children are entirely innocent and that humans are not judged for original sin, for it is more "an inclination to evil" than sin in a real sense.[13] Augustine himself rejects

this tradition altogether, writing that "that person, therefore, greatly deceives both himself and others, who teaches that [the unbaptized infants] will not be involved in condemnation."[14] For the purposes of this essay, however, it is most beneficial to take a look at the discussion of the subject by St. Thomas Aquinas—primarily as a theologian who best represents the standard of orthodoxy in Dante's day, and secondarily as a man whose writings were so influential to Dante that the scholar is granted not only a place in the Circle of the Wise in Paradise but also more lines of speech than any other character in the *Commedia* apart from Dante himself, Virgil, or Beatrice.

In the *Summa Theologica*, St. Thomas discusses the concept of the *Limbus Infantium* under two separate questions. First, he discusses the actual state of those dying while burdened only by original sin in the very first question in the Appendix to the *Summa*. Here he bases his understanding of the *Limbus* on the very oration of St. Gregory Nazianzen cited above. He further says of the one who dies in only original sin:

> No further punishment is due to him, besides the privation of that end to which the gift withdrawn destined him, which gift human nature is unable of itself to obtain. Now this is the divine vision; and consequently the loss of this vision is the proper and only punishment of original sin after death.[15]

The awareness of this privation of the beatific vision is called the *poena damni*, or pain of loss. In *De Malo*, however, Aquinas clarifies his vision by saying that in fact these unbaptized infants feel neither *poena sensus* nor *poena damni*, but are in a perfect state of natural happiness due to their ignorance of that which they have lost.[16] Second, Aquinas discusses the fate of the unbaptized infants at Christ's Harrowing of Hell, stating emphatically that Christ's descent did not save them because they "had no grace" and "were in no wise sharers of faith in Christ."[17]

Dante seems to differ from the traditional idea of Limbo in his addition of a third group which dwells therein: the virtuous pagans. Virgil tells the pilgrim Dante that these men were "never robed in the three holy virtues, but followed faultlessly the four they knew."[18] Also through Virgil's lips, Dante makes the extraordinary claim that these men "did not sin." They are deprived of the beatific vision not due to faults, but due to the fact that their "merits . . . were not enough," for

they lacked baptism, the "one gate to the faith."[19]

Limbo as described in the *Inferno* is simultaneously both a combination of the two traditional *Limbi* and also, in truth, is neither of them. Dante testifies through Virgil that this Limbo was indeed the holding place for the Old Testament saints prior to the Harrowing of Hell, listing those freed by Christ's coming in Canto 4 of the *Inferno*.[20] He also makes it clear, though he does not dwell long on the subject, that this is the place where the unbaptized infants dwell.[21] Yet Dante's focus in this Limbo is neither as a true *limbus patrum* nor a *limbus infantium* in the orthodox, Thomistic sense: he designs Limbo around the virtuous pagans.

Dante's focus on the virtuous pagans is evident in the very architecture of this Limbo he describes; it is almost identical to the Virgilian Elysium. The correlations between Canto 4 of the *Inferno* and Book 6 of the *Aeneid* are striking: as those souls in Virgil's Elysian fields are granted "open country swept with light,"[22] so the souls in Limbo are granted "a ring of light quelling the darkness that surrounded it."[23] Likewise, just as there are in Elysium green meadows with the rivers of Eridanus and Lethe running through them, so in Dante's Limbo there is a castle surrounded by "a lovely stream" within which is "a fresh green field."[24] This is Dante's great tribute to the art of Virgil and the other ancients, and has led many to criticize him as compromising between his love for them and his Christian orthodoxy.

A Compromise of Orthodoxy?

One such critic, Manlio Stocchi, says:

> We can explain Dante's paradoxical decision [to place the virtuous pagans in Limbo] by reconciling the difficulty of according salvation to pagans with Dante's impulse to love and defer to venerable antiquity, even though antiquity conflicts with Dante's own Christian convictions. The resulting compromise produces an inevitable series of contradictions and ambiguities. . . . Dante surrenders to a fascination for antiquity.[25]

While Stocchi's reading is a compelling one, it disregards several crucial points. First, Dante's addition of the virtuous pagans to his Limbo is not

entirely unsupported by the orthodox theology of his day. Aquinas never directly refers to the concept of virtuous pagans, but his commentary on the Apostles' Creed says that Christ's descent into hell liberated all those therein who "were free from grave personal sin."[26] Such a phrasing does not make this salvation exclusive to the Old Testament fathers, but extends it to any who were held in bondage only through the lack of a baptism to expunge the stain of original sin. The second and still more convincing reason to question Stocchi's understanding is that Dante might have made a compelling case for Virgil's salvation using Thomistic theology, yet he chooses not to—an indication that more than his love for the ancients is at work.

In Aquinas's discussion of Christ's descent into hell in the *Summa*, he points out that two things were necessary for those held in Limbo to be freed. First, they must either be free of grievous personal sins, or else such sins must be justified through faith. Second, they must be partakers in grace, also through faith in Christ. Aquinas uses these two principles to argue that the infants dwelling in the *Limbus Infantium* were not saved in the Harrowing of Hell, for while they were without personal sins, they did not share in faith in Christ; the Old Testament saints, however, were saved because of their implicit faith in the Christ whom they anticipated but did not know.[27] Using these same two principles, Dante could make a deductive argument for Virgil's salvation, having already claimed that the virtuous pagans are "without sin" in Canto 4. To fulfill the second of Aquinas's conditions, he then could turn to Virgil's famous Fourth Eclogue:

> Justice now returns,
> And Saturn's realm, and from high heaven descends
> A worthier race of men. Only do thou
> Smile, chaste Lucina, on the infant boy,
> With whom the iron age will pass away.
> The golden age in all the earth be born. . .
> Though, child shalt know
> The life of gods. . .
> And rule a world by righteous father tamed.
> Monstrous lions [shall] scare they herds no more.
> Serpents shall cease.[28]

The striking similarity between this poem and several passages in the

book of Isaiah elicited many remarks from early Christian scholars, including Augustine, [29] and Dante could ask for no clearer sign of Virgil's faith in the coming Christ than this passage. Accepting it as such would classify at least Virgil, Dante's beloved hero, as one of those held in the *Limbus Patrum* until the Harrowing of Hell and released at Christ's coming. To make such an argument would be simple, yet Dante does not. Stocchi's suggestion that Dante compromises his orthodoxy because of his love of the ancients, then, appears to be unfounded: Dante could justify putting his most beloved figure of antiquity in heaven without any further departures from strict orthodoxy than he has already made, yet he does not. This choice is not the sign of a man whose love for the ancients cripples him and forces him into a "compromise."

The question remains, however: why does Dante, though able to argue deductively for Virgil's salvation, choose not to? The answer is essential for the reconciliation of Dante's radical understanding of free will with his portrayal of Limbo, and it is found in the legend of Emperor Trajan.

The Legend of Trajan

When Virgil recounts the Harrowing of Hell in Canto 4, he says:

> I had just entered in this state
>   when I saw coming One of power and might,
>   crowned with the glorious sign of victory.
> From us he took the shade of our first father,
>   the shades of his son Abel and of Noah. . .
> And many others, and he made them blessed.
>   And I want you to know that, before these,
>   salvation came for not one human soul.[30]

The first striking thing in this passage is the use of the intensifying clause "*vo' che sappi che*," translated here as "I want you to know that." This construction is used only twice in the entire *Commedia*, both times in reference to the Harrowing of Hell and both times from the mouth of Virgil.[31] This intensifying statement is reminiscent of Christ's words, "Verily, verily I say unto you," a clause always used to lend extra weight and importance to the following statement. In this case, Dante seems to be simply emphasizing the fact that there was no salvation possible for

the souls in Limbo before Christ's death. However, the phrase "*dinandi ad essi*," or "before these," is critical. Had Dante used the words "apart from these," it would have entirely changed the meaning of the line. For there is at least one example that Dante knows well of a virtuous pagan who was granted salvation after the Harrowing: the Emperor Trajan.

The legend of Emperor Trajan was well known in Dante's time thanks to Jacobus de Voragine's work, *Legenda Aurea*, or *The Golden Legend*. De Voragine was a Genoese Dominican who compiled a number of well known Christian hagiographies and legends into a single text. The *Legenda* is said to have been "the most popular of books on the Continent of Europe," and Dante may well have felt a special draw to De Voragine due to the friar's involvement in quelling, though briefly, the feud between Guelphs and Ghibellines in Genoa.[32] The account of the legend of Trajan told by Dante in Canto 10 of the *Purgatory* seems to be almost a direct translation of the De Voragine's chapter on the "Life of St. Gregory," suggesting that Dante may have had the *Legenda* in hand or at least in mind while writing.[33] The legend of Trajan is of crucial importance to Dante, as indicated by the fact that he references it both in the *Purgatory* and in the *Paradise*, where Trajan now dwells within the Eagle of Justice.

The implication of the legend of Trajan, understood within the context of Dante's cosmic system, is that it is possible for prayer to raise someone from Limbo to Paradise. Trajan, as a virtuous pagan who lacked faith in Christ, would have been assigned on his death to the circle of Limbo. Yet St. Gregory, after hearing the stories of the emperor's "justice and good deeds," prays for the pagan ruler, who is then raised to heaven. The legend of Trajan is not the only such tale, another being the famous story—written some fifty years after Dante's death—of St. Erkenwald, whose tears for the fate of a long-deceased pagan judge effected a post-mortem baptism and raised him from Limbo to heaven. The pagan himself, as a miraculously animated corpse, says to the Lord,

> I was missing among those whom your misery redeemed,
> with the blood of your body on the black cross.
> When you harrowed the pit of hell and hauled them out,
> all lifting you praise from Limbo, *you left me there*.[34]

This legend indicates clearly that Dante was not the only one of his day who believed that those dwellers in Limbo who were not raised by the

Harrowing could still be freed by the prayers and tears of the living.

Pope Benedict XVI, in a discussion of Limbo while he was still a cardinal, points out that "the very theologians who proposed 'limbo' also said that parents could save the child from Limbo by desiring its baptism and through prayer."[35] Dante applies this truth, along with the salvation of the Emperor Trajan, to the virtuous pagans. Dante's hope is that Limbo is not a final destination, but rather is another path by which those who could not know Christ in life, those who "knew not the three heavenly virtues, but lived flawlessly by those which [they] knew," may still attain salvation.

Understood thus, Dante's view of Limbo does not clash with his view of the power of free will but perfects it. This Limbo is no prison— that is clear enough from its Elysian design—but instead a pleasant holding place, a pagan Abraham's bosom. Yet Christ is not coming to re-harrow this Limbo; he leaves it to his followers to baptize the inhabitants through tears and to appeal with prayers for their acceptance into paradise. Such a baptism cannot provide actual faith to those in Limbo, yet it opens that "gate to the faith" that was closed to them in life. Thus, Dante's Limbo becomes the greatest possible expression of the *libero arbitrio*—a free choice to pray for these virtuous pagans can actually give to them the free choice which they were denied by the circumstances of their life. In the end, as Mark the Lombard proclaims, free will when "fostered well" can win every battle against the stars.

NOTES

[1] *Poena sensus* is physical torment, as opposed to *poena damni,* the pain of the loss of the beatific vision.

[2] The Italian phrase translated as "free will."

[3] *Purg.*, 16.73-80; emphases added.

[4] Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Part 1 Q. 23 Art. 1, Part 1 Q. 83 Art. 1.

[5] *Purg.*, 16.63.

[6] *Par.*, 33.145.

[7] Luke 16:22.

[8] 1 Peter 3:19.

[9] "Limbo," *Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. IX, 256.

[10] Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Part III Q. 52 Art. 2.

[11] "Limbo," *Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. IX, 257.

[12] Gregory, "Oration 40," XXIII; emphases added.

[13] "Limbo," *Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. IX, 257.

[14] Augustine, 26.

[15] Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Appendix 1, Q. 1, Art. 1.

[16] *De Malo*, Q. 5, Art. 3.

[17] Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Part III, Q. 52, Art. 6.

[18] *Purg.*, 7.34-6.

[19] *Inf.*, 4.34-6.

[20] Ibid., 4.52-61.

[21] Ibid., 4.30.

[22] Virgil, *Aen.*, 6.784.

[23] *Inf.*, 4.68.

[24] Ibid., 4.108, 111.

[25] Stocchi, 57.

[26] Aquinas, *Theological Texts,* 263.

[27] Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Part III, Q. 52, Art. 7.

[28] "Eclogue IV," 8-28.

[29] MacCormack, 29.

[30] *Inf.*, 4.52-63.

[31] The second is in Canto 12, when Virgil is explaining the great earthquake that crumbled the walls of hell as Christ breathed his last on the cross.

[32] O'Neill, 3. Dante himself was deeply involved in the quarrels of the Guelphs and the Ghibbelines in his hometown of Florence.

[33] Cf. Jacobus de Voragine 135-6.

[34] *St. Erkenwald,* 273; emphasis added.

[35] Messori, 48.

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Gerard Manley Hopkins wrote a number of beautiful reflective poems which were deeply philosophical as well as religious. Particular themes of Hopkins's poetry reveal the extent to which his philosophy and his theology each reinforced and required the other. Hopkins's Marian poems show his debt not only to the Catholic Church which ordained him, but also to the work of the medieval scholastic Duns Scotus in particular.

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Scotism and Inscape in the Marian Poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins

Brock Scheller

The Victorian Jesuit poet Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844-1889) draws formative poetic inspiration from the Scholastic philosopher and theologian John Duns Scotus (1266-1308) in two closely related ways, namely, in the principle of particularity and the Scotist defense and rationale of the Catholic dogma of the Immaculate Conception. These notions manifest themselves in what Hopkins calls "inscape," particularly in the inscape of Mary found in several poems. By closely examining passages from three of these poems, "Duns Scotus's Oxford," "The May Magnificat," and "The Blessed Virgin Compared to the Air We Breathe," I will illuminate the intimate connection between Hopkins's and Scotus's work. I will also demonstrate that the tropes of motherhood and intercessory power which Hopkins employs are essentially tied to Mary's inscape. Finally, I will explore the continuity that Hopkins's poetry affirms between orthodox Catholic theology and the contributions of Scotus.

A significant dimension of the work of John Duns Scotus involved conclusions which were initially difficult to reconcile with the influential and compelling neo-Aristotelianism of St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274). Identifying a perceived flaw in Aristotle's distinction between form and matter, Allan Wolter asserts the following: "Form seems to become tied down, limited, or individualized through the matter that receives it . . . making the material or its quantitative aspect his principle of individuation."[1] According to this notion, the particularity of an object comes only from its specific material instantiation, leaving

no room for the unique quality of an object apart from its substantial form. That is, an object can be replicated identically, restricted in its duplication only for lack of matter.

While Scotus did not reject the governance of particular objects by universals and classes, he did seek to affirm every object's unique aspect or character, which is not simply reducible to its participation in a substantial form. He argued that "in each individual is an individuating difference which is unique and proper to that individual [. . . and it . . .] is what makes it this, and not that,"[2] indicating that strict material existence of a particular object is logically distinct from the individuality of an object. As "this" is an ostensive term demonstrating particularity and uniqueness, Scotus and his followers "referred to this positive additive that individuates generically as 'haecceity' (*haecceitas*) or 'thisness.'"[3] Because an object's *haecceitas* "is not in any way open to multiple instantiations,"[4] it safeguards the distinctive, irreproducible identity of the object, and affirms that the object is not merely the consequence of a formal cookie cutter. This special particularity implies that "God's creative love wanted just this person or this creature to exist, rather than its twin or perfect copy [. . . and that such particularity. . . .] invests each individual with a special value, quite apart from the type or sort of thing it might be."[5]

In addition to this robust understanding of *haecceitas*, Scotus was an early advocate of the Catholic dogma of the Immaculate Conception. In defending the legitimacy of the doctrine, Scotus was in direct opposition to two towering figures in the thought of the High Middle Ages, St. Bernard of Clairvaux and St. Thomas Aquinas. Scotus was not arguing originally for the sinlessness of Mary against an earlier tradition affirming her fallenness along with the rest of humanity. Rather, the mainstream thinkers of the High Middle Ages believed that Mary had been cleansed from original sin while she was in the womb, and that she never incurred the stain of actual sin; the dispute hinged upon the mode of Mary's sanctification. Bernard, in keeping with the primitive biology of his day, believed that Mary was conceived in sin and was later sanctified in the "quickening," the moment when the rational soul entered the developing fetus more than a month after conception. Though significant, this explanation pales in comparison to its more pointed articulation by Thomas. His objection has to do with the nature of Mary's redemption, as he explains in the Tertia Pars of the *Summa*, question twenty-seven, article two:

> If the soul of the Blessed Virgin had never incurred the
> stain of original sin, this would be derogatory to the dignity
> of Christ, by reason of his being the universal savior of all.
> Consequently after Christ, who as the universal savior of all,
> needed not to be saved, the purity of the Blessed Virgin holds
> the highest place. . . . the Blessed Virgin did indeed contract
> original sin, but was cleansed therefrom before her birth from
> the womb.[6]

The objection claims that Mary could not be immaculately conceived
because she would not then have, along with the rest of fallen humanity,
a moment of sanctification, of redemption from sin according to Christ
the universal savior. Her sanctification, he maintains, still occurs before
her birth, but her conception is not immaculate since it is the immediate
product of fallen carnal sexual union between Mary's parents.[7]

Scotus's argument for the Immaculate Conception affirms the
unique role of Mary as the mother of the Incarnate Word. The modern
Catechism of the Catholic Church[8] explains that

> The "splendour of an entirely unique holiness" by which Mary
> is "enriched from the first instant of her conception" comes
> wholly from Christ: she is "redeemed, in a more exalted fash-
> ion, by reason of the merits of her Son." The Father blessed
> Mary more than any other created person.[9]

Scotus founds his proof on two concepts evident in the Catechism pas-
sage, namely, that Mary occupies the highest place of all merely human
subjects, and that Mary was in a state of grace from birth and thus
incurred no actual sin. After his death, Soctus's rationale was succinctly
articulated by one of his followers as *potuit, decuit, ergo fecit*. Wolter ex-
plains that one must first, "prove the possibility (*potuit*), then the con-
gruity (*decuit*), then the actuality (*fecit*)."[10] That is, Scotus argues that God
was capable of redeeming Mary by freeing her from original sin from
the moment of her conception. In this way, redemption would not only
accord with all which is clearly known of the situation, but also explains
in a more fitting way what is otherwise unclear, though required, namely,
the point at which Mary became sinless. Scotus therefore maintains that
God elected to redeem Mary thus, fulfilling at once the recognition that
Mary, having been redeemed in a manner consonant with her own indi-

vidual and unique nature, is exalted above all other humans after Christ, as well as the necessity that she be "full of grace" and able freely to assent to being the vehicle of Christ's coming into the world. This does not imply that Mary had no need of salvation, for in the *Magnificat* of Luke 1, she rightly praises God as her savior. Rather, her unique salvation consists in her preservation from sin rather than her cleansing from it, as is normative for humanity in the Sacrament of Baptism.

Remarkably, this proof rests on premises and a logical form with which Thomas himself agrees. As seen in Thomas's objection to the Immaculate Conception, he affirms both the distinctive and illustrious place of Mary above all other persons after Christ Himself,[11] as well as the sinlessness of Mary. However, not only the foundations of the proof, but even the argumentative principle, the rationale of *conveniens* or "fittingness," is Thomistic. This rationale is frequently employed in defense of the theological legitimacy of Thomas's answers throughout the *Summa Theologiae*. For instance, in question forty-three, article five of the Prima Pars, he considers "whether it is fitting for the Son to be sent invisibly."[12] The truth of the position hinges for Thomas in part on whether it is appropriate to the divine mode of procession and the principle of charity. Not only is Scotus consistent in justifying the Immaculate Conception of Mary in his terms of *haecceitas*, he even does so in a way which takes the elements of Thomas's opposite position and forms them into a coherent endorsement of the doctrine that solves problems of which Thomas himself is aware.

Gerard Manley Hopkins endorses both of these aspects of Duns Scotus's thought, and he combines them in an organic unity in his own theological development. He takes Scotus's emphasis on *haecceitas*, or particularity, and develops it into his famous notion of "inscape." His sermons and journals demonstrate that his approach to Mariology is deeply informed by Scotus's rationale for the Immaculate Conception. The doctrine of particularity becomes in Hopkins's parlance the appropriately original, specially-created concept of "inscape," the unique, unrepeatable dimension of any individual thing. It is further defined as the "individual or essential quality of a thing; the uniqueness of an observed object, scene, event, etc."[13] Hopkins defends his poetic style by noting how a good composer is recognized "by his distinctive melodies and each painter by his own characteristic designs, so 'design, pattern or what I am in the habit of calling "inscape" is what I above all aim at in poetry.'"[14] Rather than destroying the poetic impulse by de-emphasizing,

in the Thomistic sense, the relational and analogical quality of creation, Hopkins makes inscape an occasion for exploring the concrete beauty and richness of creation through poetry. With its special capacity to express distinctiveness, Hopkins's poetry expresses the inscape of things by demonstrating their simultaneous radical concreteness and reflection of the divine, because "[e]ach separate species (or in man's case, individual) through its inscape reflects some fractional part of God's all-inclusive perfection."[15] Poetry becomes the ideal mode of exploring an object, for it at once indicates its irreducibly specific quality and the way in which this quality testifies to God's perfect love in his creation.

Hopkins is further formed by Scotus's defense of Mary's Immaculate Conception. In one sense, Hopkins could not help but endorse Scotus's conclusion, since as a faithful Catholic he would honor the infallible 1854 *ex cathedra* pronouncement by Pope Pius IX of the doctrine as official dogma and article of faith.[16] The Catholic Church's present articulation of the doctrine asserts that, "Mary, 'full of grace' through God, was redeemed from the moment of her conception."[17] However, more than merely accepting the position, Hopkins affirms the Subtle Doctor's rationale:

> He followed Scotus in insisting on the role of Christ in bestowing this honor on his Mother: "The Blessed Virgin was saved and redeemed by Christ her son not less than others but more, for she was saved from even falling but they were let fall and yet recovered (that is / redeemed): now, as the proverb says, prevention is better than cure."[18]

In this characterization, Mary's salvation is justified by suitability, according to Christ's superior and special manner of redeeming his own mother. Hopkins's Scotist interpretation of the doctrine is more explicit as he describes the peculiar case of Mary as "beyond all others redeemed, because it was her more than all other creatures that Christ meant to win from nothingness and it was her that he meant to raise the highest."[19] This accords with the orthodox notion of the supreme place of Mary among redeemed humanity, but goes farther, for the doctrine can be explained according to Mary's unique position in preeminence, as an essential aspect of her inscape.

Hopkins reveals the implications of Mary's inscape in several of his poems, including the last three lines of the aptly titled poem

"Duns Scotus's Oxford." Here, he explicitly articulates the relationship of Marian theology to the work of Scotus, writing that, "Of realty the rarest-veinèd unraveller; a not / rivalled insight, be rival Italy or Greece / Who fired France for Mary without spot" (12-14). Hopkins praises Duns Scotus for being the "rarest-veinèd unraveller" or the most delicate explicator of reality, superior to his rivals in Italy (Thomas) and Greece (Aristotle). The final line describes "the heroic defense offered by Scotus against strong opponents to the teaching . . . . Single-handedly, Scotus turned the tide by lecturing on the Immaculate Conception at Oxford and carrying the day at a previously hostile Paris."[20] His inspiring support of "Mary without spot," literally *immaculate* in the etymological sense of having no *macula*, or stain, of sin, was enough to convince France and eventually the Church. Thus, Hopkins's understanding of Scotist contributions, both to concepts of particularity and to Mariology, is bound up together in the concluding lines of the poem.

In his poem "The May Magnificat," Hopkins explores how the inscape of May is fittingly related to Mary's own inscape, developing the similarity between the special motherhood of Mary and the "mothering" fecundity of the world of spring by explaining "why we associate the month of May with Mary."[21] The last stanza, the poet's definitive answer to the association of Mary and May, reveals that, "this ecstasy all through mothering earth / Tells Mary her mirth till Christ's birth / To remember and exultation / In God who was her salvation" (45-49). In other words, the joy which Mary has in God as her savior lies in her very nature as immaculately conceived and intended for this purpose, and extends back before "Christ's birth," though essentially linked to her role as Christ's mother. This sharing in the divine life is only possible "because she alone among humans was in her mother's womb conceived immaculate, with no stain of sin, no tendency towards evil."[22] In her joy in God as her savior, in her motherhood of Christ, and especially in the uniquely exalted nature of her redemption through the Immaculate Conception, Mary "embodies the meaning of the great sacrifice, its purpose and aim; she is Christ's most perfect inscape."[23] Not only does Hopkins express what is unique and individual about Mary by articulating her inscape, but he also fulfills the other essential aspect of every inscape in relating it to the creative love of God, especially so in the exalted case of Mary.

"The Blessed Virgin Compared to the Air We Breathe," which is the longest of Hopkins's Marian poems, develops Mary's inscape with

regard to the Immaculate Conception. Inscape in general is indicated from the first word "wild," as it is then repeated throughout the poem, which "as elsewhere in Hopkins, indicates the freedom with which a being expresses its own nature."[24] However, a particular dimension of inscape which depends upon Scotus's foundational work in defining *haecceitas* is significant in this poem: the concrete reality in which a thing's inscape and all its characteristics inhere. This model of inscape applies especially to Mary, as her particular, concrete acceptance of God's will was essential for the particular Incarnation of God in the person of Jesus Christ, and "by *this* inspiration, this indwelling she could in time deliver *that* word, distinctive, a fleshing-forth of that *yes*."[25]

Hopkins responds to a common objection to Mary's having a true, concrete nature, writing that, "Mary Immaculate, / Merely a woman, yet / Whose presence, power is / Great as no goddess's / Was deemèd, dreamed" (25-29). He means to affirm her "presence" and "power" as greater than pagan goddesses not only in her being more majestic and perfect, but also in her being a particular person with true existence:

> The deemers and dreamers Hopkins has first in mind are those who, in the pagan (rather, pseudo-pagan) tradition which rooted in the Renaissance, considered the devotion accorded to Mary in the Catholic Church a continuation of the devotion once accorded to female deities, or a revival of such devotion. The Mary of Catholics they considered to be pretty much on the level of the Diana of Ephesus or the Venus of Rome. . . . For them, Mary ceased to be a real woman and became instead an idea, a symbol, a product of the human imagination.[26]

As opposed to this pagan tradition, which imposes its own categories onto the product of the imagination, Hopkins struggles to depict faithfully a being whose inscape has been established in a personal reality. Mary is not merely the occasion for lofty metaphors bundled together in abstraction. The created quality of all being reflects in some way the authorship of God, but Mary, not only in her role in the Incarnation but also in her lofty nature as immaculately conceived, especially reveals divine love and perfection, "the core of Hopkins' vision of reality and the center of his thought and action and the power which fuses his profoundest metaphors."[27]

As his metaphors come to life in a concrete person, this impulse

turns into a direct prayer to her; the second-person language marks a turn not to an abstraction but to a dynamic and significant personality. John Delli-Carpini articulates this shift to prayer, claiming that "the final stanza is Hopkins's prayer to Mary, who is as essential to his spirit as air is to his lungs . . . [He] looks to the sinless virgin in which to be 'isled,' and in her mantle, to be 'fast-fold[ed]' where he can hear from her of God's love."[28] Mary's preeminent inscape also features this special intercessory role, one of her many qualities which Hopkins explores in his poems, including Mary as a personal and yet universal mother, as the mother of all graces, and so forth. Hopkins expresses in his Marian poems "his trust in her unshakeable love and her intercessory power for him personally, his need to share in her 'fiat' of Nazareth, Bethlehem, Calvary, the present moment, throughout time."[29] This *fiat*, Mary's acceptance of the will of God, is not only the basis for such intercessory power and motherly love, but is essentially rooted in the Immaculate Conception as a precondition and thus as the ground of her inscape.

John Duns Scotus revolutionized the theology of his time by affirming the irreducible particularity of things and by applying this notion to justify the doctrine of Mary's Immaculate Conception. Though he was opposed to some aspects of the prevailing Thomistic positions on these matters, his solution was such that it ultimately accorded with the spirit and logic of Thomas's work overall. Hopkins's poems examined here are strongly influenced by his understanding of the Scotist underpinnings of Marian particularity in the Immaculate Conception. It is this particularity which makes possible her many superior qualities by preventing her from incurring the stain of original and actual sin, through the grace of God and the redemptive power of Jesus Christ.

NOTES

[1] Wolter, 27.

[2] Ibid., 28.

[3] Ibid. He also calls this principle the *forma individualis*, *ultimus gradus formae*, *entitas positiva*, and, in an alternate spelling, *haeceitas*. See Williams, 119.

[4] Williams, 119.

[5] Wolter, 29.

[6] Ibid., 57.

[7] Ibid.

[8] John Henry Cardinal Newman, the great nineteenth-century Anglican convert to Roman Catholicism who influenced Hopkins's own conversion, explains the development of the doctrine: "it was *implied* in early times, and never *denied*. In the Middle Ages, it *was* denied by St. Thomas and St. Bernard, but they took the phrase in a different sense from that which the Church now takes it. They understood it with reference to Our Lady's mother." See Newman, 14.

[9] *United States Catholic Catechism for Adults* 492, pg. 138.

[10] Wolter, 64.

[11] The role of Mary is distinct in a special way above the saints, though still infinitely below the divinity of Christ. This is affirmed in Catholic doctrine with its distinction between *dulia*, the reverence due to the angels and saints in general, and *hyperdulia*, the different tier of reverence reserved for Mary alone. Both of these, however, are of a different and lower kind of reverence than *latria*, the worship and adoration which belongs to God alone.

[12] Thomas Aquinas and Pegis, ed. 418.

[13] MacKenzie, 232.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Ibid., 233.

[16] Even the nature of the pronouncement, history's first *ex cathedra* statement, accords with Hopkins's understanding of the relation of the doctrine to Mary's unique particularity. It is fitting that the formal declaration of the Immaculate Conception as doctrine is itself an instance of especial particularity, being solemnized by the sole office of the Papacy, without an ecumenical or even regional council, as is typical for the articulation of dogma in the Church.

[17] *United States Catholic Catechism for Adults* 491, pg. 138

[18] Cotter, 132.

[19] Ibid., 133.

[20] Ibid., 132.

[21] Downes, 92.

[22] Boyle, 57.

[23] Cotter, 133.

[24] MacKenzie, 157.

[25] Mariani, 56 (emphasis in original).

[26] Boyle, 54.

[27] Ibid., 65.

²⁸ Delli-Carpini, 15.
²⁹ Boyle, 56.

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