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The Mercersburg Society has been formed to uphold the concept of the Church as the Body of Christ, Evangelical, Reformed, Catholic, Apostolic, organic, developmental and connectional. It affirms the ecumenical Creeds as witnesses to its faith and the Eucharist as the liturgical act from which all other acts of worship and service emanate.

The Society pursues contemporary theology in the Church and the world within the context of the Mercersburg tradition. In effecting its purpose, the Society provides opportunities for fellowship and study for persons interested in Mercersburg Theology, sponsors an annual convocation, engages in the publication of articles and books, stimulates research and correspondence among scholars on topics of theology, liturgy, the sacraments and ecumenism.
The **New Mercersburg Review** is designed to publish the proceedings of the annual convocation as well as other articles on the subjects pertinent to the aims and interests of the Society.

From the Editor

During the past year Jeffrey Roth, John Shelter and R. Howard Paine have all entered the Church Triumphant. They freely offered their special gifts to the work of The Mercersburg Society. This issue is dedicated to their memory.

We apologize that we have not had an issue of ***The New Mercersburg Review*** since the Spring issue of 2005. The present issue promises to be worth the wait. It contains essays from our June 2007 Convocation entitled: **"Andover Meets German Theology: Two Reformed Cousins, Two Centuries Later"** which took place at South Church, UCC in Andover MA.

Gabriel Fackre, Ph.D., preached on "The Church of John." If the Roman Catholic Church is "The Church of Peter" and the Church of the Reformation is "The Church of Paul," then Mercersburg theologians long for "The Church of John." Dr. Fackre is Abbot Professor of Christian Theology, Emeritus at Andover-Newton Theological School in Newton Center, MA. He is author of a five volume systematic theology that began with the popular Christian Story.

Peter Schmiechen, Ph.D., was President and Professor of Theology at Lancaster Seminary from 1985 to 2002. Dr. Schmiechen's latest publication is ***Saving Power: Theologies of the Atonement and Forms of the Church*** on Eerdmans. His essay outlines the importance of understanding the connection between incarnation and atonement. From Athenasius and Abelard through Schleiermacher, Schmiechen demonstrates the significance of incarnation for Mercersburg.

Clifford B. Anderson is the Curator of Special Collections at Princeton Theological Seminary. He received M.Div. from Harvard Divinity School in 1995. Anderson's discussion of the doctrine of the Trinity moves from Schleiermacher to Moses Stuart to Karl Barth's work on the Trinity in ***Church Dogmatics I***.

The Rev. Kenneth Aldrich, D. Min. is a retired Episcopalian priest living in Huntingdon, PA. His book review compares N.T. Wright new book to C.S. Lewis' ***Mere Christianity***.

May this collection be a blessing to all of us who seek to be Evangelical, Reformed and Catholic.

Feast of The Reign of Christ Rev. Dr. F. Christopher Anderson

The Church of John

Gabriel Fackre

1 Corinthians 12: 14-21, 29 John 17: 20-23

"The Church of John." Folks here will recognize that title immediately as from the mouth of Mercersburg theologians. You will remember they saw the church universal moving over time from the "Church of Peter (Rome) through the Church of Paul (the Reformation) to their vision of how things could someday rightly be in the ecumenical "Church of John." (While this distinction may well have gone back to Schelling, they put their own stamp on it.)

Thus any future authentic Church that embodied their evangelical catholicity would have to include the best of "the church of hope" (Rome…and given their writings on the Fathers the East, Constantinople too), the best of "the church of faith" (the Reformers). And the Johannine "Church of Love" would be the culmination that brings those gifts from each into a mutuality reflecting the very triune Life Together that God is. So our much quoted John 17: 20-21: "that they my all be one, as you Father am in me and I in you…"

But what does all this have to do with this occasion—the meeting of theologians and theologies of Mercersburg and Andover? How can we think them together in any such loving conjunction when Mercersburgers lambasted the "Puritans," and the Andover missionary bands were more into evangelizing the Sandwich Islands rather than catechizing the Pennsylvania anxious benchers?

Well, could someone who comes from both of these traditions preach at an opening Eucharist about such an unlikely mutuality? Maybe someone who was a pastor and teacher in the Mercersburg land of the former E&R Church for 20 years, and then taught on the Andover Newton faculty for 25 years? Well there are hints of such a Johannine amity in other odd conjunctions. After all, Schaff did give a course of lectures at Andover. And our own Herb Davis did give his whole set of ***Mercersburg Reviews*** to the Andover Newton library. And a carload of pastors from New

England did make their way to New Brunswick in 1983 to help found, with Pennsylvania sisters and brothers, this Mercersburg Society. Then the very next year, the Mercersburg Society joined with a bunch of New England Tabletalkers and the "BTL" to launch the Craigville theological colloquies now in their 24th year. (Some of the back-and-forthers are here tonight.) Are these unusual partnerships portents of what might someday happen in the Church of John? .

Now in an Andover Eucharist we are from diverse traditions coming together with Jesus Christ at the Table. And that does make this little patch of Christian life together, in some sense, a "church of John." But let's pursue that small latent unity here and now, and see what a patent unity in a larger Church of John might look like beyond this Table. And let's try to do it with the utter honesty these two diverse forebears would expect of us. After all,the great Uniter, Jesus Christ, is a Lord of tough love as well as tender love. And so were his witnesses at Mercersburg and Andover. None of this "sloppy Agape!"

For example, tough talk about this Eucharist itself as in the Mercersburg-influenced E&R liturgy:

> Being of such a sacred nature it is plain that the table of the Lord can be rightly approached only by those who are of a truly devout, repentant and believing mind. These holy mysteries are not for the worldly, the irreverent or the indifferent……not because they are sinners, but because they are unrepentant sinners, not because they are unworthy, but because they eat and drink unworthily not discerning the Lord's Table. [1]

And Andover? Yes, some strange and too strident declarations about who is in and who is out of that 1807 school. So the vow of the first faculty:

> I do solemnly promise that I will open and explain the Scriptures …in opposition not only to atheists and infidels but [among others] to Jews, Papists Arians, Pelagians, Antinomians Arminians, Socinians, Sabellians, Unitarians and Universalists , and to all other heresies which may be opposed to the gospel of Christ and are hazardous to the souls of men.[2]

Whew!

But inflammatory rhetoric aside-- and indeed such tempered by, for example, the anti-supersessionist commitments of a 1987 UCC General Synod vis-a-vis the Jewish people, or by the Augsburg accord of 1999 between the so-called "Papists" and World Lutheranism[3]— Andover's birth celebrated by us here was a case of tough love--a painful separation from Harvard in 1807 in order to train its clergy in the Trinitarian faith. Unity in the Church of John , whether it's Mercersburg or the original Andover, entailed an ability to say "No!" as well as "Yes!"

How different this understanding of what it takes to have a Church of John than so much of today's talk of a unity. For example, the promotion here and there of a so-called "open table" with no Christological norms, or a church ...or a seminary, so wedded to the slogan of diversity that a Trinitarian and Christological faith is no longer the framework for diversity! And how can we take seriously our own grounding of ecclesial unity in John 17:20,21 without keeping in mind the scandalous particularity of John 14:6: "I am the way, the truth and the life and no one comes to the Father except by me"?

This toughness of Agape is eminently clear in our Pauline epistle that should is rightly partnered with tonight's Johannine passage on unity. Interestingly, past-UCC president Avery Post, chose these same two lections for his farewell homily at the retirement of Diane Kessler as the splendid leader of the Massachusetts Council of Churches three weeks ago in Worcester. And, again, interestingly, 1807 Abbot professor Mark Heim chose the epistle lesson for his baccalaureate sermon at the dedication of the new Wilson chapel at Andover Newton two weeks ago. Of course, the lesson for Easter 7 was the passage from John, as well. So such things must be much on our mainline church minds these

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[1] "Order for Holy Communion," *The Hymnal* (St. Louis: Eden Publishing House, 1941), 21.

[2] In Everett Carleton Herrick, ***Turns Again Home: Andover Newton Theological School and Reminiscences from an Unkept Journal*** (Boston The Pilgrim Press, 1949), 22.

[3] ***The Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification***

days. But when we hear them preached upon, let's listen hard for the toughness of ecclesial love, as in the admonitory word of Paul: "The eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of you…On the contrary…." (1 Cor. 12: 21, 22).

Well some will recognize this concern about the linkage of admonitory with hospitality as that of the note struck in the 1997 Formula of Agreement voted on by four national Churches: the ELCA, PCUSA, the RCA and the UCC, that formula featuring the words, "mutual affirmation and mutual admonition." I remember the late evening session in 1991 when that language appeared as out of nowhere after an intense exchange among 6 Reformed and 6 Lutheran theologians saying in so many words: there will be no compromise in this agreement on the warnings needed to be given by each to the other. The Reformed are going to accent and offer their historic commitment to the divine sovereignty and all that means: "no domesticating deity in the communion elements, no restricting the sovereignty of Christ to the Church and diminishing his rule over the political, social, and economic terrain. No giving up on the possibilities of sanctification in the Christian life or in public history. You Lutherans had better pay attention to these things in any possible full communion agreement! "And the Lutherans, in turn, saying to us: "You people had better listen clearly to our emphasis on the divine solidarity of Christ with his church and thus his real presence in the Eucharist. No Zwinglian distancing of Christ from the bread, wine and action will do, no severing the Head from the Body of Christ. And no forgetting *simul iustus et peccator* in the Christian life, or the persistence of sin in public history, and thus in both cases succumbing to uncritical assumptions about unfettered growth in self or society." These mutual warnings are of a piece with Pauline strictures about imperial claims made by the parts of the Body of Christ and thus the absolute need in any attempts at unity for mutual admonitions as well as .mutual affirmations.

And just what about those mutual affirmations? They too can be made only by a love that is tough as well as tender. So the Lutherans told the UCC when they dropped us out of the Reformed-Lutheran dialogue in 1987 because of our perceived theological promiscuity, and then acceded reluctantly to a protracted meeting in

New York in the fall of 1987 with a UCC contingent explaining whether, and in what sense, this denomination might be considered a "confessional Church." and on that espoused the doctrine of justification.[4] After an intense all-day session, with RCA and Presbyterian theologians looking on while UCC theologians read papers to ELCA representatives on what their corporately voted present texts actually said, as well as what their historic texts declared, most of the Lutherans muttered,. "OK. Come on back in." Then these four traditions resumed their inquiry into what the essentials were which might make mutual affirmation possible. Those were tough times, and rightly so as these Churches worked toward an update and slight revision of Rupert Meldinius' famous 17th century aphorism: in essentials, unity—mutual affirmation; in perspectives, diversity—mutual admonition; in all things charity—another trilogy that makes up a Church of John.[5]

On getting clear about the toughness of core affirmations, Ted Trost has it right in a point made in his year-long research of the UCC "God is Still Speaking" campaign, when he contrasts one of its slogans that "no matter where you are on life's journey, you're welcome here," with Jesus' own very different posture, proclaiming the coming of the joyful but demanding reign of God with its very tough call to repentance.

So how do these New Testament passages and their import relate to this convocation of Mercersburg and Andover? And more: could what is said here about two streams of Christian history make some sort of contribution to the wider Church?

A good case could be made concerning Corinthian mutual admonition and complementary matters with respect to these two traditions. For example, Mercersburg gave high profile to the Incarnation while Andover rang the changes on the Atonement, very different accents. But would one be open to the other? Richard Wentz points out in his study of Nevin, that Nevin responded to Dorner's criticism about the lack of the atonement teaching in the

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[4] See papers by Louis Gunnemann, Charles-Hambrick-Stowe and Gabriel Fackre in *New Conversations* (Winter/Spring, 1988).

[5] The story and substance to be found in Keith F. Nickle and Timothy Lull, eds., *A Common Calling: The Witness of Our Reformation Churches in North America Today* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1993).

Mercersburg theology that,for Mercersburg, "the liturgy was 'baptized' in the atoning sacrifice…bathed in it from beginning to end."[6] And, yes, Andover's accent was on the Atonement as the saving Work of Christ that had to be spread fervently across the oceans. Yet the split of 1807 had to do with the deity of Jesus Christ, and therefore a fundamental assumption about the Incarnation. And interestingly, yes, a similar distinction in accents (as in Incarnation and Atonement) occurs regarding ministry. Mercersburg treats ministry as of the *esse* of the church, its very being (though not ,of course, ministry in apostolic succession), but Andover in following the Cambridge Platform considers it only of the *bene esse* of the church—only its well-being, giving ecclesial primacy to the laity as congregation. Yet Mercersburg theologian Emanuel Gerhart, for all his emphasis on the office of the pastor, was at pains to assert in detail the "dignity and authority of the laymen."[7] Meanwhile, Andover, functionally, from the beginning placed great stress on the training of clergy and thus sought to avoid the tendencies of the times to let the spontaneities and enthusiasms that swept through the laity to marginalize the learned minister. Accents in one tradition do not preclude openness to those of an ecclesial other. Indeed, where there is an ecumenical impulse toward the Church of John, there is a readiness to listen for, and learn from , them, recognizing that the Body is made up of many parts and not reducible to one's own historic charism.

But before there is any talk of openness to mutual admonition, there must be, as noted, a foundational mutual affirmation. That means each party has to be able to recognize in the other a common core of convictions— "in essentials, unity." Is there evidence of such? Yes. For one, the common commitment to a Trinitarian faith, linking both to such a non-negotiable in any wider ecumenism. So too, historic unity on the scandal of Christological particularity, so important in today's drift in too many places toward an uncritical pluralism, yet at the same time a place in each tradition for the premise of their shared historic Reformed

[6] Cited in Richard Wentz, ***John Williamson Nevin: American Theologian*** New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 141.

[7] Emanuel Gerhart, ***Institutes of the Christian Religion,*** Vol. 2 (New York; Funk and Wagnall, 1894), 528.

heritage's assertion of a "common grace," preserving though not saving, a grace that is able to honor truth, goodness, beauty and holiness wherever found.

Yet another commonality that underscores a Reformed cousinship is their mutual affirmation of the three-fold office of Christ—prophetic, priestly and royal-- that can be found in both the 19th century Mercersburg theology with its Heidelberg catechism background and the Andover theologians' writings grounded in Congregational creeds and platforms, a stress on the *munus triplex* still current today, as in the chapters in Scott Paeth's 2006 UCC collection: ***Who Do Say That I Am?*** in essays on the importance of the three-fold office by Andover cum Congregational heir, Max Stackhouse, and Mercersburg cum E&R heritage heir, Lee Barrett.[8]

But let's face it. A true Church of Love, the ultimate in catholicity, would entail both Mercersburg and Andover moving beyond their own, finally, tiny constituencies. Such an encompassing Church of John would have to include most of the rest of Christendom. That would mean the billion plus of Rome and Constantinople—the Church of Hope, and, perhaps even more challenging, some parts of the Church of Faith that seem strange to old-line Reformation Churches-- the pentecostal and evangelical fires and fevers of the global south which, Phillip Jenkins tells us, is where the majority of Christian believers will someday be in the 21st century. Any kind of future Church of Love will have to come to terms with these two multitudes. Can a sacramental Mercersburg have anything to do with these evangelical and Pentecostal effervescences? Can an Andover tradition of congregational autonomy have anything to do with apostolic succession? Or make it even harder by turning the question around: can a Ratzinger who

[8] See Max Stackhouse, "The Office s of Christ from Early Church Through the Reformers," and Lee Barrett, "Christology in the English and Continental Reformations," both in Scott Paeth, ed., ***Who Do You Say I am? Christology and Identity in the United Church of Christ*** (Cleveland: United Church Press, 2006), 25-41 and 42-65. My own essay in the same book also deals with the *munus triplex.* Indeed, a UCC theologian who has worked on both sides of the historic traditions has written an entire volume on it, indeed, connecting it with the Trinitarian core to which earlier reference was made, Robert Sherman, ***King, Priest and Prophet*** (New York: T&T Clark International, 2004)..

not so long ago bewailed a neo-congregationalism he felt was making inroads into his own Church have anything to do with Andover and its heirs?[9] Or can Pentecostals aflame with their faith have anything to do with what they consider are the old-line Church's dying embers of rites and rituals? All this seems to make talk of a Church of John well beyond the borders of Mercersburg and Andover sheer utopianism. I expect that is so in my time and no doubt in all of yours as well. But wait a minute. What are we to make of these recent remarks of Cardinal Walter Kasper?

> The Catholic Church is…wounded by the divisions of Christianity….Several aspects of being church are better realized in other churches. So we can learn from each other in order to grow in the one truth of Jesus Christ….Thus since the Council we Catholics learned a lot from our Protestant brothers and sisters about the importance of the word of God and its proclamation…The *oikoumene* is not about a way backwards but about a way forwards by mutual exchange… Ecumenism is no one-way street, but a reciprocal learning process—as stated in the Encyclical *Ut unum sint*—an exchange of gifts.[10]

Now, how about that? And Cardinal Kasper walked the walk as well as talked the talk because he was instrumental in bringing to be the accord between Lutherans and Roman Catholics on the doctrine of justification, something of that miracle of mutuality, indeed precisely one that had in it both mutual affirmations and mutual admonitions.[11]

If a cardinal of Rome, indeed, its ecumenical officer, can acknowledge his own Church's need to listen to the ecclesial "other," and learn from it, how dare we not do the same? Especially

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[9]Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger with Vitterio Messori, The Ratzinger Report: An ***Exclusive Interview on the State of the Church*** (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1985), 45-46, 156-157.

[10] Cardinal Walter Kasper, "Present-Day Problems in Ecumenical Theology," in ***Reflections, Volume 6: The 2003 Public Lectures*** (Princeton Center of Theological Inquiry), 56,88.

[11] See The Roman Catholic Church and the Lutheran World Federation, ***The Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification*** (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co, 1999).

the heirs of Mercersburg that dreamed of that Church of Love to be! And the same thing is the case if we are to go by the 200th anniversary professedly ecumenical heirs of Andover seminary! Just so, how dare we not look for the day of the Church of John with its loving mutualities of affirmation and admonition. And set up signs here and now on the path toward it? And to make such a sign, to the Table together we go to be with the Christ who prays to the Father for that day when we shall all be one.

Amen

Incarnation and Atonement, with special reference to Schleiermacher and Mercersburg

Peter Schmiechen

This discussion of atonement and incarnation will focus on several themes: First, the need to change the way we think about atonement. The conventional wisdom is that there is either one big theory of atonement (penal substitution) or three theories named by Gustaf Aulen in his landmark book of 1931: ***Christus Victor***. As we shall see, both of these options present us with serious problems. The most serious is that they restrict our vision of the many ways in which the saving power of God in Christ meets human need. The New Testament and Christian traditions offer us a far richer set of images and theories.

Second, I want to explore the relation of atonement and incarnation. It is my contention that the witnesses to saving power in Christ make clear that incarnation is the inevitable and necessary consequence. Moreover, once this conclusion is reached, the theological affirmation of incarnation begins to function as a presupposition for what may be called the Christian re-thinking of God, human life, sin and salvation, and the redeemed life.

Both of these interests relate directly to Mercersburg. Unless we expand our view of atonement, there is no consideration of the view of Christ in the Mercersburg tradition. It was the distinctive genius of Mercersburg to take as its starting point the incarnation and the new life Christ initiates. While its view of atonement includes forgiveness of sins, the conquest of demonic power and the demonstration of divine love, it shifts the emphasis to participation in the spiritual life which enlivens the church as the Body of Christ. In order to see the distinctive character of Mercersburg's approach to atonement, we need to expand the entire framework for understanding atonement.

In a related way, Mercersburg becomes a wonderful example of a theological tradition that takes incarnation as its starting point and treats atonement and incarnation as inseparable. When we explore Mercersburg from this perspective, it will not

surprise us that its lineage takes us back to three other theological figures who also take incarnation as the starting point: Athanasius, Anselm and Schleiermacher.

I. Rethinking Atonement

Let us begin with the standard options regarding atonement: either there is one theory or the three outlined by Gustaf Aulen. If the only theory is that of penal substitution, we are in serious trouble, in spite of its elevation by so many to a position of doctrinal inerrancy. It is flawed for two reasons: First, it makes God into a passive, angry deity, waiting for the scales of retributive justice to be balanced by the death of the innocent Jesus in payment for the sins of the world. Second, it isolates the death of Jesus and makes it into something of intrinsic value demanded by God. It is very difficult to find this view in the teaching of Jesus or elsewhere in the Bible, where salvation is always presented as the action of a gracious God to redeem fallen humanity. Now it may well be that while many affirm penal substitution, they do not necessarily subscribe to the rigorous version of Charles Hodge, where punishment must precede forgiveness, or even the bloody version of Mel Gibson's ***The Passion of Christ***. It is quite possible that many hold a softer version, wishing to affirm that Jesus died for me and in my place, or that I am redeemed by his life and death. Nevertheless, the theory of penal substitution violates so many of our evangelical and theological values that it is difficult to endorse.

But things do not get better in Aulen's proposal that there are three theories: a transactional view linked to Anselm, a subjective view tied to Abelard, and a classical view named Christus Victor. The transactional or penal view is rejected by Aulen for reasons already noted. But Aulen also judges it to be Pelagian, since it is the human Jesus who offers his life to God. This human act is repeated ever after by faithful believers in the Roman Mass, as a work lifted up to God to earn our salvation. The subjective view is rejected because nothing really happens in the world except for a declaration of God's love, given solely to change our hearts. To paraphrase Aulen, the entire gospel story is thus reduced to a postcard from heaven: "God loves you, wish you were here, Love, God." Having rejected these two views, Aulen then

lays out what he calls the classic view, running from Paul through Irenaeus to Luther, wherein the Victorious Christ conquers sin, death and the devil. Note then what has happened: first we are presented with the generous offer of three views, but then the three are reduced to one and we are back at another form of imperialism where all atonement theology is reduced to one view.

The consequences of either of these approaches—one or three reduced to a new one—are disastrous for faith, preaching and theology. When pastors become convinced that atonement is about a vindictive God who takes satisfaction in the death of Jesus, many choose to skip the subject. The result, however, is confusion and lack of conviction regarding the cross. No wonder so many turn to syrupy moralism and platitudes as advice to believers on their personal spiritual journey toward self-fulfillment. But even Aulen's proposal fails to open the door to the many forms of saving power, since everything is reduced to his Lutheran version of Christus Victor. In the end we are left without any clarity regarding the many ways the New Testament speaks of saving power in relation to the numerous forms of human brokenness or the profound tensions within the God who wills the redemption of the world.

To get beyond this imperialism of one or three, I propose that we recognize that the New Testament and Christian traditions provide us with many theories. By a theory of atonement I mean a comprehensive interpretation of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ as the demonstration of God's saving power. To test this thesis I have isolated at least eleven theories of atonement which are distinct in terms of original image as well as comprehensive theory. (See Appendix 1.) I have included Penal Substitution because it is held by so many Christians, in spite of the fact that it is deeply flawed and in need of major reconstruction. With the exception of this theory, all of the theories are positive and complement one another rather than exclude one another. This is the case because they speak to different issues, either in the human condition or in God. For example, there really is a difference between sin and the resultant guilt versus bondage to oppressive powers. A guilty person needs to be forgiven, a person suffering from shame needs to be liberated.

I am proposing that we change the way we think about atonement, namely, that the grace of God meets human need in many ways, always revealing something about God and ourselves. But it is impossible to adopt this new approach without liberating ourselves from the rigid confines presented by Aulen. His perspective has been codified in general works of theology and seminary curricula, appears endlessly in sermons and the media, and now reappears in recent books on Atonement (cf. works by Weaver, Boersma and Heim). The irony of Aulen's approach is that at one point he actually recognizes that R. Hermann interprets Anselm in a radically different way as the restoration of creation rather than penal substitution. But such an alternative would destroy Aulen's tripartite scheme for interpreting all of Christian history. Bear in mind that Aulen wrote in 1931, a time when Protestants were waging war against a Catholicism judged to be Pelagian and a modern liberalism judged to be humanistic. Thus it was a handy rhetorical device to identify Anselm with Catholicism, with its Pelagian tendencies, and Abelard with modern liberalism, with its tendency to reduce the gospel to the simple teachings of Jesus. Aulen's three types thus become symbols of Pelagian Catholicism, modern liberalism and Protestant Orthodoxy, linked to Irenaeus and Paul. Given the entrenched nature of Aulen's perspective, it may indeed take an act of God to change the minds of many people. While we wait for divine arbitration of this dispute, let me make the case why Aulen is incorrect in attributing penal substitution to Anselm.

First, Aulen assumes that since Anselm places satisfaction at the center of his argument, therefore Anselm must affirm penal substitution. This, however, does not follow, since many writers use the word satisfaction in quite different ways. This is precisely the case with Anselm. R. W. Southern argues that Anselm is thoroughly medieval: the creation consists of layers of inter-connected relations, obligations and duties, displaying both a moral order and infinite beauty, all working in harmony and giving honor to God (***Saint Anselm***, pp. 221-227). But sin has destroyed the harmony of the universe and dishonored God. Such disorder God can not permit because it disrupts God's purpose for the creation. If God were to allow this to continue, it would mean that God has

turned aside from the divine purpose or is unable to achieve it. But what is to be done? Anselm lays out two options: satisfaction may be achieved by *either punishment or restoration*. While it appears that these two options are equally possible, we soon discover that for Anselm there really is no choice: *God must restore the creation.*

This is the crucial point in the entire treatise and it leads to two conclusions:

a) if satisfaction must take the form of restoration, then we are led to the incarnation, which makes possible the liberation of humanity from death, the overthrow of the devil, the restoration of the creation as well as the honor of God. Any thought of punishment leading to penal substitution is completely set aside.

b) While we may think Anselm made the right choice, he must pay a price that even he does not acknowledge. Recall that Anselm said at the outset that he would justify the incarnation without appealing to the Bible and instead search for a necessary reason for the incarnation. But the only way he can justify the choice of restoration is to appeal to God's faithfulness to God's own purpose, found in the Biblical record. What we have then is a brilliant affirmation of the faithfulness of God, but also an admission that the search for a principle of necessity acceptable to independent reason ends in failure. Before moving on, let us summarize this first argument: Anselm's whole thesis is constructed around the idea of God fulfilling the divine purpose by means of restoration, rather than punishment for violation of the law. Anselm is clearly working in a framework far distant from that of penal substitution.

The second reason penal substitution is not a part of Anselm's view is that at no point in the text does God demand the death of Jesus. What Anselm says is that in his obedience and holiness, Jesus freely gives his life to God and thereby sets an example for believers. (Cf. John 15:13) There is no necessity laid on Jesus by God (or, to employ the intra-Trinitarian terminology, by the Father upon the Son). Instead, Jesus' journey toward Jerusalem is of his own free will and love of God. What is made abundantly clear is that if Jesus dies, it not to satisfy the justice of God as a juridical requirement, but his death is a consequence of his obedience and love of God. Bear in mind that Anselm was a monk,

for whom the vow of obedience was by far the highest goal for the Christian—yes, even more important than poverty and celibacy.

The third point has to do with Aulen's charge of Pelagianism against Anselm. Aulen introduces a principle which most would readily accept: There must be total continuity between the action of God and the action of redemption. In applying this to Anselm, Aulen argues that since satisfaction must be accomplished by humans, therefore when the God-human appears for our salvation, he is acting only as human. Aulen judges this to be Pelagian and represents a discontinuity in the flow of action from God to salvation. While this argument is parallel to the Reformers' critique of the Roman Mass, it is somewhat out of context when applied to Anselm. Anselm's whole point is to argue that the incarnation must occur because humanity can **not** offer satisfaction but only God **can**. Thus while it is true that humanity must offer satisfaction, it is only the God-human who can. To attribute a Pelagian twist to the requirement of the Savior's humanity is to do violence to the delicate logic of incarnational theology found in Nicea and Chalcedon. Moreover, using Aulen's logic, most theories of atonement would fail his test, since in every one the work of salvation is effected by the One who is both divine and human. Time and again theology has affirmed that Jesus is the truly human one, the new or second Adam, who embodies the true obedience and love of God. Indeed, for the human not to be involved would be docetic at worst, or Apollinarian at best.

To this point I have argued against only one half of Aulen's reading of theology. Is it possible that we can also retrieve Abelard from Aulen's scrapheap of bad theology? Let us risk the attempt. Aulen dismisses Abelard as affirming Jesus as a teacher and example of love, the exponent of the subjective view. Nor can he find anything special about the death of Jesus in Abelard's writing. To overturn this caricature of Abelard, one need only read the relevant texts. Abelard, like Anselm, refuses to build a case for the incarnation and passion of Christ on the basis of negotiations with the devil. The devil is a liar and God owes the devil nothing. But Abelard turns his razor sharp logic on Anselm as well: it is not necessary to develop an elaborate theory in search of some principle of necessity for the incarnation and crucifixion. If in the end the

passion of Christ reveals the love of God, then let us simply affirm that the story is about the love of God from start to finish. Absent from Aulen's report of Abelard is the fact that something does indeed happen: Jesus Christ is the incarnate Word who embodies the love of God. He redeems the world by his life, death and resurrection, thereby creating on earth a community of faithful believers who continue to praise God and witness to the redeeming love of God. As Abelard notes, there is a difference between unrealized and realized hope. Christ is the real demonstration of the love of God. So he writes: "Wherefore, our redemption through Christ's suffering is that deeper affection in us which not only frees us from slavery to sin, but also wins for us the true liberty of sons of God...." (Fairweather, ***Scholastic Miscellany***, p. 284)

We can appreciate Abelard's main point without having to conclude that his theory is the only theory of atonement. What I find especially interesting is that nearly every theory ends up with an Abelardian chorus. This occurs at that point where, once one has defined what God has done in Christ, one is led to ask: What is our appropriate response? Sooner or later there is a reminder of the wondrous love which seeks to invoke in us love born of Christ. Irenaeus provides a good example, as he argues that God does not take us by violence but by persuasion. He illustrates how it is not uncommon for Wondrous Love to be joined with other theories as an over-arching answer to God's motivation and our response. I would also note that Abelard's position now reappears in so many books on atonement which seek an alternative to penal substitution. In many respects they are closer to Abelard than Christus Victor.

2. Incarnation and Atonement

Let us begin by affirming the dialectical relation between atonement and incarnation. On the one hand, incarnation is a *consequence* of the affirmation that saving power is present in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. While Jesus' followers are astonished by him, all of their claims about him lead to the conclusion that only God could do what they have experienced in Jesus Christ and Pentecost. Even more specific, if God were not present in Jesus, then the story of Jesus would be but one more story of an unusual person. To say that incarnation is the inevitable

and necessary consequence of the saving power in Jesus leads to the rejection of several popular views. One is the dismissal of Nicea and Chalcedon on grounds of intervention by Roman emperors. These discussions were certainly complicated by political struggles, but for Athanasius and his followers, the issue was always a matter of soteriology: God was in Christ! The other misleading view is the celebration of alternate forms of spirituality—including Gnosticism. Such a view argues for a more inclusive approach to divergent views in the early church on grounds that the church was too restrictive of such views, especially when practiced by women. On the contrary, I am suggesting that the affirmation of God's saving power in Jesus requires the rejection of Gnosticism. There is a fundamental contradiction between the Christian story of Jesus and the polytheism and dualism of Gnosticism.

On the other hand, once incarnation is affirmed as a consequence of the story of Jesus, it then begins to function as a *presupposition* for thinking about God. In fact, if the crucified is raised to be Lord and now communicates new life to those gathered in his name, then all thinking about God, Jesus, the Spirit, believers, the church and the world must be re-evaluated. New answers must now be given to questions such as: Who is God? What is God doing in the world? The point is that a major shift occurs in Christian thinking: once the presence of saving power leads to the *consequence* that it is God who is present in Jesus, then they can not think about God without assuming incarnation as a *presupposition* for all Christian thought. But we need to be reminded that incarnation did not begin as a speculative presupposition, but as a result of the story of saving power in Jesus.

Let me propose three ways in which our theological reflection is altered once this connection between incarnation and atonement is established. First, if Jesus Christ has to do with God's incarnation, then the focus shifts to God's purpose. To be sure, Jesus' cross and resurrection are still center stage. But Jesus and his story are significant to the extent that they point to God's purposes in creation and now redemption. Second, if Jesus is tied to what God is doing in the world, then categories such as history and development become major concepts. We may now speak of a history of the world, of sin and of redemption. But even more

important, we may now speak of change or development in the course of history. Third, if atonement is governed by incarnation, then the dominant images will be those of new life, new being and union with Christ. Underlying all of these images is the central idea of participation in the very life of Christ.

Taken together, the three concepts of purpose, historical development and new life become the hallmarks of an incarnational approach to atonement. Their value may be demonstrated by putting them to work: For example: such an approach slams the door on any reduction of Christian faith to moral action or cognitive ideas. To be Christian is more than doing something or knowing something. It is to be joined with Christ, i.e., to be rescued from the power of the old life lived to self and the powers of this world, and to be born again in the new life of God.

Another example is helpful. In so much of American religion, God's purpose is eliminated from the discussion. Preaching then concentrates on the question: Does God love you? The conservative answer is: "Yes, if you believe and do certain things?" That inevitably produces very oppressive systems and leads to protests in the name of the sovereignty of God. But the liberal answer is not much better: Liberals declare: "Yes, God loves you unconditionally." Now I recognize that in a world where love is parceled out under strict conditions, the gospel of unconditional love can be good news. The problem, however, is that when the gospel is reduced to this slogan, the message is given that you don't have to be or do anything but bask in the love of God. What is lost here is any sense of participation in the unfolding struggle of justice and peace as God moves the world toward God's purpose. Is it any wonder that most Americans believe God loves them and they don't have to be involved in the church or anything else?

In ***Saving Power*** I have used three writers to demonstrate how incarnation and atonement are held together in special ways: these are Athanasius, Anselm and Schleiermacher. In many respects this is an unusual combination, especially in light of the demonization of both Anselm and Schleiermacher. But all three are theologians of the incarnation and all three see history as the realm of the struggle between sin and God. It was Athanasius who

repeatedly asked the question: "What was God to do?" It was Anselm who insisted on framing incarnation and atonement in light of God's unrelenting faithfulness to restore the creation. And it was Schleiermacher who defined Christianity as a form of historical monotheism, wherein everything relates to the redemption accomplished by Jesus Christ and is mediated to us through the church. In fact, it is Scleiermacher who speaks of a double incarnation: the presence of God in Christ and the bestowal of the Spirit on the Church.

Here it is appropriate to elaborate on several aspects of Schleiermacher's work which have obvious connections to Nevin and Schaff.

1. By defining religion as a relation to God which can not be reduced to morality or knowledge, Schleiermacher joined together the pietist emphasis on religion of the heart with the Reformers emphasis on faith as trust of the heart.
2. For Schleiermacher, Christianity involved the double incarnation of God in Jesus and the Spirit in the church. There was such a perfect unity of the work and person of Jesus that his person was itself the embodiment of the new life. In an unusual move, he rejected both adoptionism and the virgin birth, since neither could adequately explain the originating power of God in him. For Schleiermacher, Christ was the goal of creation and the mediator of salvation.
3. Schleiermacher believed the ancient categories of nature, person and union of divine and human natures contained unresolved questions. They also were not the language of the modern world. As a result, he shifted to historical and personal language. But in doing this, he sought to construct a Christology which was exactly parallel to the language and the intention of Chalcedon: in Jesus Christ, God and humanity are fully and truly joined.
4. The last point which connects our Mercersburg theologians to Schleiermacher was the latter's absolute insistence that Jesus intended to found the church. It is by means of the church as the community of Christ, empowered by the Spirit, that the redemption of Christ is mediated throughout

the world. For Schleiermacher, Nevin's church question was given a resounding affirmative answer. In and through the church we participate in the new life God gives in Jesus Christ.

There can be little doubt that the Mercersburg theologians found in Schleiermacher support for the ideas that religion is a living reality which develops and that Jesus Christ is the bearer of new life. But while these connections are clear, they and Schleiermacher stood in a larger tradition going back to Athanasius and ultimately the Johannine witness to Christ. When this is understood, we can then see that there is indeed a way of thinking about the cross which is governed by the incarnation. It focuses on God's will to redeem the world by means of the incarnate Word, whereby life is bestowed upon the world through the redemption embodied in Jesus Christ. Such an approach to atonement is overlooked by both Protestants and Catholics if they are preoccupied with the forgiveness of sins (or its liberal formulation as the affirmation of unconditional love). For Mercersburg, the forgiveness of sins is taken up into a larger affirmation of life in the face of death, of the sacramental community of Christ which transforms the world, and finally, the on going revealing of God's purposes.

APPENDIX 1.

OUTLINE: THEORIES OF ATONEMENT

A. CHRIST DIED FOR OUR SINS (FORGIVENESS)

1. Sacrifice: The Jewish image of sacrifice for sin (i.e., removal/purification) and its application to Jesus. The **Letter to the Hebrews**

2. Justification by grace: the righteousness of God revealed apart from the law. **Luther's Commentary on Romans**

3. Penal Substitution: Christ in our Place: Jesus's death as compensation to the justice of God. **Charles Hodge**

B. LIBERATION FROM SIN, DEATH AND DEMONIC POWERS

4. Liberation: Christ the Saving Power of God. **Irenaeus, Moltmann, Cone, Gutierrez, and Feminist/Womanist Theology**

C. THE PURPOSES OF GOD

5. Renewal of the Creation: Incarnation and New Life in Christ. **Athanasius and the Nicene Theology**

6. Restoration of the Creation by the Incarnation of God: The faithfulness of God. **Anselm**

7. The Completion of the Creation in Jesus Christ: Jesus Christ the Redeemer. **Schleiermacher**

D. RECONCILIATION

8. The Destruction of Idols and the True Knowledge of God. **H. R. Niebuhr**

9. Christ the Reconciler: The cross as God's reconciliation in the face of spiritual warfare. **I Corinthians 1-2**

10. The Wondrous Love of God. Jesus Christ as a Demonstration of Love and the new community of love. **Abelard, Wesley and Moltmann on God's co-suffering.**

11. The Unveiling of Violence: The Cross as God's Judgment against institutionalized violence (scapegoating). **Girard, Bartlett, Heim**

On Reading Schleiermacher in America: Moses Stuart on the Trinity[12]

Clifford B. Anderson

The story of Moses Stuart's translation of Friedrich Schleiermacher's controversial 1822 essay on the Trinity provides a window into a fascinating debate which raged in the first quarter of the nineteenth century and which concerned the limits of our knowledge of the nature of God. What led Moses Stuart, a defender of the doctrine of the Trinity during the Unitarian Controversy in New England, to translate Schleiermacher's "On the Discrepancy between the Sabellian and Athanasian Method of Representing the Doctrine of the Trinity"?[13] On its face the translation and publishing of Schleiermacher's essay hardly seems like a good way to defend the Trinity. After all, Schleiermacher is frequently classified as an Anti-Trinitarian theologian. The purpose of this essay is to explain the historical circumstances which prompted Stuart to enlist this critic of the orthodox formulation to defend Trinitarian doctrine against Unitarian criticisms.

The background to Moses Stuart's reading of Schleiermacher on the Trinity is, of course, the Unitarian Controversy in the early nineteenth century. Moses Stuart was a spectator to most of the events in the first stage of the controversy. Stuart was born a Connecticut Yankee in 1780.[14] He grew up on the kind of hardscrabble farm that produced the stone walls which now run forlornly throughout the woods of New England. He showed early interest in theology, reading Jonathan Edwards' *On The*

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12 This paper was delivered at the Mercersburg Society Colloquium at Andover, MA on June 4, 2007. I would like to thank the organizers of that event for their kind invitation to take part.

13 Friedrich Schleiermacher, "On the Discrepancy between the Sabellian and Athanasian Method of Representing the Doctrine of the Trinity," trans. by Moses Stuart, *The Biblical Repository* 5 (1835):265-353; 6 (1836):1-116.

14 The bibliographical information in this paragraph is drawn largely from W. Andrew Hoffecker, "Stuart, Moses," *American National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999) and Edwards Amasa Park, *A Discourse Delivered at the Funeral of Professor Moses Stuart* (Boston: Tappan & Whittemore, 1852).

Freedom of the Will (1754) as a child of twelve.[15] His linguistic abilities also became manifest early. "While pursuing the Latin and the Greek, he attended also to the French classics. Several of his elder schoolmates had devoted many weeks to the reading of Telemachus. They ridiculed him for his attempt to recite with them at the very beginning of his study. He remained with them a day and a half, and was then transferred to a higher class."[16] He enrolled at Yale College in 1797 and graduated two years later. A religious conversion led him to give up a planned career in law for the ministry. Stuart became a disciple of Timothy Dwight, president of Yale College and grandson of Jonathan Edwards. Dwight conducted a religious revival at the college during the Second Great Awakening. He sought particularly to defend creedal Christianity against Jeffersonian Deism.[17] Stuart absorbed Dwight's New Divinity as well as his hostility toward Deism and the Enlightenment. He dated his conversion to 1803.[18] Marrying in 1805 and leaving his position as a tutor at Yale, Stuart stayed within the orbit of Dwight's influence, becoming the associate pastor and then pastor of the Center Congregational Church in New Haven.

While Stuart was preaching Dwight's form of evangelical Calvinism in New Haven, the struggle over the succession to the Hollis professorship of divinity at Harvard College was in full swing. The Corporation's election in early 1805 of the liberal Henry Ware to the Hollis chair (by a single vote margin!) signaled the defeat of the Calvinist party at Harvard.[19] The establishment of the Theological Institution in Phillips Academy in 1807 was the orthodox response. The circumstances of its birth were rather complex. The Associate Statutes arising from the negotiations[20] between the old Calvinists at Andover and the Hopkinsian

15 Park, *A Discourse Delivered at the Funeral of Professor Moses Stuart*, 16.
16 Ibid.
17 Cf. Conrad Cherry, "Nature and the Republic: The New Haven Theology," *The New England Quarterly*, 51 (1978): 510.
18 Park, *Discourse*, 22.
19 John H. Giltner, "The Fragmentation of New England Congregationalism and the Founding of Andover Seminary," *Journal of Religious Thought* 20 (1963-1964): 34f.
20 On the negotiations themselves, see Richard D. Price, "The Legal Aspects of the Andover Creed," *Church History* 15 (1946): 33f.

Calvinists at Newburyport required professors to confess that "God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth; that in the Godhead are three Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and that these Three are One God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory...."[21] Commitment to creedal Trinitarian orthodoxy was thus mandated at Andover.

When Moses Stuart joined the faculty of Andover after Eliphalet Pearson mysteriously resigned in 1810, he was joining an outpost of orthodoxy situated in a field surrounded by liberal Christians. His period of study with Timothy Dwight had indoctrinated him into Hopkinsian Calvinism, but he would be teaching the Bible at Andover, not theology. He felt woefully under-prepared for the assignment. He hardly knew any Hebrew beyond the alphabet and later judged his Greek inadequate for the task.[22] His study of Hebrew led him by happenstance to the study of German. He grew frustrated at the opacity of the German terms he discovered in the Hebrew lexicon so he resolved to learn German as well.[23] "At an exorbitant price he obtained the apparatus for German study, and in a single fortnight had read the entire Gospel of John in that language."[24] Stuart enriched Andover's library with German scholarship, which was otherwise scarce during that period in New England. Stuart was among the first to introduce German theologians and biblical scholars to the United States.[25] He began teaching his students higher criticism—not to undermine their faith, but to set their faith on more solid historical foundations. But his innovations also made his colleagues nervous. "He endured the whisperings of his brethren. Many of them met him with an averted face."[26] However, he persevered because he found that such biblical

21 *The Constitution and the Associate Statutes of the Theological Seminary in Andover; with a Sketch of Its Rise and Progress* (Boston: Farrand, Mallory, and Co., 1808), 32.
22 Park, *Discourse*, 25.
23 Ibid., 27.
24 Ibid.
25 Cf. Marjorie H. Nicolson, "James Marsh and the Vermont Transcedentalists," *The Philosophical Review* XXXIV (1925): 32.
26 Park, *Discourse*, 28.

criticism liberated the Bible from its scholastic interpretation and enriched his and his students' faith.[27]

Meanwhile, William Ellery Channing was about to initiate the next, decisive phase of the controversy. Channing was born in 1780 and grew up in Newport, Rhode Island. His neighbor was Samuel Hopkins, the "foremost proponent of 'New Light' Calvinism of his generation."[28] Channing rejected the revivalist excesses of his period, preferring a more rationalistic, moralistic, and humanistic form of Christianity. In 1803, he became the settled pastor of the Federal Street Church (later the Arlington Street Church) in Boston.[29] Over the next decade, he quietly developed a reputation as a leading liberal intellectual in congregational churches. Ironically, it was Jedidiah Morse of Andover Seminary who forced him to take a more public role in the Unitarian-Trinitarian Controversy. "Early in 1815 Morse exploded a real bomb, by financing the publication of *American Unitarianism*, which was reviewed in *Panoplist* of June, 1815."[30] Channing regarded the charges put forward as scurrilous and responded with an open declaration of the convictions of liberal Christianity.

In 1819, Channing delivered the sermon that catalyzed the incipient division of congregational churches. Gary Dorrien notes that whereas liberal Congregationalists had generally avoided the term 'Unitarian' prior to 1819, Channing now "resolved that they should wear it proudly."[31] According to Earl Morse Wilbur, "the sermon, which lasted an hour and a half, made a profound impression at the time, and has probably had a wider, deeper and more lasting influence than any other ever preached in America."[32]

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27 See ibid., 37f.

28 Gary Dorrien, *The Making of American Liberal Theology: Imagining Progressive Religion, 1805-1900* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 6.

29 Daniel Walker Howe, "Channing, William Ellery," *American National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

30 Sidney E. Mead, "Lyman Beecher and Connecticut Orthodoxy's Campaign against the Unitarians, 1819-1826," *Church History* 9 (1940): 219-220.

31 Gary Dorrien, *Making of American Liberal Theology*, 28.

32 Earl Morse Wilbur, *A History of Unitarianism in Transylvania, England, and America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1952), 424.

Channing's sermon has rightly been called the "manifesto"[33] of the Unitarian movement in the United States. He divided his text into two main parts. First, he articulated his understanding of scriptural hermeneutics, highlighting the role of reason in the interpretation of the Bible. Channing rejected the notion that the Bible should be interpreted differently from other literary works. "Our leading principle in interpreting Scripture is this, that the Bible is a book written for men, in the language of men, and that its meaning is to be sought in the same manner, as that of other books."[34] Channing insisted on the centrality of reason to all biblical interpretation. For him, being rational meant to "distrust every interpretation, which, after deliberate attention, seems repugnant to any established truth."[35] After presenting his hermeneutic, he turned his attention to five areas of Christian doctrine and practice where he judged the orthodox position to be rationally insupportable: the Triunity of God, Chalcedonian christology, the Augustinian doctrine of election, substitutionary atonement, and religious revivalism.

Channing put forward multiple arguments against the Triunity of God. On the one hand, he contended that the doctrine is not scriptural. "We are astonished, that any man can read the New Testament, and avoid the conviction, that the Father alone is God."[36] Early Christianity, so freshly sprung from Judaism, could not have abided any thought of division within God. Trinitarian language in the creeds plastered over the absence of such language in Scripture. On the other hand, he argued that the doctrine inevitably led the untutored to tritheism.

> When we attempt to conceive of three Gods, we can do nothing more, than represent to ourselves three agents, distinguished from each other by similar marks and peculiarities to those, which separate the persons of the Trinity; and when common Christians hear these persons spoken of as conversing with each other, loving each other, and performing different acts, how can they help regarding

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33 Dorrien, *Making of American Liberal Theology*, 35.

34 William Ellery Channing, *A Sermon Delivered at the Ordination of the Rev. Jared Sparks*, 2nd ed. (Baltimore: J. Robinson, 1819), 5.

35 Ibid., 8.

36 Ibid., 15.

them as different beings, different minds?[37]

This proclivity to tritheism became evident in orthodox Christian worship, which diluted genuine piety by distracting the worshiper with a maudlin drama taking place between the divine persons. He compared the Calvinist "worship of a bleeding, suffering God" to the Roman Catholic veneration of the Virgin Mary.[38] Channing's Unitarians would worship an austere and rational Divinity.

Channing's sermon galvanized forces on both sides. "The Baltimore sermon ignited a firestorm of controversy and made Channing famous," writes Dorrien. "It inspired a critical mass of pastors to stop equivocating about their liberalism. It simultaneously horrified and gratified conservatives, who at least were finally given the satisfaction of confronting an openly declared enemy."[39] Two theologically significant responses came from Andover and Princeton. Moses Stuart of Andover and Samuel Miller of Princeton Seminary both penned "letters" against Channing and his Unitarianism. However, their responses wound up exposing a rift between these centers of orthodoxy.

Moses Stuart was among the first to respond to Channing's provocations. In 1819, he published *Letters to the Rev. WM. E. Channing*.[40] He restricted his apology for orthodoxy to the principles of Scriptural interpretation, the doctrine of the Trinity, and christology. Stuart wrote in a conciliatory fashion. He implied that Channing had failed to understand orthodoxy; if he had grasped the genuine meaning of its doctrines, he would not have put forward such crude arguments against them. However, Stuart also conceded that the failure of understanding could not simply be chalked up to Channing's ineptitude. The history of doctrinal development had contributed to the kind of misunderstanding at the root of his criticisms. Stuart felt this particularly true in the case of Trinitarian dogma.

Surprisingly, Stuart opened his *Letters* by expressing his general agreement with Channing's hermeneutic. He agreed that the

37 Ibid., 14-15.
38 Ibid., 19.
39 Gary Dorrien, *Making of American Liberal Theology*, 35.
40 Moses Stuart, *Letters to the Rev. WM. E. Channing* (Andover: Flagg and Gould, 1819).

Bible had to be interpreted historically. "Of course, the language of the Bible is to be interpreted by the same laws, so far as philology is concerned, as that of any other book."[41] Stuart was not about to allow any divide between historical criticism, properly exercised, and doctrinal orthodoxy, properly interpreted. He described the difference between his position and Channing's as more about "colouring" than content. As John H. Giltner has noted, however, Stuart underestimated his disagreement with Channing.[42] Whereas Channing accorded reason the right to evaluate and reject aspects of the biblical record at odds with common sense, Stuart adopted a version of the old motto *fides quarens intellectum*: "the sole office of reason in respect to [the Scriptures] is to act as an *interpreter* of revelation, and not in any case as a *legislator*."[43] Stuart's failure to perceive how wide the gap had become at this point misled him into thinking that their disagreement was simply about the relation between biblical criticism and doctrinal theology.

In his second letter, Stuart complained that Channing had put forward a caricature of Trinitarian doctrine. If the orthodox position really was that the three persons in the Godhead had three distinct consciousnesses, it would amount to tritheism. "But I cannot help feeling," Stuart politely opined, "that you have made neither an impartial, nor a correct statement of what we believe, and what we are accustomed to teach and defend."[44] Channing's mistake was to interpret the concept of person in Trinitarian doctrine "in its *ordinary* acceptation as applied to *men*."[45] Stuart argued that "person" designated only "a real distinction in the Godhead," not "independent, conscious beings...."[46] Introducing a term so liable to misunderstanding into theology had been a mistake. "I could heartily wish...that the word *person* never had come into the Symbols of the Churches, because it has been the occasion of so

41 Ibid., xxx.
42 Giltner, *Moses Stuart: The Father of Biblical Science in America* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988), 60.
43 Stuart, *Letters to the Rev. WM. E. Channing*., 13.
44 Ibid., 17.
45 Ibid., 22.
46 Ibid., 34.

much unnecessary dispute and difficulty."[47] Creedal orthodoxy overestimated its ability to define the concept of a divine person. The Scriptures only allow us to assert that there is a threefold "distinction" in the Godhead; they do not allow us to say anything positive about that distinction. Stuart drew an analogy from Newtonian science to warrant his agnosticism about the imminent Trinity. Just as we do not doubt the existence of gravity because we can only experience, but not define it, so too should we accept the fact that distinctions exist in the Godhead even though we cannot define them.

Fatefully, Stuart criticized the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed (381) for overstepping the boundaries of divine revelation. "A slight consideration of the Nicene Creed might lead one perhaps to suppose, that undefinable, or objectionable terms of illustration had been, almost intentionally, accumulated in it."[48] He considered that the Nicene Fathers had overreached when defending against Arianism and that the Council of Constantinople had compounded the damage when expanding the Creed to exclude Sabellians. Stuart did not disagree with the intention of the Creed, but he could not subscribe to its metaphysics. "Patient investigation and candor will lead one to believe, as it seems to me, that the *thing aimed at was, in substance, to assert the idea of a distinction in the Godhead.* To do this with the more success, as they imagined, they endeavoured to describe *affirmatively* the nature of that distinction. Here they have all failed."[49] Stuart pointed in particular to the eternal generation of the Son as a concept about which he was "unable to conceive any definite meaning."[50]

> The *generation* or *production* of the Son of God, as *divine, as really and truly God*, seems to be out of question...unless it be an express doctrine of Revelation; which is so far from being the case, that I conceive the contrary is plainly taught. If the phrase *eternal generation* then, is to be vindicated, it is only on the ground that it is figuratively used, to describe an undefinable connexion and discrimination between Father and Son, which is from everlasting. It is not well chosen, however, for this purpose because it necessarily, even in its figurative use, carries along with it an idea, which is at variance with the self-existence and independence of Christ, as divine; and of course, in so far as it does this, it seems to detract from his real divinity.[51]

47 Ibid.
48 Ibid., 41.
49 Ibid., 44.
50 Ibid., 41.

Stuart was adopting a risky strategy. He was willing to concede that creedal Trinitarian orthodoxy was in some respects flawed in order to win the confidence of his opponents. He advised those who found such definitions off-putting to look away from the form to the substance, where they would discover widespread agreement throughout the history of Christianity about *"the idea of a distinction in the Godhead."*[52] The presence of a distinction in the Godhead, however indefinable, was scriptural. Stuart seemed to qualify his agreement with Channing's principles of scriptural interpretation when he complained that the Unitarians' adherence to 'common sense,' which led them to reject something quite obviously revealed in Scripture, elevated reason above revelation.[53] A more circumspect reading of the relation between creedal orthodoxy and the scriptural witness to the Trinunity of God would admit that the Church Fathers had gone beyond the limits of revelation when trying to ward off heresy. Stuart had "no attachment" to the "technical terms" of creedal Trinitiarian doctrine and could even "wish they were, by general consent, entirely exploded."[54] However, he vowed to defend the "*things* which are aimed at by these terms," adding that "logomachy is too trifling for a lover of truth."[55]

Stuart's defense of the substance but not the form of trinitarian doctrine raised eyebrows in orthodox camps. Among those who chastised him for making too many accommodations to his opponents was the Princeton Seminary professor of church history, Samuel Miller (1769-1850). Miller resented the incursion

51 Ibid., 42.
52 Ibid., 44.
53 Ibid., 52.
54 Ibid., 55.
55 Ibid..

of Unitarianism into Baltimore. He delivered a series of lectures at the First Presbyterian Church of Baltimore against Channing, published as *Letters on Unitarianism.*[56] "Miller is not so polite as Stuart in his handling of the Unitarians:" writes Bruce Stephens, "they are infidels, promulgators of 'a system of error which I have no hesitation in considering the most delusive and dangerous of all that have ever assumed the Christian name.'"[57] Miller compared Unitarians to a plague of locusts. "Probably in no part of our country out of *Massachusetts,* do these poisoned agents so completely fill the air, or, like one of the plagues of *Egypt*, so noisomely 'come up into your houses, your chambers, and your kneading troughs,' as in Baltimore."[58] Unlike Stuart, Miller classified the Unitarians as heretics because of their deviation from the ecumenical Creeds.[59] But he also saw more clearly than Stuart that the Unitarians' approach to Scripture was leading them toward rationalism and that their rejection of creedal Christianity simply marked a way station toward Deism.[60]

In his Third Letter, Miller also issued a tacit but stinging criticism of Moses Stuart's rejection of the doctrine of the eternal generation of the Son. He defended the doctrine against Stuart's criticisms. Drawing on the multivalent analogy between the sun and its beams of light, Miller argued that there was nothing rationally objectionable about conceiving of an eternal relation between the Father and the Son.

> Has the sun ever existed a moment without sending out beams? And if the sun had been an eternal being, would there not have been an eternal, necessary emanation of light from it? But God is confessedly eternal. Where, then, is the absurdity or contradiction of an eternal, necessary emanation from Him, or, if you please, an *eternal generation,*—and also an *eternal procession* of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son? To deny the *possibility* of this, or to assert that it is a manifest *contradiction*, either in terms of ideas, is to assert that, although the Father *is* from all eternity, yet He could not *act* from all eternity; which, I will venture to assert, is as UNPHILOSOPHICAL as it is IMPIOUS.[61]

He also tossed aside Stuart's claim that the concept of eternal generation hints of subordinationism—sometimes sons surpass their fathers in glory, he reasoned (not very convincingly). Miller's main point, however, was that the doctrine of the eternal generation "is so closely connected with the doctrine of the Trinity, and the Divine character of the Saviour, that where the former is generally abandoned, neither of the two latter will be long retained."[62] There is no other orthodox way to distinguish between the persons of the Trinity. In other words, if nothing can be said about the imminent Trinity beyond the fact that a threefold distinction exists within the Godhead, there is nothing to distinguish the Father from the Son from the Holy Spirit. The names are functionally interchangeable. The doctrine of eternal generation was a bulwark which could not be abandoned without losing the war. "I must therefore, warn you against the error of rejecting this doctrine, even though it come from *the house of a friend*," he wrote. "It is a mystery, but a precious mystery, which seems to be essentially interwoven with the whole substance, as well as language, of the blessed economy of mercy."[63] Miller worried that once Stuart started pulling on the strings binding together the creedal definitions of the Trinity, he would lose hold of the substance of the doctrine altogether.

Miller also cautioned against listening to 'Unitarian' German biblical critics. The goal of their scholarship was to substitute rational explanation for the mysteries of faith.

> In *their* view, the Mosaic account of the Creation, is a mere poetical fable; the delivery of the Law on Mount *Sinai*, a dexterous management of a thunder storm; the whole Jewish ritual, a mere contrivance of ingenious superstition; and the

56 Samuel Miller, *Letters on Unitarianism, Addressed to the Members of the First Presbyterian Church in the City of Baltimore* (Trenton, 1821).
57 Bruce M. Stephens, "Samuel Miller (1769-1850): Apologist for Orthodoxy," *The Princeton Seminary Bulletin* 67 (1975): 35.
58 Miller, *Letters on Unitarianism*, 12.
59 Ibid., 60ff. See also Stephens, "Samuel Miller," 38.
60 Miller, *Letters on Unitarianism*, 206.
61 Ibid., 87f.
62 Ibid., 90.
63 Ibid.

effusion of the Holy Spirit on the day of *Pentecost*, nothing more than a gust of wind, accompanied by an unusual excitement of electric fluid![64]

Was Miller directing his warning to Stuart and his students? As Bruce M. Stephens notes, Miller's ascription to common-sense realism made him wary of higher biblical criticism. "It may very well be that biblical criticism has arrived and taken root in New England," Stephens writes. "It is about to do neither at Princeton, which will remain a seat of orthodoxy and common sense."[65] In fact, a significant effect of Channing's provocation was to highlight the division between Andover and Princeton.

Stuart was stung by Miller's criticisms. In 1822, he published *Letters on the Eternal Generation of the Son of God, addressed to the Rev. Samuel Miller, D.D.*[66] The book was an extended apology for his jettisoning of the concept of eternal generation. He opened by expressing surprise that Miller had taken such offense at his criticisms. After all, he had never met anyone who really believed the doctrine. "During all my theological life, I had never once heard the doctrine of eternal generation seriously avowed and defended," he confessed. "Nearly all the ministers of New England, since I have been upon the stage, have, so far as I know their sentiments, united in rejecting it, or at least regarding it as unimportant."[67] Stuart contended that the concept was ill-founded both scripturally and rationally. The doctrine also contravened the witness of "*the great body of early and influential Christian Fathers....*"[68] In his view, the Nicene fathers had been infected by the Arian heresy which they were combating and thus had unwittingly introduced a form of subordinationism into the doctrine of God.

Stuart held that Scripture warranted belief in the eternality of the Logos, but not of the Son of God. In other words, the Logos

64 Ibid., 95.
65 Stephens, "Samuel Miller," 39.
66 Moses Stuart, *Letters on the Eternal Generation of the Son of God, addressed to the Rev. Samuel Miller, D.D.* (Andover: Mark Newman, 1822).
67 Ibid., 4f.
68 Ibid., 17.

existed from eternity but became the Son of God as a consequence of the Incarnation. The passage which guided his interpretation was the prologue to the Gospel of John. "John tells us that the *Logos* was *in the beginning*, and *was God*; and that *when he became flesh*, we beheld the glory of the *Only Begotten*. Here then is a name [i.e. *Logos*], for the second distinction of the Trinity as such, which is of apostolic authority—of inspired origin."[69] The name "Son of God" could be applied only retroactively to the Logos for, in his view, Scripture ascribes the designation "Son of God" to the Logos only by virtue of his assumption of human nature. The appellation "Son of God" is properly applied to the human nature of Jesus Christ, which Stuart asserted to be "derived from God."[70] (How Stuart understood the role of Mary in the Incarnation is not clear.) Thus, according to Stuart, it does not make sense to speak of the Logos as the eternal Son of God prior to and apart from the Incarnation. "If I am correct then," Stuart opined, "the Logos, before his incarnation, was not, strictly speaking, Son of God, but only to become so by union with the person of Jesus."[71]

In Letter IX, Stuart did not shrink from drawing the implications of his position for the other Hypostases of the Trinity. If the Logos became the Son of God as a consequence of the Incarnation, then should we not also say that the Father became the Father of the Son as its consequence as well? "There is surely no more *necessity* of supposing that God always existed as a *Father*, than that he always existed as a *Creator*, or *Governor*," Stuart asserted accordingly. "Surely he was not a creator before he created; nor a governor before he had subjects. Nor it is any more congruous to suppose that he was a Father before he had a Son."[72] The names that describe the relations of the triune God *ad extra* do not necessarily correspond to the *ad intra* relations among the divine Hypostases. Stuart rejected the patristic theologoumenon that the Logos had been "*twice* Son"—once in eternity and then again in

69 Ibid., 152.
70 In Letter VIII, Stuart asserted, "*Christ is called the Son of God, because, in respect to his HUMAN NATURE, he is derived from God.*" (Stuart, *Letters on the Eternal Generation of the Son*, 110).
71 Ibid., 122.
72 Ibid., 150.

time. Filiation is simply an activity of the Godhead *ad extra*. Of course, that Christians have come to confess the Triune God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit has altered the meaning of these descriptions of God's activity. According to Stuart, "they have become *by usage,* PROPER NAMES; and therefore no objection can lie against such usage."[73] In other words, these descriptions of the Triune God's activities *ad extra*—filiation, incarnation, and inspiration—have by common agreement become names for the hypostatic relations *ad intra*. While he did not object to using these descriptions as names, Stuart argued that theologians should be aware that such usage is not, strictly speaking, proper. The names cannot adequately circumscribe the mystery of the distinctions within the Godhead.

Stuart concluded his treatise by reiterating his objection to Nicene orthodoxy. He contended that the development of the concept of the eternal generation of the Son in the struggle leading up to the council of Constantinople, while effective against Arianism, had in fact introduced subordinationism into the orthodox concept of the Trinity. "I confess, for myself, I cannot help feeling that the idea of a derived God is, in reality, a vastly greater approximation to Arianism, than that which we adopt; and that the antagonists of Arius had much less reason to dispute with [Athanasius?] than they apprehended."[74] An eternally begotten God can never be fully God, Stuart argued, because the very concept of divinity rules out any form of derivation or emanation. "A *subordinate God* is, to my mind, a contradiction of terms; unless the word God is used in a metaphorical sense."[75] Only someone who had been trained in the long defunct school of Neo-Platonism could think otherwise. As for Stuart, he rejected any such ideas while still confessing the full divinity of the second hypostasis of the Trinity. "I believe in the *full, proper, supreme divinity of the Logos*; that he is *self-existent, uncreated, unbegotten, not emanated.*"[76] Stuart had not committed himself to showing how it was possible to defend the

73 Ibid., 151.
74 Ibid., 156.
75 Ibid., 157.
76 Ibid.

full divinity of the Logos without resorting to the creedal language of eternal begetting.

Samuel Miller responded to Moses Stuart's extended rejection of creedal orthodoxy with *Letters on the eternal sonship of Christ: addressed to the Rev. professor Stuart, of Andover*. In print, Miller adopted a reconciling tone. He apologized for making it appear that he had Stuart in mind when he labeled those denying the eternality of the Father's activity as "unphilosophical" and "impious."[77] He was seeking to "discuss," not "dispute" with the "otherwise orthodox Brethren of *New-England*."[78] Privately, Miller expressed deeper unease. In a handwritten note at the end of Letter IV of Stuart's *Letters on the eternal generation of the Son*, he wrote, "The whole of this letter treats the Deity with little reverence; and tends to render the reader profane."[79] The gap between Andover and Princeton was growing—and would only increase when Stuart brought Schleiermacher into the 'discussion.'

Stuart's translation of Friedrich Schleiermacher's essay titled "On the Discrepancy between the Sabellian and Athanasian Method of Representing the Doctrine of the Trinity" formed the concluding chapter to his debate with Channing and Miller. As Stuart wrote in his remarks on his translation, "It may be proper for me to say, that the results of this reexamination of the Trinity are, in their essential parts, the same as those which I some years since advocated in my letters addressed to the Rev. Dr. Channing, and the Rev. Dr. Miller, on the subject of the Trinity and Eternal Generation of the Son."[80] The translation, however, brought the debate to a new level—introducing not only the views of the great German theologian Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834), but also linking Stuart's name, fairly or unfairly, to the so-called "Sabellian" construction of the Trinity.

77 Samuel Miller, *Letters on the Eternal Sonship of Christ: Addressed to the Rev. Professor Stuart, of Andover* (Philadelphia: W. W. Woodward, 1823), 20.
78 Ibid., 22 & 21.
79 Miller's copy of Stuart's *Letters on the Eternal Generation of the Son* is held by Princeton Theological Seminary (SCC #8544 No. 6, p. 87).
80 Moses Stuart's concluding remarks on Friedrich Schleiermacher, "On the Discrepancy between the Sabellian and Athanasian Method of Representing the Doctrine of the Trinity," 6 (1836): 115f.

To get a sense of the new elements injected into the debate by this translation, we need now to step back from the American scene and spend a little time with the nineteenth century Germans and the fourth century Eastern Christians.

Friedrich Schleiermacher first gained notoriety as a critic of the traditional doctrine of the Trinity in the first edition of *The Christian Faith*, which he published in 1821/1822.[81] His treatment of the Trinity was intimately related to the structure of his dogmatics. Schleiermacher eschewed metaphysical approaches to doctrine in both ancient and modern guises. He set out to reconstruct the doctrines of faith from the perspective of the pious self-consciousness, that is, from our awareness of our absolute dependency on God. How then to treat the doctrine of the Trinity according to this methodology? Schleiermacher argued that the pious self-consciousness can never be directly aware of the Trinity. Everything essential about the doctrine had already been said in the second part of *The Christian Faith*, namely, in his description of our God-consciousness in its relation to the dialectic between sin and grace. He thus dealt with the Trinity in his conclusion [Schluß].

Schleiermacher's treatment of the Trinity within the *Christian Faith* remains controversial to the present day. Did he intend to downgrade the doctrine of the Trinity by relegating it to an "appendix"? So argued Claude Welche in his influential, *Protestant Thought in the Nineteenth Century*: "The controlling motive in Schleiermacher's judgment of the Trinity is his conviction that the doctrine in itself is an unnecessary and unwarranted addition to the faith."[82] A minority school of interpretation has asserted to the contrary that the entire *The Christian Faith* leads up to the doctrine of the Trinity. "The Trinity follows then not as an appendix," writes Francis Schüssler Fiorenza, "but as a 'conclusion' (the first edition even refers to it as the 'crown') that explicates the specifically

81 Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher, *Die christliche Glaube 1821/1822*, edited by Hermann Peiter, Studienausgabe, vol. 2 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1984).

82 Claude Welch, *Protestant Thought in the Nineteenth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), 5.

Christian consciousness of God."[83] Beyond debate is Schleiermacher's conviction that the doctrine required reformation. He held that the interpretation of the Trinity was "in a state of oscillation between subordination and equality on the one hand, and on the other between Tritheism and such a Unitarian view as is inconsistent with the appropriate honors due to the Redeemer," adding that "...the true method of representing the doctrine of the Trinity has not yet been hit upon or achieved in the common Symbols."[84] The first edition of *The Christian Faith* ended with a promissory note, pointing to a reexamination of the dispute between the Athanasians and Sabellians in the lead up to the Council of Nicea as a possible way forward. Schleiermacher redeemed this note with his 1822 essay, "Ueber den Gegensatz zwischen der Sabellianischen und der Athanasianischen Vorstellung von der Trinität."[85]

What exactly is Sabellianism? Like many ancient heresies, "Sabellianism" is something of an artificial construct. Typically, the heresy connected with the name of Sabellianism is taken to assert that there is no essential difference between God the Father and God the Son. The point of this heresy was to safeguard Christian monotheism. As Schleiermacher points out in his essay, there was actually something like a developing 'Sabellian' or 'Monarchian' school of thought. His history traces the rise of this school from obscure heresiarchs like Artemon, Praxeas, and Noetus, to Sabellius.[86] Of course, their writings were mostly destroyed and

83 Francis Schüssler-Fiorenza, "Schleiermacher's Understanding of God as Triune" in *The Cambridge Companion to Friedrich Schleiermacher*, edited by Jacqueline Mariña (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 176.

84 This is taken from Moses Stuart's translation of §190 from the first edition of Schleiermacher's Glaubenslehre. See Moses Stuart's introduction to Schleiermacher, "On the Discrepancy," 5 (1835): 273.

85 Friedrich Schleiermacher, "Ueber den Gegensatz zwischen der Sabellianischen und der Athanasianischen Vorstellung von der Trinität" in *Friedrich Schleiermacher und die Trinitätslehre*, ed. Martin Tetz, *Texte zur Kirchen- und Theologiegeschichte*, vol. 11 (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn, 1969): 37-94.

86 Unfortunately, Schleiermacher's history falls flat from a historical-critical standpoint. As Martin Tetz has remarked, his primary source for the description of Sabellius was the "Fourth Oration against the Arians," a pseudo-Athanasian

their opinions must be reconstructed from what their opponents ascribed to them. Jarolav Pelikan notes whereas early Monarchianism solved the problem of the relation between Jesus Christ and his Father by simply identifying them, the more sophisticated Monarchianism of Sabellius explained the Trinitiarian distinctions "by positing a more precise succession of the manifestations of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit."[87] The charge of Patripassianism—the heresy of ascribing suffering and death to the Father as well as the Son—eventually won the day against Sabellianism,[88] though Marcellus of Ancyra revived the Sabellian perspective in the period after the Nicene Creed. Marcellus asserted that the Father and the Son shared a single *ousia* and *hypostasis*.[89] Basil the Great, the first of the Cappadocian Fathers, insisted, of course, on the formula "one *ousia*, three *hypostaseseis*."[90] While Basil regarded himself as putting forward a middle ground between Arianism and Sabellianism,[91] he and his school were regarded as sophisticated Arians by their 'Sabellian' opponents.

Schleiermacher argued that the continuing development of the middle ground in Trinitarian doctrine claimed by Basil and the Cappadocians depended on listening anew to the concerns of the Sabellian party. Schleiermacher understood Sabellius as grounding his thinking about the Trinity on the Unity of God. Whereas Cappadocians asserted that such distinctions existed from all eternity, the Sabellians derived the Trinitarian distinctions from

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treatise. Moreover, that treatise attacked the views not of the third century Sabellius but of the fourth century bishop of Ancyra, Marcellus. (See Martin Tetz, "Zur Theologie des Markell von Ankyra I" in *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 75 (1964): 218.) So Schleiemacher should have titled his essay "On the Discrepancy between the Marcellian and the Pseudo-Athanasian Method of Representing the Doctrine of the Trinity." The accuracy of Schleiermacher's historical description does not matter for the purposes of our study, however.

87 Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition (100-600)*, vol.1 of The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), 179.

88 Ibid., 180f.

89 Joseph T. Lienhard, "Basil of Caesarea, Marcellus of Ancyra, and 'Sabellius'," *Church History* 58 (1989): 160.

90 Ibid., 159, 165.

91 Ibid., 166.

God's relation to the creation.[92] "To Sabellius and his friends, no doubt," wrote Schleiermacher, "it seemed very important to maintain, that *Trinity was not essential to the Godhead as in itself considered, but only in reference to created beings and on their account*."[93] Unlike the Cappadocians, the Sabellians refused to infer a preexisting imminent Trinity from the activities of the divine Persons in the economy of salvation.

> ...The Most High, in and of himself and considered apart from the idea of the Trinity, the true *Monάς* would be altogether in and by himself and altogether unknown to other beings. But this could take place only on condition, that no other beings beside himself had an existence. *The Trinity, therefore is* **GOD REVEALED**; and each member of the same, is a peculiar mode of this revelation. The Godhead, however, in each of these, is one and the same and not a different one; but still, it is never revealed to us as it is in itself, but as it is developed in the persons of the Trinity.[94]

This conception is marvelously simple. God unrevealed is Unitarian but God revealed is Trinitarian.

Schleiermacher insinuated that the Church had too quickly dismissed the Sabellian point of view. He rejected several traditional charges against Sabellianism as calumnies. His interpretation of Sabellianism left no room for Patripassianism, for example. Such an interpretation rests on the faulty assumption that according to Sabellius the Father became the Son.[95] In point of fact, Sabellius had defended the equality of the Father and the Son by asserting their common origin in the divine Monad. Schleiermacher also argued that Sabellians did not regard the divine persons as transitory modes of revelation. Instead, he interpreted Sabellius as asserting that Father, Son, and Holy Spirit persist as circumscriptions of the divine *Monad* as long as the creation

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92 Cf. Schüssler Fiorenza, "Schleiermacher's Understanding of God as Triune," 173f.

93 Schleiermacher, "On the discrepancy," 6 (1836): 52.

94 Ibid., 61.

95 Idid., 47.

persists.[96] Schleiermacher referred to Sabellius' version of the frequently-employed metaphor of the sun and its rays to explain his intentions.

> Sabellius...compares the circular forms of the Sun as connected with its motion, its power of giving light and of sending forth heat, with the distinctions in the Godhead; for these are not merely transitory phenomena, but active powers which continue as long as there are living beings on whom the sun can act and by whom it may be noticed.[97]

The Trinity will persist so long as humanity exists to perceive the divine Persons—presumably, thus, for eternity. Finally, Schleiermacher argued that the Sabellians developed a more systematic defense against Arianism than Athanasius and the Cappadocians. Elements of subordinationism still linger in the Alexandrian school's concept of the eternal generation of the Son, and the full Divinity of the Holy Spirit was never placed on solid theological footing.

In sum, Schleiermacher attributed a different motivation to the Sabellian school. Whereas the Cappadocians drew inspiration from the liturgy and traditions of the church, the Sabellians emphasized theological rationalism. Schleiermacher described Artemon, a predecessor of Sabellius, as "a leader of those, in whom a deeply-rooted earnestness produces efforts to check all harsh and easily perverted expressions respecting what is of a wonderful nature in our creed and to keep such expressions away from the region of *scientific* theology."[98] He expressed optimism in *The Christian Faith* that "a more consistent and unexceptionable representation of the doctrine of the Trinity" might be made, especially since Christianity "has become fully established, and all

96 Francis Schüssler Fiorenza writes, "The divine causality should not be divided among the persons, even though it might be natural to think of Father alone as creator and preserver, Son alone as redeemer, and Spirit alone as sanctifier. On this point Schleiermacher is distant from a Sabellian identification of personhood with specific salvation-historical manifestions" (Schüssler Fiorenza, "Schleiermacher's Understanding of God as Triune," 180).

97 Schleiermacher, "On the Discrepancy," 6 (1836): 53f.

98 Schleiermacher, "On the Discrepancy," 5 (1835): 339.

temptation to polytheism among us is removed."[99] The purpose of reevaluating the Sabellian school was to develop a Trinitarian doctrine free from the vestiges of polytheism and therefore better able to withstand rational scrutiny.

Moses Stuart regarded Schleiermacher as an ally in his struggle against those who rejected the doctrine of the Trinity, on the one hand, and those who defended the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity in all its details. Stuart presented him not as a skeptic of the doctrine, but as its most able defender. "With regard to Schleiermacher's views as a Trinitarian," Stuart wrote, "I can truly say, that I have met scarcely with any writer, ancient or modern, who appears to have a deeper conviction of, or more hearty belief in, the doctrine of the real Godhead of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit."[100] Stuart also quoted at length from two pietistic narratives about the final days and death of Schleiermacher to establish the latter's evangelical *bone fides.*[101] While Stuart did not agree with Schleiermacher in every respect, he stated that "his views are, in most respects, palpable and intelligible."[102] Stuart agreed with Schleiermacher's diagnosis that elements of Arianism and paganism had infected the church's confession of the doctrine of the Trinity. Like Schleiermacher, he held that the church had overstepped the biblical warrants for the doctrine of the Trinity in its creeds. Stuart was willing to bear the ire of the orthodox for rejecting elements of the credal formulas as metaphysical speculations. "If the anathemas of even ecumenical councils were to be fulminated in defence of the Nicene Symbol; if the thunders of the Vatican were to speak loud in its favour; yea, if seven thunders like these were to utter their voices in proclaiming Θεός εκ θεο, φ□ς □κ φωτός," he wrote excitedly, "the humble believer would press the New Testament to his bosom, and say: Jesus, Savior! Thou art my Lord and my God!"[103] Finally, Stuart shared Schleiermacher's underlying conviction that to survive

99 Ibid., 274.

100 Moses Stuart's translation of §190 from the first edition of Schleiermacher's Glaubenslehre. See Stuart's introduction to Schleiermacher, "On the Discrepancy," 5 (1835):268.

101 See ibid., 324-329.

102 Ibid., 277

103 Ibid., 315.

in the modern age the Christian faith needed to reformulate its central doctrines, most especially the doctrine of the Trinity. Stuart seems to have come to regard the emergence of Unitarianism in New England as an overreaction to the intrusion of Arianism and paganism into the courts of the church. His purpose for translating Schleiermacher was thus to save the biblical witness to the Trinity from its orthodox defenders. "It is not that I am a lower Trinitarian," he wrote at the conclusion of his introduction to Schleiermacher's essay, "but because I am a higher one, that I reject [the orthodox Trinitarian creeds]."[104]

Stuart did put some distance between his and Schleiermacher's views on the Trinity. Stuart worried that Schleiermacher had construed the doctrine of the Trinity too consistently. While he agreed that God is Trinitarian in his revelation, he refused to go along with Schleiermacher's contention that God's being in and for itself is monadic. "...I am not willing to stop where he does, nor to conclude that a distinction like that of Father and Son and Spirit in the Godhead, has commenced altogether in time, and has no foundation in the Μονάς."[105] Stuart believed that God's Trinitarian distinctions *ad extra* had some causal ground *ad intra*, though he believed that inner ground would forever remain mysterious.

> We come by necessity...to the position, that there was in the Godhead, antecedent to creation and redemption, something which was the foundation of all developments made in the same. Was this in the substance or in the attributes of the Godhead? It is easy to ask this question; but where can we apply for any satisfactory answer? The Bible does not inform us. The definitions and distinctions of the Schoolmen or later Theologians, give us no adequate information respecting it. ... Can a plain, sensible, unsophisticated reader of the Bible feel...that there was no distinction in the Godhead before the creation of the world, and therefore from eternity?[106]

104 Ibid., 321.

105 See Moses Stuart's concluding remarks on Schleiermacher, "On the Discrepancy," 6 (1836): 94.

94 Ibid., 95.

Stuart thus held that a causal ground for the Trinity existed in the Godhead from all eternity, "which laid the foundation for all the manifestations of the Father and Son and Spirit," but what this distinction is cannot be said—only what it is not.[107] Stuart sacrificed some of Schleiermacher's consistency in favor of biblical fidelity. Whether he wound up with a defensible doctrine of the Trinity is up for debate.

Stuart's writings on the Trinity, particularly his translation of Schleiermacher, raised echoes in various corners of Christendom. Of course, Miller had been the first to detect alarming concessions to Unitarianism in Stuart's writings. Miller's assessment was subsequently confirmed by Charles Hodge.[108] But Stuart's translation also raised negative echoes further afield. His translation found its way to John Henry Newman, who wrote a brief appendix to Tract 73—"On the Introduction of Rationalistic Principles into Religion"—about Stuart's understanding of the Trinity. For Newman, Stuart confirmed the spreading toxin of German rationalism. "The American publication...is a melancholy evidence that the learning and genius of Germany are to be made to bear, by the theologians of the United States, in favour of this same (as the writer must call it) spurious Christianity."[109] The Presbyterian and Anglican defenders of orthodoxy in Princeton and Oxford saw no salvation for the church in Schleiermacher's reformation of Trinitarian doctrine—only a ruinous assault on the creeds.

Stuart's writings on the Trinity found a more positive response in New England. There appears to be a good deal of truth in Stuart's often repeated claim that scholastic distinctions such as the eternal generation of the Son had no purchase on New England divines. Horace Bushnell, for example, praised Stuart's translation

107 Ibid., 96f.

108 Charles Hodge, "Review of *God in Christ* by Horace Bushnell, *Princeton Theological Review* 21 (1849): 259-298.

109 John Henry Newman, "On the Introduction of Rationalistic Principles into Religion," *Tracts for the Times* no. 73. Stephen B. Thomas notes, however, that Newman "seriously misrepresented" Stuart's actual views in this brief appendix (Stephen B. Thomas, *Newman and Heresy: The Anglican Years* [Cambridge: University Press, 1991], 137).

of Schleiermacher in his *God in Christ*. He shared Stuart's opinion that the emergence of Unitarianism was prompted in part by the obscurities upheld by orthodox Calvinists. He thus also occupied the space between Unitarianism and Calvinist orthodoxy which Stuart had staked out. In his introduction to *God in Christ*, Bushnell thanked Stuart for showing him the way forward for contemporary trinitarian doctrine. "Thirteen or fourteen years ago, Professor Stuart translated and published, in the Biblical Repository, a translation of Schleiermacher's critique on Sabellius, adding copious remarks of his own. ... I was greatly obliged to Professor S. for giving it to the public, and not the less because it confirmed me in results to which I had come by my own private struggles."[110] Although Bushnell proposed to reconstruct the doctrine of the Trinity differently than Schleiermacher or Stuart, he accepted their claim that the creedal formulations do not uphold the full divinity of Christ.[111] In his review of Bushnell's *God in Christ*, Charles Hodge declared any use of Schleiermacher's reconstruction of the Trinity—modified or not—as beyond the pale: "Dr. Bushnell has chosen to enrol himself among the avowed opposers of the church doctrine of the Trinity."[112] While Bushnell may eventually have moved beyond Stuart's agnosticism about the God's Being *ad intra*,[113] the fact that he continued Stuart's line of thinking about the Trinity was sufficient to confirm the Princeton theologians about the errancy of Moses Stuart and the Andover school.

Let's conclude with a counterfactual. What if Moses Stuart had translated not Schleiermacher's but another Germanic theologian's meditations on the Trinity? A theologian who shared Stuart's concerns about applying the language of "person" to the Trinitarian modes of beings for fear of ascribing three distinct centers of consciousness to God? A theologian who also grounded his Trinitarian doctrine in the unity of the divine subject, sharing

110 Horace Bushnell, *God in Christ: Three Discourses Delivered at New Haven, Cambridge, and Andover* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1876), 111f.

111 Ibid., 135.

112 Hodge, Review of *God in Christ* by Horace Bushnell, 281.

113 Cf. Fred Kirschenmann, "Horace Bushnell: Orthodox or Sabellian?" *Church History* 33 (1964): 49-59.

Stuart's aversion to 'social Trinitarianism'? A theologian who preserved the creedal language attesting to the eternal begetting of the Son, but cautioned that "the knowledge expressed in the metaphor is a non-knowing knowledge"[114] and more frequently spoke of the "self-positing of God"? This theologian in view is, of course, none other than the Swiss-German, Karl Barth. Would Stuart have recognized Barth's concerns in the first volume of the *Church Dogmatics* as his own? Of course, we'll never know. Counterfactuals have no truth-value; they only lead us to think more broadly about conceptual possibilities. So let me put this point differently. May it be that Karl Barth—who also took up the contested space between liberalism and orthodoxy—was a more genuine successor to Moses Stuart than Horace Bushnell and his liberal New England successors? If so, perhaps we should learn to read Moses Stuart's writings on the Trinity in the company of another great (Swiss-) German scholar.

-Clifford Blake Anderson

114 Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics* I/1, 432.

APOLOGETICS FOR THE NEW MILLENIUM

A Book Review by Rev. Kenneth Aldrich

Simply Christian: Why Christianity Makes Sense by N.T. Wright. New York, Harper-Collins. ISBN 13: 978-0-06-050715-2

By choice of title, the Bishop of Durham has inevitably invited comparison with C.S. Lewis' classic, ***Mere Christianity***. Both Wright and Lewis offer their contemporaries - in the early 21st and mid 20th centuries, respectively – well reasoned apologias of "the faith once delivered to the saints," set forth in terms accessible to the modern reader.

Before becoming a bishop, Nicholas Thomas Wright labored with no little success in the field of New Testament studies as well as taking seriously his ordination as a presbyter in the Church of England. Perhaps his best known of his numerous publications here-to-fore is ***The Meaning of Jesus***, which he co-authored with Marcus Borg of the Jesus Seminar. Here Wright acted as a traditionalist counterfoil to Borg's more radical assertions.

In ***Simply Christian***, however the author is totally free to set his own agenda and express his personal convictions without contradiction from those of another mind. The book records the results of much reflection and someone with a mature and rich spirituality.

Simply Christian's introduction regrettably 'gives away the plot' rather than allowing readers the joy of discovering it for themselves.

Like ancient Gaul, the main body of ***Simply Christian*** *in tres partes divisa est*: A. "Echoes of a Voice," B. "Staring at the Sun," and C. "Reflecting the Image." The first and shortest section (I-IV) reflects upon humanity's fixations with the four phenomena of justice, spirituality, relationships and beauty. In connection with our experiences in these areas, Wright argues, we hear the "echoes of a voice" which leads us to suspect the existence of a reality beyond that which can be verified by physical science.

"Staring at the Sun" (V-X) begins by exploring three options – pantheism, deism, and biblical religion – which Dr. Wright

postulates as possible answers to the questions posed by the "echo" phenomenon treated in the earlier section. As one might expect, the bishop affirms the third option as the right choice. He then proceeds to lay out the historic Christian faith, anchoring it solidly in Israel and the Old Testament. The tone shifts perceptibly from the dialectical which characterized the initial chapters into something more prescriptive – even dogmatic – albeit scholarly.

While the second section describes the faith of the Christian, section three – "Reflecting the Image" (XI-XVI) – attempts an exposition of the recommended practice of faith for the Christian. In this context, chapter XV clearly asserts that authentic Christianity necessitates membership in the community of faith we call the church. One notes that there is no place for "lone Ranger" Christianity in Wright's understanding of Christian faith and practice. He is a churchman par excellence.

By and large, the author focuses on those things upon which most Christians agree, avoiding anything idiosyncratic or peculiar to some branches but absent from others. Thus his presentation can be described as ecumenical and non-sectarian. However, Wright openly reveals himself as a traditionalist with respect to most theological issues. Accordingly, those Christians on the very liberal end of the spectrum might experience some disaffection with what he has to say.

Although he generally avoids areas of intra-Christian controversy, Wright does venture into the thorny terrain of the longstanding, Protestant-Catholic impasse over Eucharistic doctrine. He risks potentially alienating persons on both sides by proposing a breakthrough. In this regard, he articulates a powerful theological synthesis, embracing the essential positions of both camps in the context of a dynamic numinous conjunction of time with eternity, and the human with the divine (cf. pp. 153-157).

For those of us committed to Mercersburg Theology, this segment of the book alone is worth the price of the whole. Although approaching the topic somewhat differently than does Nevin, Wright sets forth an understanding totally compatible with that expressed in ***The Mystical Presence***.

I found ***Simply Christian*** indeed highly admirable, but not quite flawless. I must confess that I would have preferred somewhat

less of the conventional and predictable and somewhat more of the original and insightful. Having said this, it is only fair to recognize that ***Simply Christian*** does contain memorable and even elegant principles. Here are some textual excerpts:

"(Christian Ethics) is about practicing the tunes we shall sing in God's new world."(222)

"Christianity isn't about Jesus offering a wonderful moral example...Some people's lives really have been changed simply by contemplating and imitating the example of Jesus. But observing Jesus' example could equally well simply make a person depressed. Watching Richter play the piano or Tiger Woods hit a golf ball doesn't inspire to go out and copy them. It makes me realize that I can't come close and never will." (91)

"Listening to God's voice in scripture doesn't put us in the position of having infallible opinions. It puts us where it put Jesus himself: in the possession of a vocation for a life time or for the next minute. Vocations are fragile, and are tested in performance. That is what it's like to live at the intersection of heaven and earth." (189)

"A great many arguments about God – God's existence, God's nature, God's actions in the world – run the risk of being like pointing a flashlight toward the sky to see if the sun is shining...The difficulty is that speaking of God in anything like the Christian sense is like staring into the sun. It's dazzling. It's easier, actually, to look away from the sun itself and to enjoy the fact that, once it's well and finally risen you can see everything else clearly." (56)

One is amazed above all by the large amount of solid material the author has managed to cram into this relatively slim volume. Likewise he avoids being turgid or technical and thus producing a text so dense as to make reading it a chore rather than a pleasure. The text flows freely; its ideas present themselves cogently and convincingly.

In the course of the book, Wright is able to refute authors like of ***The DaVinci Code*** dilettantes as well as the more seriously challenging Nag Hamadi aficionados. He does this without rancor or ridicule, directing his readers away from beguiling tangents back to mainstream Christianity.

Will ***Simply Christian*** become an apologetic classic on the order of ***Mere Christianity***. Yes, according to Anne Rice, whose highly laudatory remarks are quoted on the book jacket of the first edition. Walter Brueggemann's sentiments, two paragraphs down the book jacket from those of Rice, more closely match my own. "Wright lives imaginatively at the interface of critical thought and church faith. Readers will welcome such ready access to one of the fine teachers of the church."

I may be prejudiced because of the significant role Lewis played in my own Christian pilgrimage, but while I regard ***Simply Christian*** as the highest quality of English sterling, it is not, in my view, the 24 karat gold one encounters in ***Mere Christianity***. Whereas the bishop may be better at scriptural exegesis, the literary don excels in the use of language, facility of expression and impeccable narrative style.

Nonetheless, I most heartily recommend ***Simply Christian***. It asks the right kind of spiritual questions and offers responses that are easily comprehensible without being condescending or smug. Like most such apologetic works, this one may be more likely to appeal to and edify those who are already in some way attracted to Christianity rather than to those with little or no interest therein. N. T. Wright possesses both an academician's head and a pastor's heart, graciously affording the reader –whether a skeptical inquirer or a confirmed believer – the insights of one who truly knows and deeply loves his subject.

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