THE *IMAGO DEI* AND PASCAL'S ABDUCTIVE

ANTHROPOLOGICAL ARGUMENT

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APPROVAL SHEET

THE *IMAGO DEI* AND PASCAL'S ABDUCTIVE

ANTHROPOLOGICAL ARGUMENT

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To Christa,

my beloved wife, cherished friend,

and companion in pursuit of Christlikeness.

"Strength and dignity are her clothing,

and she laughs at the time to come."

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PREFACE

The task of writing this dissertation has been mine; others have shouldered the rest of the burden. My supervisor, Dr. Douglas Blount, has inspired me with a "broader, more comprehensive vision of the apologist's task."[1] Through his invaluable feedback (including hundreds of comments on initial chapter drafts) he pushed me to think and write more clearly. I have also greatly appreciated Dr. Jonathan Pennington's vision for the research doctoral studies program at SBTS. His emphasis on the importance of learning in community made me feel more connected to the seminary, even as a distance student. Other professors also deserve my thanks for their role in this journey. Dr. James Parker encouraged me through his feedback on my first forays into Ph.D.-level writing, and he taught me how to analyze worldviews. Dr. Ted Cabal modeled humility and intellectual vigor as he steered his students through philosophical theology and the history of Western thought. Dr. Mark Coppenger made epistemology come alive through his engaging teaching approach. Drs. Michael Haykin, Stephen Yuille, and Tom Nettles opened for me the wealth of spiritual resources we have in past theologians, including the Patristics, the Puritans, and Jonathan Edwards.

I am grateful to my former pastor and dear friend, Dr. Ron Allen, under whom I served as youth pastor when I first started my Ph.D. studies. He provided steady encouragement and spiritual counsel throughout my coursework. Also deserving my thanks are the people of Bible Baptist Church, as well as the members of my former youth group and college and career group. They allowed me to share some of the fruits of

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[1]Douglas Keith Blount, "Good (and Beautiful) News for Postmodern Apologists," *Caesura* 2.2 (2015): 14.

my studies and helped me constantly think of practical ways God's Word intersects with our lives.

When I needed a place to stay during my modular classes, Angus and Cherie Nicholson modeled the instruction given in Hebrews to "not neglect to show hospitality to strangers." Before even meeting me, they agreed to let my family and me stay in their home, providing everything I needed for a comfortable stay.

Early in the writing of this dissertation, my younger brother, Joshua Threlfall, was diagnosed with an aggressive form of leukemia. For a time, I despaired of Joshua's life, but the Lord allowed my older brother, Daniel, to donate his bone marrow, and Joshua is now free from his cancer. In their many dark trials, Joshua and his wife, Aimee, have radiated a depth of trust and joy I envy. When in chapter 6, I quote 2 Corinthians 4:8-10, Josh and Aimee were on my mind: "Afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies" (2 Cor 4:8-10).

Other dear friends have also walked with me on this journey. Dr. Brian Pate and I shared many exciting conversations about biblical theology. Besides supporting me with prayers and encouraging words, he furnished me with an elegant copy of Pascal's *Pensées* from the Great Books Series. I am also grateful for Dr. Joel Arnold, my friend and my brother-in-law. He gave me the valuable gift of listening, thinking and providing feedback—all of which were helpful, some of which kept me from blunders. Dr. Brian Collins also gave valuable input and directed me to important resources.

To my father-in-law, Pastor Dan MacAvoy, I owe an enormous debt of gratitude. If it were not for his wise advice and tangible help, it is unlikely that I would have completed this degree. He guided me through a major life change, as he and Hanover Baptist Church offered me the opportunity to serve as assistant pastor during the writing phase of my dissertation. I have been overwhelmed often at the kindness and

generosity of him and my mother-in-law, Janice MacAvoy. I also thank the people of Hanover Baptist Church for their love, support, and prayers.

Throughout my Ph.D. studies, my parents, Doug and Barbara Threlfall, have faithfully served as missionaries in South Korea, where they have been for many years. Their influence on my life—in teaching me from the earliest ages to love and live for Jesus Christ—is incalculable. Thirty years ago, at the price of her blood, sweat, and tears, my longsuffering mother gave me the basic skills for completing this dissertation: she taught me to read and write. The childhood memory of my father reading the Bible to my siblings and me shaped my love and respect for God's Word. But even more impacting are my memories of him kneeling in prayer alone on early mornings. Often, what we intend no one to notice is what makes a lasting impression.

Our children have also contributed to this dissertation. They "complicate life," as A. G. Sertillanges puts it, "but so sweetly that they should serve to give the worker fresh courage rather than to lessen his resources." Instead of being a hindrance, they "defend you against the abstract; they bring you back to the real, about which their questioning eyes are waiting for an exact commentary from you." I could not think of a better way to describe the help I have received from Anna Grace, Nate, Miles, and Karis.

Finally, I am indebted to my beautiful wife, Christa, for being my most important human source of encouragement and joy along this journey. When I first told her I was considering the Ph.D., she could have sensibly steered her husband away from the notion. But instead, Christa urged me to pursue it. In this and countless other ways I have seen how Christa prizes God and his will above her own interests. In this life, I will never know all the sacrifices Christa made for me to complete this degree. For one thing,

she doesn't know: she wasn't counting. And even if she had been, she loves me too much to tell me the sum.

For these and more reasons than space permits, all the glory goes to God.

Jonathan Threlfall

Richmond, Virginia
May 2018

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Pascal's Anthropological Argument

A man chases a golf ball down the fairway. Some young people swarm into a movie theater. A politician pursues a higher office. In their mundane pursuits, these people betray something about the human condition: we are both great and wretched.[1]

Farfetched at first blush, this claim begins to make sense to the careful thinker. If they were truly happy in their present condition, why would they pursue something else? As it is, even the objects of their pursuits remain useful only as long as they arouse interest. But the game of golf becomes boring, the movie credits roll, and a higher office beckons. Robbed of these distractions, with nothing but themselves to think about, they will find the feeling of unhappiness to be unbearable, and continue their frenzied quests.[2]

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[1]Unless otherwise indicated, I cite the *Pensées* by the fragment number from Lafuma's numbering scheme ("L"), followed by the fragment number from Sellier's numbering scheme ("S"), separating these numbers by a slash. English translations are from A. J. Krailsheimer (London: Penguin Books, 1995). I follow Pascal in choosing examples of *divertissement* (entertaining pursuits) from the world of sports, entertainment, and politics. "Men," he observes, "spend their time chasing a ball or a hare; it is the very sport of kings" (L39/S73). But it is never the ball or prey they are really chasing, for no one truly "imagines that true bliss comes from possessing the money to be won at gaming or the hare that is hunted: no one would take it as a gift" (L136/S168). "The hare" (or football or video game) "would not save us from thinking about death and the miseries distracting us, but hunting it does so" (L136/S168). Regarding the theater, Pascal remarks that "all the principal kinds of entertainment are dangerous for the Christian life," but "among all those which the world has invented there is none more to be feared than the theatre" (L523/S630). In politics, Pascal explains why "high office" is so "popular": it is the "agitation that takes our mind off [our unhappy condition] and diverts us." This is why, though we complain about how busy life is, we are "so fond of hustle and bustle" (L136/S168).

[2]"Take away their diversion," Pascal predicts, "and you will see them bored to extinction. Then they feel their nullity without recognizing it, for nothing could be more wretched than to be intolerably depressed as soon as one is reduced to introspection with no means of diversion" (L36/S70). Ironically, this "diversion" is "taken away" by the very pursuit of it. MIT philosophy professor Kieran Setiya observes this phenomenon with respect to mid-life crises: "Your engagement with value," he writes, "is self-destructive. The way in which you relate to the activities that matter most to you is by trying to complete them and so expel them from your life. . . . Your relationship with the values that structure your life remains antagonistic to itself: by engaging with them in the mode of pursuit and completion, you aim at

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Yet this very feeling of unhappiness betrays something else: they have some sense of happiness, or, at least, a sense that their lives ought to be somehow better.[3] If they had no such sense, why else would they protest against the feeling of unhappiness by pursuing happiness? However, this sense of happiness does not mitigate their unhappiness—it actually turns it to misery.[4] For it is miserable to want something (happiness) but be unable to achieve it. Let us call this sense of happiness *greatness*, and this feeling of unhappiness *wretchedness*. It seems, then, that these mundane pursuits do reveal this duality of the human condition.

If the careful thinker has a curious bent, she may demand to know why humans exhibit this paradoxical duality of greatness and wretchedness. Perhaps it is because what Scripture teaches about the human condition is true: that God created humans for his glory, but that they have rebelled against him, severing themselves from the life and joy found only in a relationship with him. Perhaps, then, the only solution to our wretchedness is to be found in Christ, who, as fully God and fully man, died and rose again to reconcile sinners to himself.

This, in short, is a Pascalian approach to persuading people to believe in Christ. After demonstrating that human wretchedness "is the wretchedness of a great lord, the wretchedness of a dispossessed king," Pascal proclaims that "with Jesus Christ man is free from vice and wretchedness. In him lies all our virtue and all our happiness" (L116/S148, L416/S35). Having made people *wish* that Christianity is true, he then demonstrates—summoning the resources of history and logic—that it *is*.[5] Unlike some

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outcomes that preclude the possibility of such engagement. In pursuing a goal, you are trying to exhaust your interaction with something good, as if you were to make friends for the sake of saying goodbye," Kieran Setiya, *Midlife: A Philosophical Guide* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2017), 133.

[3]"Man's greatness is so obvious that it can even be deduced from his wretchedness" (L117/S149).

[4]Pascal writes, "Anyone is unhappy who wills but cannot do" (L75/S110).

[5]"Men despise religion," Pascal observes, "They hate it and are afraid it may be true. The cure for this is first to show that religion is not contrary to reason, but worthy of reverence and respect. Next

other approaches to Christian persuasion, people find this directly compelling.[6] The evidence is as ancient as human history, vast as the human population, and close as one's heart. Since it begins with *human* feelings and behavior, it is called an *anthropological* argument.[7] And since it is uniquely personal, it is also uniquely powerful.

Yet Pascal's version of the anthropological argument is powerful for another reason: it pierces the defenses of postmodern thought. However one understands postmodernism—that slippery term that defies a precise definition—at least one thing is clear: its "incredulity toward metanarratives" has largely immunized Western culture against traditional approaches to Christian apologetics.[8] A. M. Robbins goes so far as to lament that postmodernity's "increasing lack of shared values . . . leaves apologetics floundering."[9] Although some apologetic approaches appear to "flounder," in the waters of postmodernity, the Pascalian craft of apologetics successfully navigates these challenges.[10] Rejecting the Enlightenment ideals of Descartes (which postmodernity

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make it attractive, make good men wish it were true, and then show that it is. Worthy of reverence because it really understands human nature. Attractive because it promises the true good" (L12/S152).

[6]The logical "proofs" for God's existence, by contrast, depend on a person's ability to follow their logic and, moreover, an epistemological framework foreign to some people's way of thinking. Pascal points out these limitations: "The metaphysical proofs for the existence of God," he writes, "are so remote from human reasoning and so involved that they make little impact, and, even if they did help some people, it would only be for the moment during which they watched the demonstration, because an hour later they would be afraid they had made a mistake" (L190/S222).

[7]I use "argument" here to denote a case for or against a particular idea, not a particular form of logical reasoning.

[8]Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi, Theory and History of Literature 10 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), xxiv.

[9]A. M. Robbins, "Legitimacy of Apologetics," in *New Dictionary of Christian Apologetics*, ed. C. Campbell-Jack, Gavin J. McGrath, and C. Stephen Evans (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2006), 23.

[10]James Peters seeks to "remedy the disimbeddedness of our postmodern condition by returning to the thought of two Christian thinkers of the past, Augustine and Pascal, whose perspective on Christian faith and human reason provide us with a viable way to overcome modernity's unfortunate legacy of a deep and ugly divide between reason and affection and postmodernism's excessive preoccupation with its own gospel of radical autonomy," in *Logic of the Heart, The: Augustine, Pascal, and the Rationality of Faith* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009), 15.

rejects), Pascal charted a humbler course toward belief in God.[11] Rather than launching

his apologetic project from epistemic certitude (as the "Father of Modern Philosophy"

attempted to do), Pascal started from the perilous situation of humans' certainty and

uncertainty.[12] Thus, while postmoderns may turn a deaf ear to the apologetic overtures in

the classical tradition of Thomas Aquinas or Joseph Butler, they might find themselves

moved by the strains of Pascal, who dares them to consider: "If man was not made for

God, why is he only happy in God? If man was made for God, why is he so opposed to

God? (L399/S18)."

Despite its potential effectiveness in a postmodern culture, Pascal's

anthropological argument has received relatively little attention from Christian

apologists. This is surprising, not only because the contemporary cultural and intellectual

climate seems ripe for such an approach, but also because the fragmentary nature of

Pascal's apologetic naturally invites Christian apologists to extend and bolster his

arguments. Three avenues of research seem worthy of attention. First, Pascal's

anthropological argument takes the form of abduction—a kind of reasoning that was not

well understood until Charles Sanders Peirce developed a vocabulary for it in the 19th

century.[13] This relatively recent development in abductive reasoning, it seems, could

supply apologists with tools to formulate more rigorously the abductive anthropological

argument. Second, as a form of abductive reasoning, the anthropological argument may

be strengthened when its proposed explanation for the data is shown to be superior to

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[11]Pascal writes, "Knowing God without knowing our own wretchedness makes for pride. Knowing our own wretchedness without knowing God makes for despair. Knowing Jesus Christ strikes the balance because he shows us both God and our own wretchedness" (L192/S225).

[12]René Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, trans. Donald A. Cress (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1993), 34.

[13]Peter Lipton, "Abduction," in *The Philosophy of Science: An Encyclopedia* (New York: Routledge, 2005), ed. Sahotra Sarkar and Jessica Pfeifer, 1. See also Dov M. Gabbay and John Woods, *A Practical Logic of Cognitive Systems*, vol. 2, *The Reach of Abduction: Insight and Trial* (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2005), 39.

other proposed explanations. As non-Christian thinkers offer alternative explanations for the human condition, Christian apologists have the opportunity to explain how and why these accounts fail to provide an explanation that surpasses than the Christian one. Third, since Pascal's "case for revelational anthropology" rests implicitly on the doctrine of the *imago Dei*, considerations arising from this doctrine might enhance his anthropological argument.[14] This third avenue is the subject of this dissertation.

Thesis

This dissertation, then, occupies the intersection of two areas: (1) the image of God as a theological theme and (2) Pascal's anthropological argument as an apologetic approach. My central argument is that the doctrine of the *imago Dei* strengthens Pascal's abductive anthropological argument.

I had read snippets of the *Pensées*, but I did not study Pascal's writings deeply until I began doctoral studies at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. In my first course, I read Avery Cardinal Dulles's *History of Apologetics,* and it was his description of Pascal's apologetic that roused my study of him: "With extraordinary psychological insight," Dulles writes, "Pascal dissects the nature of man, showing both his nobility and his wretchedness. He shows the paradoxes of the human situation, man's foolish pride and vain imaginings, his weakness before the wild powers of nature, and his superiority over those powers insofar as he knows his misery, repents of his failures, yearns for all truth and goodness."[15] My resulting interest in Pascal led me to the writings of Douglas Groothuis, whose work on Pascal arguably has constituted the most significant effort to bring attention to Pascal's apologetic in evangelical scholarship.[16] It also prompted my

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[14]Douglas Groothuis, *Christian Apologetics: A Comprehensive Case for Biblical Faith* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2011), 437.

[15]Avery Robert Cardinal Dulles, *A History of Apologetics* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2005), 162.

[16]Douglas R. Groothuis, "Deposed Royalty: Pascal's Anthropological Argument," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 41, no. 2 (1998): 297–312.

writing of several papers in which I analyzed Pascal's use of the book of Ecclesiastes, his philosophical Christocentrism, and his epistemology of the heart. Through Pascal I learned that all right thinking must bow to Christ as Lord, and that true knowledge of God results in humility and worship.[17] I hope that this dissertation will serve in some way to highlight the importance and strengthen the impact of an apologetic approach—namely, a Pascalian anthropological one—that deserves greater attention and clarity in contemporary Christian apologetics.

Pascal's Anthropological Argument in Apologetic Literature

For a variety of reasons, the anthropological argument is not neatly defined in apologetic literature. First, the anthropological argument refers not to a single argument, but to a family of variously-termed arguments.[18] Second, there is no consensus on how such arguments should be classified.[19] Third, writers that discuss the anthropological argument do not consistently name it as such.

A few examples illuminate these challenges. (1) In his book *Reasonable Faith,* William Lane Craig discusses Pascal's anthropological argument among other apologetic approaches that take as their starting point the "human predicament"—including the approaches of Fyodor Dostoyevsky, Søren Kierkegaard, and Francis Schaeffer.[20]

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[17]Alvin Plantinga, "Advice to Christian Philosophers," *Faith and Philosophy Journal* 1, no. 3 (October 1984): 253–71.

[18]Kenneth Boa and Robert M. Bowman, *Faith Has Its Reasons: Integrative Approaches to Defending the Christian Faith*, 2nd ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2006), 97.

[19]Part of this difficulty lies in the fact that there is no consensus on how various apologetic systems should be categorized. James Beilby identifies five taxonomies: (1) Norman Geisler's ("Types of Apologetics," in *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics* [Grand Rapids: Baker 1999]), (2) Steven Cowan's (*Five Views on Apologetics* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000]), (3) Bernard Ramm's (*Types of Christian Apologetics* [Wheaton, IL: Van Kampen, 1953]), (4) Gordon Lewis's (*Testing Christianity's Truth Claims* [Chicago: Moody, 1976]), and (5) Boa's (*Faith has Its Reasons: An Integrative Approach to Defending Christianity* [Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2001]); Beilby then offers his own taxonomy ("Varieties of Apologetics," ed. Chad V. Meister and Khaldoun A. Sweis, *Christian Apologetics: An Anthology of Primary Sources* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012], 31–38).

[20]William Lane Craig, *Reasonable Faith: Christian Truth and Apologetics*, 3rd ed. (Wheaton,

However, Craig identifies this approach most closely with Francis Schaeffer, calling it "cultural apologetics," and never uses the term "anthropological argument" to describe it.[21] (2) Boa and Bowman, on the other hand, do use the term "anthropological argument" to refer to a "broader argument" that "reasons from specific aspects of human nature to the existence of God, and includes arguments from morality, aesthetics, human thought and reason, and the need for meaning, purpose, and hope."[22] Yet in the section of their book devoted to the apologetic approach of Blaise Pascal, the anthropological argument is described, but never named as such.[23] (3) Likewise, in his *History of Apologetics,* Dulles aptly summarizes Pascal's anthropological argument as presenting the "enigmatic situation of man,"[24] and the superiority of the Christian explanation for this enigma, but does not use the term "anthropological argument." (4) Peter Kreeft discusses, but does not name, the anthropological argument in his book *Christianity for Modern Pagans,* but (surprisingly) there is no mention of the anthropological argument in his *Handbook of Christian Apologetics.*[25] (5) In his book *Faith and Reason,* Ronald Nash touches on Pascal's anthropological argument in the "Anthropology" section of the chapter entitled "The Christian World-View."[26] Echoing Pascal, Nash writes, "The essential paradox here—the greatness and the misery—of humankind flows out of two important truths. God created humans as the apex of his creation; our chief end, in the words of the Westminster Catechism, is to glorify God and enjoy him forever. But each human being

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IL: Crossway, 2008), 65.

[21]Craig, *Reasonable Faith,* 65.

[22]Boa and Bowman, *Faith Has Its Reasons*, 97.

[23]Ibid., 343–45.

[24]Dulles, *A History of Apologetics*, 161.

[25]Peter Kreeft and Ronald K. Tacelli, *Handbook of Christian Apologetics: Hundreds of Answers to Crucial Questions* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1994).

[26]Ronald H. Nash, *Faith & Reason: Searching for a Rational Faith* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1988), 35–50.

is fallen, is in rebellion against the God who created and loves him."[27] Although Nash articulates the argument, he did not use the term "anthropological argument." (6) Douglas Groothuis's article on Pascal in the *New Dictionary of Christian Apologetics* mentions the anthropological argument, but no entry deals with that argument by name. (7) Likewise, Norman Geisler's *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics* contains no article on the anthropological argument. (8) Finally, Geisler's *Christian Apologetics* has a section on Pascal's apologetic, but he construes it as a species of fideism, conflates it with Pascal's "wager," and does not mention the anthropological argument, either by name or description.[28]

Douglas Groothuis

Despite this inattention to and lack of clarity on Pascal's anthropological argument, the work of Douglas Groothuis offers a refreshing change. His contribution to the research on Pascal's anthropological argument first appeared in the *Journal of the Evangelical Society* in 1998. In this article, he gathers various statements from the *Pensées* to provide an exposition of Pascal's anthropological argument. Groothuis formulates the argument as follows:

> [I]t states that humans are (1) wretched because fallen, (2) great because of their unfallen origin and the vestiges of it, and (3) redeemable through the incarnation. Pascal observes the human condition from a number of angles, crafts a cumulative and abductive case for his revelational anthropology, and challenges any other worldview to better explain the human condition.[29]

In addition to providing this summary of the argument, Groothuis also makes another important contribution to the research on this argument: he identifies it as a form of abductive reasoning, and argues that "if this kind of reasoning is common, useful and

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[27]Nash, *Faith & Reason,* 44.

[28]Norman L. Geisler, *Christian Apologetics*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1976), 47–50.

[29]Groothuis, "Deposed Royalty," 297.

acceptable in other contexts, its use in the philosophy of religion should not be excluded."[30] A revised version of Groothuis's journal article appears as a chapter in *Christian Apologetics: A Comprehensive Case for a Biblical Faith*. While substantially the same as the journal article, this chapter suggests at least one way the anthropological argument can be strengthened and sustained: "The rudiments of Pascal's case for Christianity can be applied to any potential rival on a case-by-case basis."[31]

Peter Kreeft

Although this dissertation draws primarily from Groothuis's terminology and description of Pascal's anthropological argument, two other writers are worth mentioning in the background of research: Peter Kreeft and Robert Velarde. Although Kreeft has written no book or article devoted exclusively to Pascal's anthropological argument, he offers this summary in *Christianity for Modern Pagans* (a "festooning" of Pascal):[32]

> Can you really prove a past Paradise from our present unhappiness? But the conclusion logically follows from the premise if we add one other premise, as our missing link. The complete syllogism would look like this:
> A. No one would be unhappy not to be king (king of life—perfectly happy) unless he had once been king and been dethroned.
> B. But man is unhappy not to be king.
> C. Therefore man must have once been this king of happiness and fallen from this state, that is, been dethroned.[33]

Unlike Groothuis, who understands that the anthropological argument is an abductive one, Kreeft recasts Pascal's anthropological argument as deduction. It seems, however, that this recasting significantly weakens the force of the argument, since an unbeliever is less likely to agree to the premises as Kreeft has expressed them.

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[30]Groothuis, "Deposed Royalty," 310.

[31]Groothuis, *Christian Apologetics*, 437.

[32]Peter Kreeft, *Christianity for Modern Pagans: Pascal's Pensées Edited, Outlined, and Explained* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1993), 17.

[33]Ibid., 61.

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Nevertheless, Kreeft's chapter devoted to "The Paradox of Greatness and Wretchedness" contains helpful insights into Pascal's anthropological argument.[34]

Robert Velarde

In his 2004 article in the *Christian Research Journal*, Velarde seeks to explain the anthropological argument and highlight its contemporary relevance.[35] Although he draws heavily from Groothuis' 1998 article, Velarde does helpfully suggest the usefulness of this argument to confront the challenge of the New Age movement and humanism.

The Present Work

The authors mentioned above, and especially Groothuis, have provided helpful expositions and commentary on Pascal's anthropological argument. However, to my knowledge, nothing has been done to discover how this argument can be strengthened as an apologetic for Christian belief by drawing its connections with recent biblical and systematic theological studies in the doctrine of the *imago Dei*. In light of this need and the value of such an endeavor, I propose to demonstrate how dialogue among these fields of study will serve to strengthen Pascal's abductive anthropological argument by providing greater specificity to the explanation for human greatness and wretchedness. This work aims to advance the thesis by bringing a subfield of biblical and systematic theology (the doctrine of the *imago Dei*) into dialogue with Christian apologetics, specifically Pascal's abductive anthropological argument.

Outline of Argument

The question I seek to answer is this: how may the doctrine of the *imago Dei*

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[34]Kreeft, *Christianity for Modern Pagans*, 51–72.

[35]Robert Velarde, "Greatness and Wretchedness: The Usefulness of Pascal's Anthropological Argument in Apologetics," *Christian Research Journal* 27, no. 2 (2004), accessed February 5, 2018, http://www.equip.org/PDF/JAP500.pdf

strengthen Pascal's anthropological argument? I argue that the *imago Dei,* as an explanation for the paradoxes of the human predicament, provides a level of detail not found in Pascal's *Pensées* and accounts for a broader scope of paradoxical human beliefs and behavior.

I substantiate that claim as follows. Since Pascal's anthropological argument is found in his *Pensées*, I argue in chapter 2 why it is legitimate to understand this collection of fragments to be his unfinished *Apology for the Christian Faith*. I also provide an exposition of the anthropological theme in the *Pensées* in order to demonstrate that this theme may be cast as a three-stage abductive argument, consisting of data, explanation, and elimination. In the data stage, Pascal presents evidence from human beliefs and behavior to make the case that humans are a paradoxical duality of greatness and wretchedness—a duality, moreover, that makes them wretched. In the explanatory stage, Pascal shows that Christian anthropology is the plausible explanation for humans' paradoxical duality. In the eliminative stage, Pascal argues that all other religions or worldviews fail to explain the human condition because they inevitably exaggerate either greatness or wretchedness. Only Christian anthropology, he insists, has the scope to encompass both poles of the paradox. I argue that the doctrine of the *imago Dei* belongs to the explanatory stage of the anthropological argument.

But what is the *imago Dei*? Interpreters are hardly agreed on precisely what it means that humans are created in the image of God. Chapter 3, therefore, surveys the history of interpretation, focusing on Irenaeus, Augustine, Aquinas, Luther, Calvin, Barth, and the recent "consensus" of Old Testament scholars. Despite significant differences, interpreters agree at least that the doctrine of the *imago Dei* means that humanness integrally involves a relationship with God, and that sin intrudes in opposition to human nature.

Drawing on the insights of a variety of interpreters, chapter 4 presents six propositions about imagedness. In general, the doctrine of the *imago Dei* indicates that

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the fallen human condition—by virtue of imagedness and fallenness—exists in conflict with itself.

Chapter 5 correlates the propositions about imagedness from chapter 4 with the explanatory stage of Pascal's anthropological argument. The result is that the doctrine of the *imago Dei* provides a finer level of detail to the explanation for humans' paradoxical duality, thus tightening the connection between data and explanation. In addition, the doctrine of the *imago Dei* encompasses more instances of humans' paradoxical behavior and beliefs, including our influence on others, our beliefs about God, and our beliefs about ourselves.

Chapter 6 dilates on one proposition from chapter 4: expressions of imagedness are being restored in redeemed humans. If this is true, we should expect to see the renewed *imago Dei* (i.e., Christiformity) instantiated in people's lives. Further, if some humans do instantiate Christiformity, their lives serve as more evidence that Christian anthropology explains the human condition. Chapter 6, therefore, presents a Scriptural portrait of how Christiformic humans believe and behave. Then it investigates whether such beliefs and behavior are instantiated in the lives of three Christians— Augustine, C. S. Lewis, and Jonathan Edwards. The result of this investigation is that these Christians do instantiate Christiformity, and their lives thus heighten the plausibility of Christian anthropology. In becoming Christlike, therefore, a Christian can *be*, as it were, an "embodied anthropological argument."

CHAPTER 2

THE CONTEXT AND CONTENT OF PASCAL'S
ANTHROPOLOGICAL ARGUMENT

Introduction

Pascal's portrayal of the human condition in the *Pensées* is generally

recognized as his apology for the Christian faith. David Wetsel describes Pascal's

projected apology as "an anthropological investigation of the enigma of the human

condition and the successively potent theological proofs that explain this enigma."[1]

Similarly, A. J. Krailsheimer observes that "the categorical statement that man is

wretched constitutes the basis of Pascal's entire argument."[2] Pascal himself stresses this

anthropological focus in his approach to persuading unbelievers.

> If he exalts himself, I humble him.
> If he humbles himself, I exalt him.
> And I go on contradicting him
> Until he understands
> That he is a monster that passes all understanding. (L130/S167)

This chapter presents Pascal's discussion of the human condition (i.e., his

anthropological investigation) as an abductive argument in order to show how the

doctrine of the *imago Dei* may be situated within this argument. First, I explain the

context of the anthropological investigation, namely, Pascal's projected apology found in

the *Pensées*. Second, I dissect the anthropological investigation as three stages of an

abductive argument. This presentation of Pascal's discussion of the human condition

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[1]William David Wetsel, "Blaise Pascal," in *The History of Western Philosophy of Religion*, ed. Graham Oppy and N. N. Trakakis (New York: Routledge, 2014), 131.

[2]Alban J. Krailsheimer, *Blaise Pascal*, Past Masters (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 50.; see also Avery Robert Cardinal Dulles, *A History of Apologetics*, 2nd ed. (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2005), 162; H. F. Stewart, introduction to *Pascal's Apology for Religion: Extracted from the Pensées*, by Blaise Pascal, ed. H. F. Stewart (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), xiv.

supports three observations that advance my central thesis: (1) the anthropological argument is part of a cumulative case for Christian belief; (2) it is properly understood as an abductive argument; and (3) the doctrine of the *imago Dei* belongs to the explanatory stage of this abductive argument.

Context: The *Pensées* as an Unfinished *Apology for the Christian Religion*

In order to understand Pascal's discussion of the human condition properly, it is necessary to have a basic grasp of the *Pensées*. This collection of thoughts comprises fragments of what Pascal intended to be a persuasive work, often called his *Apology for the Christian Religion* (although Pascal, as far as we know, never used this title).[3] His intended readers were, as Wetsel argues, "unbelievers who are still seeking the truth."[4] Pascal's illness and eventual death prevented him from completing this work.[5] In 1670 (six years after his death) a committee at Port Royal edited these fragments and published them under the title *Les Pensées de M. Pascal sur la Religion et sur quelques autres sujets*.[6]

Since Pascal did not develop and arrange these writings into a completed book, we are left with the question that has vexed editors of the *Pensées* since it was first published. What was the intended shape of Pascal's *Apology for the Christian Religion*?

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[3]Throughout this chapter I refer to Pascal's *Apology*, but it should be understood that this title does not refer to an actual work by Pascal, but to what he (arguably) intended to be the final product of his fragmentary apologetic writings, as evident throughout the *Pensées*. That it is legitimate to use such a title to refer to Pascal's intended apology has been argued by Philippe Sellier, introduction to *Pensées*, by Blaise Pascal (Paris: Le Livre de Poche, 2000), 23–24. See also David Wetsel, *Pascal and Disbelief: Catechesis and Conversion in the Pensées* (CUA Press, 1995), 17–18; and Wetsel, "Blaise Pascal." 130-33.

[4]Wetsel, *Pascal and Disbelief*, 14. Wetsel differs from the traditional view, represented by Krailsheimer, who understands Pascal to be addressing the "cultured, intelligent *libertins*" modeled after Montaigne. See Krailsheimer, *Blaise Pascal*, 43.

[5]Étienne Périer, preface to *Pensées de M. Pascal sur la religion, et sur quelques autres sujets*, by Blaise Pascal (Paris: Desprez, 1669), 41.

[6]Sister Mary Louise Hubert O.P., *Pascal's Unfinished Apology: A Study of His Plan*, Yale Romanic Studies (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1952), 2–3.

Dealing with the editorial problem of Pascal's *Pensées* (the "intricacies" of which, Krailsheimer writes, "are endless") is beyond the scope of this dissertation.[7] But a brief consideration will help us better understand the context of Pascal's anthropological investigation.

What did Pascal ultimately intend his *Apology* to be? Simply put, we do not know how (or whether) Pascal would have finally arranged the fragments that now constitute the *Pensées*. At the conclusion of her book on this issue, Mary Louise Hubert admits that "to the delight and dismay of the curious scholar, the plan of Pascal's unfinished Apology remains after nearly three centuries an open question."[8] Expressing a similar sentiment, Ben Rogers writes that "we will never know whether, had Pascal had the time, he would have completed this 'apology' for the Christian religion or what form it would have taken if he did."[9] From a purely historical perspective, of course, any number of events *could* have changed whether Pascal would have completed this work, or if he had, how he would have arranged it. But the fact that Pascal left no explicit and detailed plan does not leave us completely in the dark about what final shape he planned for his *Apology,* or whether he intended to finish it at all.

In the course of this chapter, then, the following points should be kept in mind regarding Pascal's intended plan for the *Pensées.* First, the minority but persistent opinion that Pascal, for theological reasons, would not have finished his project even if he had been able to do so, has little merit. In his preface to Honor Levi's translation of the *Pensées*, Anthony Levi claims that

> the theory of grace outlined in the *Writings on Grace*, if accepted, totally subverts
> the usefulness of the apologetic which Périer [Pascal's nephew] thought Pascal

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[7]Krailsheimer, *Blaise Pascal*, 42.

[8]Hubert, *Pascal's Unfinished Apology*, 143.

[9]Ben Rogers, "Pascal's Life and Times," in *The Cambridge Companion to Pascal*, ed. Nicholas Hammond, Cambridge Companions (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 17. See also A. J. Krailsheimer, introduction to *Pensées*, by Blaise Pascal (London: Penguin Books, 1995), xix.

intended to write, and offers at least a possible reason for its eventual abandonment, at least in its apologetic form, when Pascal found that the theory of grace to which he appears to have become increasingly committed . . . was incompatible with the apologetic he had seen the need to write in 1656.[10]

Levi's speculation rests on the assumption that an Augustinian view of grace is incompatible with efforts to persuade unbelievers to believe in Christ. But that assumption runs contrary to the fact that many Christian apologists who have held an Augustinian view of grace apparently have not considered their apologetic endeavors to be futile.[11] Further, Levi's suggestion goes against the majority view, which is supported by Pascal's own nephew.[12] In contrast to Anthony Levi, David Wetsel advocates the majority scholarly opinion.

> The idea advanced in recent years that we have no proof that Pascal ever intended to write an Apology for Christianity will, of course, appear patently absurd to those who have followed the work of Louis Lafuma, Henri Gouhier, Jean Mesnard, and Philippe Sellier over the last forty years of Pascalian research.[13]

Second, Pascal himself provided clues about what the final shape of his *Apology* would have been. In one fragment, he writes,

> First part: Wretchedness of man without God.
> Second part: Happiness of man with God.
> otherwise
> First part: Nature is corrupt, proved by nature itself.
> Second part: There is a Redeemer, proved by Scripture (L6/S43).

In another fragment, he hints at a similar plan.

> *Order.* Men despise religion. They hate it and are afraid it may be true. The cure for this is first to show that religion is not contrary to reason, but worthy of reverence and respect.
> Next make it attractive, make good men wish it were true, and then show that it is.

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[10]Anthony Levi, introduction to *Pensées and Other Writings*, by Blaise Pascal, trans. Honor Levi, Oxford World's Classics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).

[11]For an in-depth discussion of Pascal's Augustinian view of grace, see Michael Moriarty, "Grace and Religious Belief in Pascal," in *The Cambridge Companion to Pascal*, Cambridge Companions (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 145–61. For an explanation of the Augustinian view of grace, see Alister E. McGrath, *Historical Theology* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 1998), 26–27.

[12]Étienne Périer, préface to *Pensées de M. Pascal sur la religion, et sur quelques autres sujets,* by Blaise Pascal (Paris: Desprez, 1669), 41. See also Krailsheimer, introduction to *Pensées*, xx.

[13]Wetsel, *Pascal and Disbelief*, 16.

Worthy of reverence because it really understands human nature.
Attractive because it promises true good (L12/S49).

Third, besides these internal clues about Pascal's intentions, the work of scholars such as Lois Lafuma, Philippe Sellier, Jean Mesnard, H. Gouhier, and others has brought us closer to understanding what Pascal likely had planned (at least at some point or points in his life). As early as 1952, Mesnard writes (with, perhaps, a touch of hyperbole) that "after two centuries of forgetfulness and one century of research, we now find ourselves to-day once again in the privileged position of Pascal's relations and friends when at his death they acquired possession of his papers."[14] In 1969, Jan Miel considered that "recent scholarship" had "sufficiently demonstrated" that "Pascal had in mind . . . a definite plan or outline for his projected Apology."[15] In agreement with this assessment, Krailsheimer writes in 1980 that "recent and continuing scholarship has brought us closer to Pascal's successive intentions than seemed possible forty years ago."[16] Finally, scholars of the *Pensées* generally agree that one of the fragments is a table of contents that outlines what Pascal, at some point, intended to be the major divisions for his *Apology*.[17] Based on this research, Jean Mesnard offers a summary of the *Pensées* which in the main, I follow.[18]

In keeping with Pascal's indication that his apologetic project would comprise a "first part" and "second part" (L6/S43), Mesnard divides the *Apology* into two parts: "the first part putting the unbeliever in a frame of mind in which he would be willing to

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[14]Jean Mesnard, *Pascal: His Life and Work* (London: Harvill, 1952), 135.

[15]Jan Miel, *Pascal and Theology* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1969), 148.

[16]Krailsheimer, *Blaise Pascal*, 41.

[17]Levi, introduction to *Pensées and Other Writings*, xxi.

[18]Mesnard's summary is found in *Pascal,* 147-66. I say "in the main" because Mesnard's placement of the so-called "wager argument" appears be based on his assumption that Pascal has brought his readers to the point of believing that there is complete parity in the evidence for and against Christianity. Thus, Pascal's readers face a choice based, not on logical or evidential considerations, but on prudential ones. But this assumption is difficult to square with the rest of the *Pensées* in which Pascal aims to demonstrate, *not* that the evidence points equally in both directions, but that the weight of evidence lies *in favor of* the Christian faith.

accept the truth of religion; the second part then demonstrating the truth of religion."[19]

Part One exposes man's duality: "two opposite characteristics, wretchedness and greatness."[20] Here man's wretchedness is first substantiated, then explained. "Christianity," Mesnard writes, "therefore explains the secret of man's nature."[21] Philosophy—whether "dogmatic" or "Pyrrhonian"—fails to do so, and therefore should not be believed; for a true religion must "account for the contradictions in our nature."[22] Mesnard expresses the cumulative force of this first section. "Only the Christian religion," he writes, "satisfies all these requirements. It explains the duality of human nature by original sin."[23]

An urgent question prompts the second part of the *Apology*. "But is all this at once incomprehensible and unbelievable?"[24] In reply, Part Two seeks to demonstrate the truth of the Christian faith. Here Mesnard supposes that Pascal would have introduced the so-called wager argument.

> We have thus arrived at a point where the odds are equal for and against the Christian religion. Religion cannot offer us a proof that God exists of the sort that will constrain all minds. . . . But life imposes a choice on us: we have got to 'bet' for or against the existence of God.[25]

After this prudential weighing of the odds in favor of faith, Pascal would have argued that reason has its place and its limitations, that the human mind must submit to revelation and find in Christ the only way to true knowledge.[26] Then, Mesnard suggests, Pascal

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[19]Mesnard, *Pascal: His Life and Work*, 149.

[20]Ibid.

[21]Ibid., 153.

[22]Ibid., 155.

[23]Ibid.

[24]Ibid.

[25]Ibid., 156–57.

[26]Ibid., 158–59.

would have exposed the "falsity of other religions," and set forth evidence in favor of Christianity, including the "perpetuity" of the Christian religion, miracles, and fulfilled prophecies.[27]

This summary of the *Pensées* as the context for Pascal's anthropological theme supports two observations. First, Pascal's *Apology* assembles a broad range of reasons and evidence in support of Christianity. Therefore, his apologetic approach may be properly considered a "cumulative case."[28] Second, the anthropological investigation occupies a significant portion of this cumulative case. While it is found mostly in the "first part" (L6/S43), this theme may be seen in various places throughout the *Apology*, as a thread running throughout a tapestry or a motif in a musical composition.[29]

Content: Three-Stage Abductive Argument

To avoid getting ahead of my argument in the above section, I have referred to Pascal's discussion of the human condition not as an "argument" but as an "investigation" or "motif" running throughout the *Pensées*. Now I endeavor to show that this investigation may be formulated as a three-stage abductive argument: (1) the exposition of the *data* for the human condition (i.e., the duality of greatness and wretchedness), (2) the *explanation* of the data (i.e., Christian anthropology), and (3) the *elimination* of rival explanations for that data. I defend this three-stage formulation by showing how a variety of writers describe the dialectic of Pascal's anthropological investigation, as well as that the various subcomponents of this theme throughout the *Pensées* correspond to these three stages.

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[27]Mesnard, *Pascal: His Life and Work*, 159-65.

[28]Douglas Groothuis, *Christian Apologetics: A Comprehensive Case for Biblical Faith* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2011), 297.

[29]Honor Levi compares the *Pensées* to a tapestry in his introduction to *Pensées and Other Writings*, xxiv. Mesnard uses the metaphor of a musical composition: "Instead of a rigid and systematic classification," he writes, "we find a cunning interweaving of themes, a subtle, almost musical mode of composition," in Mesnard, *Pascal: His Life and Work*, 148.

**Abductive Reasoning in Pascal's
Anthropological Argument**

Writers who describe Pascal's discussion of the human condition generally

agree on one or more of the following points. First, Pascal aims to persuade his readers

that their condition is a paradoxical duality of wretchedness and greatness. Second, he

presents the Christian faith as providing the resources to explain this duality. Third, as a

consequence of these first two points, he aims to persuade his readers that Christ alone

can remedy their wretchedness. A sampling from a variety of writers gives evidence for

this general agreement. According to Daniel Fouke, Pascal "argues . . . that there is a

certain paradox about human nature. . . . This peculiarity can be explained only through

the Christian doctrine of the fall."[30] As noted above, Wetsel describes Pascal's projected

apology as "an anthropological investigation of the enigma of the human condition and

the successively potent theological proofs that explain this enigma."[31] In an especially

concise and comprehensive summary of the scholarly consensus regarding this

anthropological investigation, William Wood writes,

> We can infer that Christianity is true because only Christianity explains the data that we do in fact observe: human beings are both great and wretched, with a capacity for truth and happiness that nevertheless remains empty. We are great because we are created in the image of God, but wretched because we are no longer in the pristine state of our creation. Only Christianity understands why human beings are both great and wretched, and never either one or the other alone. Our wretchedness testifies to our greatness, which in turn points to our wretchedness, in an endless dialectic (L122/S155). This seeming paradox impels us towards Christianity, the sole philosophy that can comprehend our dual nature and, through grace, resolve it.[32]

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[30]Daniel Clifford Fouke, "Pascal, Blaise," in *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*, ed. Robert Audi, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 648. For an extended study of Pascal's strategy, see Daniel Clifford Fouke, "Argument in Pascal's Pensées," *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 6, no. 1 (January 1989): 57–68.

[31]Wetsel, "Blaise Pascal," 131.

[32]William Wood, *Blaise Pascal on Duplicity, Sin, and the Fall: The Secret Instinct*, Changing Paradigms in Historical and Systematic Theology (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 6. Relevant to the central argument of this dissertation, Wood mentions in passing the "image of God" to refer to Pascal's explanation for humans' abiding greatness. Although Pascal never uses the term "image of God," it seems apparent to Wood that this concept lies behind Pascal's discussion of the human condition.

Douglas Groothuis also describes Pascal's anthropological investigation as an argument

> that the claim of divine revelation solves the riddle of the human condition by providing a compelling theological explanation for a philosophical and existential conundrum. It states that humans are (1) wretched because fallen, (2) great because of their unfallen origin and the vestiges of it, and (3) redeemable through the incarnation. Pascal observes the human condition from a number of angles, crafts a cumulative and abductive case for his revelational anthropology, and challenges any other worldview to better explain the human condition.[33]

When these authors summarize Pascal's diagnosis of the human condition, they use words such as "dual nature," "enigma," "riddle," and "paradox"; when they describe Pascal's application of Christian doctrines to this condition, they use words such as "explains," "solves," and "understands"; further, they use language of superiority or exclusivity—"better," "sole," and "only"—to describe how Pascal compares the Christian faith to rival explanations. Similar terminology may be found in the summaries provided by Jean Mesnard, Buford Norman, James Peters, Avery Dulles, and Anthony Levi.[34]

The above summaries of Pascal's anthropological investigation (especially Groothuis's identifying it as an "*abductive* case for revelational anthropology") suggest that it can be arranged as stages in an abductive argument.[35] A detailed discussion of the logic of abduction is beyond the scope of this chapter.[36] Nevertheless, as a starting point, we may take Charles Sanders Pierce's classic formulation of an abductive argument:

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[33]Groothuis, *Christian Apologetics*, 297.

[34]Mesnard, *Pascal*, 153; Norman, *Portraits of Thought*, 93; James R. Peters, *Logic of the Heart, The: Augustine, Pascal, and the Rationality of Faith* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009), 84; Dulles, *A History of Apologetics*, 161; Levi, introduction to *Pensées and Other Writings*, xxxv.

[35]Groothuis, *Christian Apologetics*, 297.

[36]The literature on this topic is large and growing (Peter Lipton calls it "enormous"), especially in light of its application to the study of artificial intelligence. See Peter Lipton, *Inference to the Best Explanation*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2004), 4. See also Peter Flach and Antonis Kakas, preface to *Abduction and Induction: Essays on Their Relation and Integration*, ed. Peter Flach and Antonis Hadjiantonis (New York: Springer Science & Business Media, 2000), xiii–xiv.

> The surprising fact, *C*, is observed;
> But if *A* were true, *C* would be a matter of course.
> Hence, there is reason to suspect that *A* is true.[37]

Daniel Campos explains that "Peirce is arguing that we cannot infer *A* unless our inference be to an *explanatory* hypothesis. In short, a condition for the admissibility of a hypothesis is that the hypothesis would account for the facts, and on those explanatory grounds we hold the hypothesis to be plausible."[38]

When we map the components of Pascal's anthropological investigation onto Pierce's formulation of an abductive argument, we discern two stages of the argument. First, the "surprising fact" of man's dual condition is observed. This stage may be called the *data* of the argument—that is, the observed facts in need of explanation.[39] As shown below, what makes this data "surprising" is that the dual aspects of human nature—greatness and wretchedness—are mutually opposing yet mutually dependent. Second, if Christian anthropology were true, then man's dual condition would not be surprising, but rather "a matter of course." [40] Hence, there is "reason to suspect" that Christian anthropology is true.[41] At this stage (to use Campos's terminology) the "*explanatory* hypothesis" (i.e., Christian anthropology) is introduced, which purportedly "account[s] for the facts"—i.e., the data of man's dual condition.[42] Following Campos, then, this stage may be called the "explanatory stage."[43]

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[37]Charles Sanders Peirce, "Pragmatism as the Logic of Abduction," in *The Essential Peirce*, vol. 2 (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1998), 231.

[38]Daniel G. Campos, "On the Distinction between Peirce's Abduction and Lipton's Inference to the Best Explanation," *Synthese*, no. 180 (December 2009): 427.

[39]For the use of the term "data" in abductive reasoning, see Douglas Walton, *Abductive Reasoning*, 2nd ed. (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2014).

[40]Peirce, "Pragmatism as the Logic of Abduction," 231.

[41]Ibid.

[42]Campos, "On the Distinction between Peirce's Abduction and Lipton's Inference to the Best Explanation," 427.

[43]See also Walton, *Abductive Reasoning*, xiii.

But Pascal is interested in more than giving his readers reason to "suspect" that Christian anthropology is true. Having established on "explanatory grounds" that Christian anthropology is plausible, he wants to show that it is the *only* plausible hypothesis, that every other hypothesis is *im*plausible.[44] In this respect, his abductive argument takes on the character of an "inference to the best explanation," a kind of reasoning that is closely related to (and sometimes equated with) abduction.[45] In "inference to the best explanation," rival hypotheses are compared with each other, by what Peter Lipton refers to as "contrastive inference" which is part of the "eliminative process."[46] Thus, a third stage may be added to this abductive argument: the demonstration of the superiority of the hypothesis by comparing its explanatory power with the explanatory power of a rival hypothesis or hypotheses. Following Lipton's terminology ("eliminative process") we may call this the "eliminative" stage.[47] The following presentation of Pascal's anthropological investigation seeks to show the appropriateness of casting it as a three-stage abductive argument.

Data: The Human Condition as a Duality
of Greatness and Wretchedness

The first stage in Pascal's anthropological argument is, as I am presenting it, his exposition of the data of humans' dual condition. He intends to lay out this data so that it drives readers to the unavoidable conclusion that their nature comprises a duality of two opposing but mutually dependent principles—greatness (*grandeur*) and wretchedness (*malheur/misère*).[48] That these two dispositions obtain within in a single

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[44]Campos, "On the Distinction Between Peirce's Abduction and Lipton's Inference to the Best Explanation," 427.

[45]Walton, *Abductive Reasoning*, xiii.

[46]Lipton, *Inference to the Best Explanation*, 136.

[47]Ibid.

[48]For a discussion on Pascal's use of the French word *condition* and its role in persuading his

human being is "so obvious that some people have thought we had two souls"

(L629/S522). Pascal believes that anyone who wanders into the labyrinth of his or her

own feelings will discover this duality.

> Is it not clearer than day that we feel within ourselves the indelible marks of excellence, and is it not equally true that we constantly experience the effects of our deplorable condition? What else then does this chaos and monstrous confusion proclaim but the truth about these two states in a voice too powerful to be gainsaid? (L208/S240)

To heighten his readers' angst arising from their dual condition, Pascal stresses the

paradoxical relationship of these opposite states.

> All these examples of wretchedness prove [man's] greatness. It is the wretchedness of a great lord, the wretchedness of a dispossessed king. (L116/S148)

> Man's greatness is so obvious that it can even be deduced from his wretchedness (L117/S149).

> It is wretched to know that one is wretched, but there is greatness in knowing one is wretched (L114/S146).

Yet most people fail to recognize their dual condition. They tend to see

themselves as great and minimize their wretchedness, or they magnify their greatness and

suppress their wretchedness. Siding with one extreme or the other, they fail to see their

true state. Pascal rejects a unidimensional view of the human condition.

> If he exalts himself, I humble him.
> If he humbles himself, I exalt him.
> And I go on contradicting him
> Until he understands
> That he is a monster that passes all understanding. (L130/S163)

Accordingly, Pascal spends much of the *Pensées* presenting data for this duality of

greatness and wretchedness.[49] This data may be arranged into three categories: (1) data of

the duality of happiness and misery, (2) data of the duality of certainty and skepticism,

and (3) data of the duality of our place in the universe, midway between two apparently

infinite poles. The first two categories involve paradoxes *internal* to the human subject.

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readers of their duality, see Nicholas Hammond, *Playing with Truth: Language and the Human Condition in Pascal's Pensées* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 84–85.

[49]Hammond, *Playing with Truth*, 85.

The third category involves a paradox *external* to the human subject. By presenting his readers with this data, Pascal aims to make them see that their own condition is paradoxical, and thus to crave an explanation. "Know then, proud man," he writes, "what a paradox you are to yourself. Be humble, impotent reason! Be silent, feeble nature! Learn that man infinitely transcends man, hear from your master your true condition, which is unknown to you. Listen to God" (L131/S164).

Happiness and misery. Our longing for happiness (*bonheur/félicité*) and experience of misery are, perhaps, among the most obvious features of human existence.[50] Yet happiness and misery stand in a paradoxical relation to each other. On one hand, everyone longs to be happy ("All men seek happiness. There are no exceptions," L148/S181), indicating that we have some awareness of happiness. On the other hand, our idea of happiness and our experience of *un*happiness conspire to make us miserable. "We have an idea of happiness but we cannot attain it," he writes (L131/S164). "We seek happiness and find only wretchedness and death" (L401/S26). If we knew nothing of happiness, then pain and suffering would be meaningless. But the very idea of happiness prompts us to seek what we cannot find, and thus rouses our misery. Indeed, he writes, "anyone is unhappy who wills but cannot do" (L75/S110).

If this understanding of unhappiness is correct, it seems to follow that one could end unhappiness simply by purging the desire for happiness, achieving *apatheia*. As Pascal states, "The Stoics say: 'Withdraw into yourself, that is where you will find peace'" (L407/S26). Such an enterprise, however, fails to realize that the very desire to end desire is itself a desire for happiness. As Pascal observes, "man wants to be happy, only wants to be happy, and cannot help wanting to be happy" (L134/S167). Thus, our idea of happiness incites us to unhappiness; and the experience of unhappiness increases

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[50]Hammond argues that Pascal uses *bonheur* and *félicité* synonymously, *Playing with Truth,* 151.

our awareness of happiness.

Pascal points to specific features of human behavior to illustrate the paradoxical duality of happiness and misery. Rather than drawing his from the extreme sorrows and joys of human experience he draws on something far less dramatic—humans' passion for "diversion." The English word "diversion" does not do justice to Pascal's employment of the French *divertissement*. For, as D. C. Potts observes, *divertissement* encompasses "not only the pursuit of particular pleasures such as gambling and hunting, but a whole way of life."[51] Nicholas Hammond further explains that "*divertissement* represents . . . evasion from reality and the subsequent creation of a [false] 'happiness.' "[52] Indeed, *divertissement* "plays a central role in [Pascal's] deliberate destabilization of the reader's perception of a fixed happiness."[53] As will be discussed later, *divertissement* also includes attempts to stave off *ennui*, a condition which humans spare no pains to avoid.[54]

Thus, Pascal unmasks humans' passion for *divertissement* in order to reveal how unhappy they truly are. If people were truly happy, they would not seek diversion. "If our state were really happy," Pascal explains, "we should not need to take our minds off it in order to make ourselves happy" (L889/S445). So, then, the very thing intended to make us happy—*divertissement*—reveals our deep unhappiness. Indeed, Pascal calls the craving for *divertissement* a "secret instinct driving them to seek external diversion and occupation" (L134/S168). He observes this instinctual passion for *divertissement* in an

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[51]D. C. Potts, quoted in Hammond, *Playing with Truth,* 109.

[52]Ibid., 155.

[53]Ibid.

[54]Hammond observes that "the combination of [*divertissement* and *ennui*] makes one of the most central and original concepts in the *Pensées*," Hammond, *Playing with Truth,* 109.

array of pursuits: competitive sports (L39/S73),[55] hunting (L39/S73),[56] card games (L136/S168), sexual adventures (L136/S168), war (L136/S168), seeking government office (L134/S168), gambling (L134/S168, L79/S114), and the theater (L134/S168, L764/S630). Pascal claims that these pursuits are not ends in themselves but rather means of distraction.

> That is why gaming and feminine society, war and high office are so popular. It is not that they really bring happiness, nor that anyone imagines that true bliss comes from possessing the money to be won at gaming or the hare that is hunted: no one would take it as a gift. What people want is not the easy peaceful life that allows us to think of our unhappy condition, nor the dangers of war, nor the burdens of office, but the agitation that takes our mind off it and diverts us. That is why we prefer the hunt to the capture. (L134/S168)

Elsewhere Pascal writes that "only the contest appeals to us, not the victory. . . . We never go after things in themselves, but the pursuit of things" (L773/S637).

Pascal further observes that the pursuit of *divertissement* involves self-deception. In order for the entertainment to be sufficiently distracting, we must convince ourselves that we want what we pursue. He draws on gambling to illustrate this. Suppose a gambler were promised, on the condition that he not gamble, that he would simply be *given* the money that he would win. Such an offer would take the thrill out of gambling. From this Pascal concludes that

> it is not simply the entertainment they are looking for; tame uncommitted entertainment will bore them. They have to become excited and deceive themselves, imagining that they would be happy to win what they would not want to be given on the condition that they did not gamble. (L134/S168)

He makes yet another point about *divertissement* that serves to reinforce his point that humans experience duality of misery and happiness. *Divertissement* constitutes the pursuit of happiness *outside* ourselves, revealing that happiness is not found *within* ourselves. He imagines a dialogue with an interlocutor:

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[55]"Men spend their time chasing after a ball."

[56]Pascal uses hare hunting as a classic example of the pursuit of a trivial thing by great men ("it is the very sport of kings"). His point is that the distraction of the hunt, not the prize of the prey, motivates this particular form of *divertissement.*

If man were happy he would be even more so if he had less diversion, like the saints and God.' 'Yes, but does not happiness consist in being able to enjoy diversion?' 'No, because it comes from somewhere else, from outside, and so he is dependent and liable to be disturbed by thousands of things which inevitably cause him distress. (L132/S165)

The happiness supposedly found in *divertissement* is so fragile, in fact, that it can be undone at the mere notice of a more exciting pursuit. "A man enjoying a happy home-life," Pascal writes, "has only to see a woman who attracts him, or spend five or six pleasant days gambling, and he will be very sorry to go back to what he was doing before. It happens all the time" (L79/S114). "We are so unhappy," he states, "that we can only enjoy something which we should be annoyed to see go wrong, and that can and does constantly happen to thousands of things" (L56/S89).

Finally, Pascal makes a most sobering point. The reason we desperately pursue *divertissement* is because we want to avoid thinking about our mortality. Pascal writes that he "found one very cogent reason [for all our unhappiness] in the natural unhappiness of our feeble *mortal condition*, so wretched that nothing can console us when we really think about it" (L136/S168, emphasis added). Even though nothing can truly "console us," *divertissement* can, for a time at least, preoccupy us with other thoughts. Thus,

the only thing that consoles us for our miseries is diversion. And yet it is the greatest of our miseries. For it is that above all which prevents us from thinking about ourselves and leads us imperceptibly to destruction. But for that we should be bored, and boredom would drive us to seek some more solid means of escape, but diversion passes our time and brings us imperceptively to our death. (L414/S33)

Because humans feel the wretchedness of their condition, Pascal observes, "they have taken to diversions" (L10/S44). What would people become without *divertissement* to keep them from thinking about their frailty and finitude? "Take away their diversion," Pascal predicts, "and you will see them bored to extinction. Then they feel their nullity without recognizing it, for nothing could be more wretched than to be intolerably depressed as soon as one is reduced to introspection with no means of diversion" (L36/S70). Again, he writes,

you would only have to take away all their cares, and then they would see themselves, and think about what they are, where they come from, and where they are going. That is why men cannot be too much occupied and distracted, and that is why, when they have been given so many things to do, if they have some time off they are advised to spend it on diversion and sport, and always to keep themselves fully occupied. How hollow and foul is the heart of man! (L139/S171)

So *ennui* must be avoided at all costs. For

man finds nothing so intolerable as to be in a state of complete rest, without passions, without occupation, without diversion, without effort. Then he faces his nullity, loneliness, inadequacy, independence, helplessness, emptiness. And at once there wells up from the depths of his soul boredom, gloom, depression, chagrin, resentment, despair. (L622/S515).

But there is nothing miserable about finitude *per se*. After all, as Pascal reasons, a tree, which is finite, "does not know it is wretched" (L114/S146). Neither does a "ruined house" (L437/S689). Unlike trees and houses, humans have the capacity for self-consciousness. Therefore, their mortality and self-consciousness conspire to make them miserable. "Only sentient beings can be wretched" (L437/S689). Clearly, then, "it is wretched to know that one is wretched, but there is greatness in knowing one is wretched" (L114/S146). The very capacity that allows humans to feel that they are great and happy is also the *sine qua non* of their misery. Thus, Pascal effectively shows the human condition to be an unhappy paradox. In order to be happy, we must be capable of affection and self-consciousness; but these very capacities enable our misery.

Pascal might have made the point that humans are a duality of happiness and misery by depicting the extremes of human sorrow and joy. Instead, he uses examples common to even the most emotionally sheltered. Our pursuit of *divertissement*, which we pretend brings happiness, reveals our unhappiness. We are hollow, void of happiness, and desperate to distract ourselves from thinking about our end.

Besides this extensive theme of *divertissement*, a less extensive one supplies more evidence of the duality of our happiness and misery—our perspective on the passing of time. Because "the present usually hurts," we tend to "thrust it out of sight because it distresses us" (L47/S80). If for some reason we "find [the present] enjoyable,

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we are sorry to see it slip away" (L47/S80).[57] We are always striving for some happier state in the future, while we either curse the past or nostalgically pine for it. This backward and forward orientation keeps us from living happily in the present. "Thus, Pascal writes, "we never actually live, but hope to live, and since we are always planning how to be happy, it is inevitable that we should never be so" (L47/S80).

Pascal's case for the paradoxical duality of greatness and wretchedness is thus substantiated by his psychological analysis of human experience. Our desire for happiness together with our inability to achieve it, makes us miserable; yet we can neither discard nor diminish that desire. Misery finds its genesis in the consciousness of our mortality; and because we cannot bear to face that mortality, we pursue *divertissement*.

Certainty and skepticism. In addition to a duality of happiness and misery, Pascal presents humans as subject to the duality of certainty and skepticism. "Man," he writes, "has within him the capacity for knowing truth . . . but he possesses no truth which is either abiding or satisfactory" (L119/S151). On one hand, we crave certainty, to have knowledge based on a sure foundation; on the other hand, we discover that the propositions constituting the foundations of our noetic structures are neither proven nor provable. If this disturbs us, we cannot simply quit seeking knowledge and certainty, for (as with his desire for happiness), man is "equally incapable of knowing and of not desiring to know. He cannot even doubt" (L75/S110). Radical skepticism is impossible, for even the radical skeptics' position is founded upon a proposition for which they claim certainty—to wit, that everything is to be doubted.[58] So we can have neither complete

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[57]To a similar effect, Schopenhauer writes, "Every moment of our life belongs to the present only for a moment; then it belongs for ever to the past. Every evening we are poorer by a day," Arthur Schopenhauer, *Essays and Aphorisms*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale, Penguin Classics (London: Penguin, 1970), 52.

[58]Pascal shows the absurdity of this position by recounting Montaigne's articulation of it: "If he says that he doubts, he betrays himself with saying at least that he does so, which was strictly not his intention. He could only explain his position by a question, so, not wanting to say: 'I don't know,' he says: 'What do I know?'" (Blaise Pascal, "Discussion with Monsieur de Sacy," in *Pensées and Other Writings*,

certainty nor complete uncertainty.[59]

Pascal identifies two rival schools of thought arising from this epistemic tension: Pyrrhonism (the position, championed by Montaigne, that it is impossible to achieve certain knowledge) and dogmatism (the position, championed by Epictetus, that humans *can* have such knowledge).[60] Paradoxically, both schools are, to some degree, reasonable. First, as Pascal contends, "all [the Pyrrhonists'] principles are true"

ed. Anthony Levi, trans. Honor Levi, Oxford World's Classics [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999], 184).

[59]In his demonstrations of humans' epistemic duality, Pascal's anthropological argument intersects with another important component of his work: his critique of reason. Pascal writes that "we know the truth not only through our reason but also through our heart. It is through the latter that we know first principles" (L110/S142). By "heart" Pascal means the epistemic faculty that grasps those propositions *from* which we reason rather than *to* which we reason. Pascal never aims to undermine the legitimacy of rational inquiry, and he has been unhelpfully identified as a fideistic apologist. (For example, see Kenneth Boa and Robert M. Bowman, *Faith Has Its Reasons: Integrative Approaches to Defending the Christian Faith*, 2nd ed. [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2006]). The term "fideist" carries a broad range of connotations, but often it is used as a reproachful epithet for a person who irresponsibly jettisons reason in his or her embrace of religious belief. Terence Penelhum labels Pascal as a "moderate fideist," but distinguishes him from the "radical fideism" of Tertullian, Bayle, and Kierkegaard, who tell us that "faith is flatly contrary to reason," in Terence Penelhum, "Fideism," in *A Companion to Philosophy of Religion*, 2nd ed. Charles Taliaferro, Paul Draper, and Philip L. Quinn (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 444. C. Stephen Evans calls Pascal a "responsible fideist" since, according to Evans, Pascal assumes that "reason [can] neither prove nor disprove the existence of God" in *Faith Beyond Reason: A Kierkegaardian Account* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998), 49. It is better, however, to understand Pascal's locating the source of reason's impotence in the mind of fallen humans, rather than in reason itself. The problem is not with reason, but with the human mind ravaged by the noetic effects of the fall. In his effort to stress the limits of reason (e.g., he writes that "we know that we are not dreaming, however powerless we are to prove it by reason. This powerlessness proves only the weakness of our reason, not the uncertainty of our entire knowledge as they claim" [L110/S142]), Pascal insists that the most reasonable thing reason can do is realize its limitations and submit to revelation.

[60]Pascal's choice of the Stoic Epictetus as the champion for dogmatism might seem arbitrary, since Epictetus left no personal writings and more prominent Stoic thinkers—such as Zeno of Citium, Chrysippus, Marcus Aurelius, and Seneca—might have more ably represented the dogmatic school; see Graeme Hunter, *Pascal the Philosopher: An Introduction* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013), 27. Even Descartes might fit this role well since he places such confidence in the moral and intellectual perfectibility of humankind, a confidence characteristic of the dogmatists; Francis X. J. Coleman, *Neither Angel Nor Beast: The Life and Work of Blaise Pascal* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 1. However**,** Pascal's purpose in choosing these figureheads is not to present a historical account of their viewpoints, but to set up a "tournament of champions" (Hunter, *Pascal the Philosopher*, 21). His choice of Montaigne as champion of Pyrrhonism is less perplexing, though he could easily have chosen Sextus Empiricus instead; see Pierre Pellegrin, "Sextus Empiricus," in *The Cambridge Companion to Ancient Stoicism*, ed. Richard Bett, Cambridge Companions (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 120–42. Unlike Epictetus, Montaigne was Pascal's contemporary, a literary luminary, and likely Pascal's inspiration for his "descriptive anthropology," which features prominently in Pascal's apology (Hammond, *The Cambridge Companion to Pascal*, 47). Whether Pascal accurately depicts the views of the historical Montaigne and Epictetus does not affect his argument.

(L619/S512, see L131/S164), and warns that anyone who reads the Pyrrhonists' books "will soon be persuaded, perhaps too much so" (L131/S164). Thus, he considers the arguments of Pyrrhonism nearly irresistible.[61]

But despite its compelling case for skepticism, Pascal believes Pyrrhonism to be ultimately untenable. For the skeptics' arguments dissolves the legitimacy of all philosophical conclusions, including their own. The skeptic "thereby slowly undermines everything which seems to be taken as certainties by mankind, not in order to establish the opposite . . . but simply to show that, the arguments appearing equal on both sides, we do not know to which one to give our support."[62] After acknowledging that "all their principles are true," Pascal adds that "their conclusions are false, because the contrary principles are also true" (L619/S512). He further states that "everything [in Pyrrhonism] is partly true, partly false. . . . Such mixture destroys it and reduces it to nothing" (L905/S450). Besides being intellectually untenable, Pyrrhonism cannot be lived. Pyrrhonists must ignore their radical skepticism in order to sustain a normal existence. Even in crafting a philosophical utterance, the Pyrrhonian philosopher is limited to the interrogative mood. As Pascal states, "he could only explain his position by a question, so, not wanting to say, 'I don't know,' he says: 'What do I know?' He makes this his motto, and, putting it on the scales which, weighing all the contradictions, are in perfect equilibrium."[63] The Pyrrhonist faces an awkward choice. On one hand, she may insist on philosophical skepticism, meanwhile conducting her practical affairs as a dogmatist.[64] On

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[61]Pyrrhonism promises rest, or *ataraxia,* from the wearisome task of seeking for certain knowledge (see Pellegrin, "Sextus Empiricus," 19).

[62]Pascal, "Discussion with Monsieur de Sacy," 184.

[63]Ibid.

[64]As a philosophical skeptic, David Hume faced a similar awkwardness: "The *intense* view of these manifold contradictions and imperfections in human reason has so wrought upon me, and heated my brain, that I am ready to reject all belief and reasoning, and can look upon no opinion even as more probable or likely than another. . . . Most fortunately it happens, that since reason is incapable of dispelling these clouds, nature herself suffices to that purpose, and cures me of this philosophical melancholy and

the other hand, the Pyrrhonist may surrender to the psychological consequences of this radical skepticism, thus falling into despair, for Pyrrhonism thrives on human epistemic wretchedness. Such existential tension led Pascal to "maintain that a perfectly genuine sceptic has never existed. Nature backs up helpless reason and stops it going so wildly astray" (L131/S164). Yet, as a philosophical position, Pyrrhonism proves difficult to refute.

Dogmatism also springs from rational thinking but holds greater existential appeal. While Pyrrhonism promises its adherents *ataraxia*, dogmatism promises moral and epistemic perfectibility. The dogmatist believes that "our spirit cannot be forced to believe what is false, nor our will to love something which makes it unhappy."[65] Dogmatism, thus conceived, has attracted many of the world's great thinkers, not the least of whom is Descartes, a chief among the dogmatists (L553/S462). Their "only strong point" is "that we cannot doubt natural principles" (L131/S164). For Pascal, however, the case for dogmatism is not watertight. When dogmatists think they have found an indubitable "natural principle," the Pyrrhonist simply asks on what basis they find that principle to be "natural." "The dogmatists still have to find an answer to that," Pascal writes, "though they have been trying since the world began" (L131/S164).

Having perplexed his readers with this epistemic standoff, Pascal dismisses any prospect of neutrality.

> What then is man to do in this state of affairs? Is he to doubt everything, to doubt whether he is awake, whether he is being pinched or burned? Is he to doubt whether he is doubting, to doubt whether he exists? . . . Is he, on the other hand to say that he is the certain possessor of truth, when at the slightest pressure he fails to prove his

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delirium, either by relaxing this bent of mind, or by some avocation, and lively impression of my senses, which obliterate all these chimeras. I dine, I play a game of backgammon, I converse, and am merry with my friends; and when after three or four hours' amusement, I wou'd return to these speculations, they appear so cold, and strain'd, and ridiculous, that I cannot find in my heart to enter into them any farther. Here then I find myself absolutely and necessarily determined to live, and talk, and act like other people in the common affairs of life," David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature and Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, ed. Thomas Hill Green and Thomas Hodge Grose (London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1898), 548–49.

[65]Pascal, "Discussion with Monsieur de Sacy," 183.

claim and is compelled to lose his grasp? (L131/S164)

At this point, Pascal makes his most forceful statement on humanity's epistemic wretchedness: "What a figment of the imagination human beings are! What a novelty, what monsters! Chaotic, contradictory, prodigious, judging everything, mindless worm of the earth, storehouse of truth, cesspool of uncertainty and error" (L131/S164). Thus, Pascal highlights the duality of the human condition. We seek happiness, but find misery. We seek certainty, but discover doubt. Yet our misery and doubt reveal a happiness to be found and a truth to be discovered.

Greatness and smallness. Whereas the two dualities discussed above involve opposing pairs *internal* to the human subject, a third duality involves such a pair *external* to the human subject. In relation to the cosmos, we find ourselves to be both conqueror and the conquered; master of the elements, yet at their mercy; suspended midway between the infinite and the infinitesimal. "Limited in every respect," Pascal writes, "we find this intermediate state between two extremes reflected in all our faculties" (L199/S230). Indeed, "the whole universe," he declares, "teaches [man] his greatness or his wretchedness" (L442/S690).

On one hand, we occupy an infinitesimal place within the cosmos, both spatially and chronologically. This smallness disorients and frightens us.

> When I consider the brief span of my life absorbed into the eternity which comes before and after . . . the small space I occupy and which I see swallowed up in the infinite immensity of spaces of which I know nothing and which know nothing of me, I take fright and am amazed to see myself here rather than there: there is no reason for me to be here rather than there, now rather than then. Who put me here? By whose command and act were this time and place allotted to me? (L68/S102)

What terrifies us is not our finitude *per se* but rather our inability to comprehend it. "For what reason," Pascal asks, "did nature make it so, and choose this rather than that mean from the whole of infinity, when there is no more reason to choose one rather than another?" (L194/S227). From our perspective, there is infinity above and below, before and behind.

Besides being spatiotemporally finite, we find ourselves at the mercy of the mindless cosmos. Not only do we feel tiny ("the universe grasps me and swallows me up like a speck," L113/S145), but our lives are fragile and easily snuffed out. "Man is only a reed," he writes, "the weakest in nature. . . . There is no need for the whole universe to take up arms to crush him: a vapour, a drop of water is enough to kill him" (L200/S231). Pascal uses Oliver Cromwell's untimely death to illustrate the fragility of human life.

> Cromwell was about to ravage the whole of Christendom; the royal family was lost and his own set for ever in power, but for a little grain of sand getting into his bladder. Even Rome was about to tremble beneath him. But, with this bit of gravel once there, he died, his family fell into disgrace, peace reigned and the kingdom was restored. (L749/S622)

Our trifling size within the cosmos does not tell the whole story, for power of thought gives us mastery over the universe. A human may be "only a reed . . . but he is a thinking reed" (L200/S231). Although "the universe grasps me and swallows me up like a speck," yet "through thought I grasp it" (L113/S145). Paradoxically, then, the very knowledge of our vulnerability shows our dignity, for "it is wretched to know that one is wretched, but there is greatness in knowing one is wretched" (L114/S146). But even our power of thought is a dubious advantage. "All man's dignity consists in thought, but what is this thought? How silly it is! . . . It does have such faults that nothing is more ridiculous. How great it is by its nature, how vile by its faults!" (L756/S622) The fault lies not with reason itself, but rather with the reasoner.

> The mind of this supreme judge of the world [i.e., humans] is not so independent as to be impervious to whatever din may be going on nearby. It does not take a cannon's roar to arrest his thoughts; the noise of a weathercock or a pulley will do. Do not be surprised if his reasoning is not too sound at the moment, there is a fly buzzing round his ears; that is enough to render him incapable of giving good advice. If you want him to be able to find the truth, drive away the creature that is paralysing his reason and disturbing the mighty intelligence that rules over cities and kingdoms. What an absurd god he is! Most ridiculous hero! (L48/S81)[66]

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[66]In another fragment, Pascal makes a similar point about the buzzing of a fly: "Flies are so mighty that they win battles, paralyse our minds, eat up our bodies" (L22/S56).

Humans' superiority over the universe consists in their power to reason, but this power can be held in check by a tiny, virtually mindless part of the universe—a buzzing fly, for example. Thus, within the universe, humans occupy a paradoxical position: sovereign over the cosmos, yet subject to it.

Humans find their paradoxical position bewildering and terrifying.

> When I see the blind and wretched state of man, when I survey the whole universe in its dumbness and man left to himself with no light, as though lost in this corner of the universe, without knowing who put him there, what he has come to do, what will become of him when he dies, incapable of knowing anything, I am moved to terror, like a man transported in his sleep to some terrifying desert island, who wakes up quite lost and with no means to escape. (L198/S228)

This duality, involving our paradoxical position in the world, differs from the other two dualities discussed above. But, since it disorients, frightens, and mocks us, it is no less a source of wretchedness. One might reject Pascal's case for Christianity and yet find it difficult to resist the notion that human nature is a paradoxical duality of greatness and wretchedness, for the data not only overwhelms, but stands close at hand.[67] Humans only need to take an honest look at their own habits and private thoughts. Once they see this duality, they cannot easily dismiss it. In Pascal's words, "Is it not as clear as day that man's condition is dual?" (L131/S164)

Explanation: Creation and Fall

The *data* of human duality provides the first step in Pascal's anthropological argument. The second step presents the explanation for this duality, namely, Christian anthropology. As Miel writes, for Pascal, "there is no human nature separable from the story of a mankind that was created sane, just, and free, and which lost those attributes

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[67]Others have recognized a paradoxical duality in the human condition. Sigmund Freud, for example, postulated two "instincts" or "drives" that motivate human behavior. Explaining the development of his view, he writes, "Our standpoint was a dualistic one from the beginning, and is so to-day more sharply than before, since we no longer call the contrasting tendencies egoistic and sexual instincts, but life-instincts and death-instincts." Sigmund Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, trans. C. J. M. Hubback, The International Psycho-Analytical Library 4 (London: International Psycho-Analytical, 1922), 67.

through Adam's Fall."[68] Simply stated, then, Pascal's explanation of human duality is found in the Christian doctrines of creation and fall. Our greatness can be traced to our original nature as "created in Adam, sound, faultless, just, and upright, coming from God's hands from which nothing can emerge except what is pure, holy, and perfect."[69] By contrast, our wretchedness springs from a condition alien to our nature: "the state into which [humanity] was reduced by sin and the first man's revolt, through which it became sullied, abominable, and detestable in God's sight."[70] Our wretchedness, ringing with faint echoes of our greatness, discloses how far we have fallen from that purpose.

This two-fold explanation (creation and fall), accounts for our duality of greatness and wretchedness: "it is the wretchedness of a great lord, the wretchedness of a dispossessed king" (L116/S148). Pascal imagines God's speaking to his human creatures, explaining the reason for their condition.

> It is I who have made you and I alone can teach you what you are. But you are no longer in the state in which I made you. I created man holy, innocent, perfect, I filled him with light and understanding, I showed him my glory and my wondrous works. . . . But he could not bear such great glory without falling into presumption. He wanted to make himself his own centre and do without my help. He withdrew from my rule, setting himself up as my equal in his desire to find happiness in himself, and I abandoned him to himself. The creatures who were subject to him I incited to revolt and made his enemies, so that today man has become like the beasts, and is so far apart from me that a barely glimmering idea of his author alone remains of all his dead or flickering knowledge. . . . This is the state in which men are today. They retain some feeble instinct from the happiness of their first nature, and are plunged into the wretchedness of their blindness and concupiscence, which has become their second nature. (L149/S182)

Once this explanation is provided, the solution is clear: humans need to be restored to God's original intent for them, and this restoration is possible only through Christ who, as the sinless God-man, reveals God as he truly is and humanity as it truly should be. Pascal writes,

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[68]Miel, *Pascal and Theology*, 82–83.

[69]Blaise Pascal, "Writings on Grace," in *Pensées and Other Writings*, ed. Anthony Levi and Honor Levi, Oxford World's Classics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 217.

[70]Ibid.

> Knowing God without knowing our own wretchedness makes for pride.
> Knowing our own wretchedness without knowing God makes for despair.
> Knowing Jesus Christ strikes the balance because he shows us both God and our own wretchedness. (L192/S225)

It should be noted that the explanation of human duality, not the solution to it, is what is essential to Pascal's abductive anthropological argument. In order for the argument to be successful, Pascal needs only to demonstrate that the data is best explained by Christian anthropology. Strictly speaking, the argument requires no solution to be offered. As a doctor may successfully diagnose a patient's condition without offering a cure for it, so also Pascal's explanation of human wretchedness may be correct even were he to offer no cure for it.

Yet the solution itself *can* serve as further evidence that his explanation is plausible. Another example from medicine might illuminate this point. Suppose a doctor believes that a patient has strep throat but is unable to confirm this diagnosis with a throat culture. Since the cure for strep throat is penicillin, the doctor prescribes the appropriate doses of penicillin to his patient, and after the patient takes the stipulated doses within the predicted amount of time, the symptoms of strep throat subside. Thus, the successful application of penicillin in curing the symptoms serves as evidence for the accuracy of the doctor's diagnosis. Similarly, the successful application of the solution to the human condition can serve as evidence for the accuracy of the explanation. In other words, if a person embraces the "cure" (Jesus Christ) and then discovers a change in his "symptoms" (i.e., wretchedness in duality), this change may count as evidence that the "diagnosis" (i.e., Christian anthropology) is correct. For example, Pascal exclaims, "how little pride the Christian feels in believing himself united to God! How little he grovels when he likens himself to the earthworm!" (L358/S390) A person who, after trusting in Christ, recognizes his wretchedness without despairing, and knows God without becoming arrogant—this person stands as living evidence of Pascal's argument that Christian anthropology best explains the dualities of the human condition. Of course, we would need more than words on a page to be persuaded. We would need actual humans living

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out the kind of changes predicted by the solution based on Christian anthropology—an "embodied" anthropological argument. For now, it is sufficient to note that, while the absence of a solution to the human predicament would not nullify Pascal's argument, its presence may serve to enhance it.

For Pascal, then, Christian anthropology provides the explanatory hypothesis for the duality of the human condition. It now remains for us to investigate *how*, according to Pascal, Christian anthropology explains this duality. What follows seeks to explain that duality in terms of creation and fall. It further suggests correlations between this explanation and the doctrine of the *imago Dei* in order to substantiate one of the main points of this chapter, namely, that the doctrine of the *imago Dei* can enhance the explanatory stage of Pascal's argument.

Happiness and misery explained. Pascal finds in Christian anthropology the explanation for the duality of happiness and misery: humans originally experienced complete happiness in their relationship with God, but having lost that happiness through sin, they now seek that happiness in other things.[71] "Happiness," he writes, "is neither outside nor inside us: it is in God, both outside and in us" (L407/S26). Further, we cannot rid ourselves of this misery by suppressing our thirst for happiness because God intends that this desire to "make us feel how far we have fallen" (L401/S20). So now we "retain some feeble instinct from the happiness of [our] first nature" (L149/S182). It is only "an idea of happiness," but "we cannot attain it" (L131/S164). Therefore, it is "obvious . . . that we once enjoyed a degree of perfection from which we have unhappily fallen" (L131/S164).

Although this "instinct of happiness" can "prompt us to search for eternal

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[71]Of Pascal's use of *bonheur/félicité*, Hammond writes, "For Pascal the fact that man wishes to be happy must point back to his original perfect happiness," Hammond, *Playing with Truth*, 161.

happiness," it does *not* inevitably lead us to seek God.[72] We seek happiness in other things, particularly those pursuits (*divertissement*) that distract us from our *ennui*, lest we be left to ponder our ultimate end. But in order to distract ourselves effectively, we must deceive ourselves into thinking that we actually want the object of our *divertissement*—whether trophy, political office, or gambling winnings—and then feign happiness when we get it. So we grasp after the mirage of our original happiness. Yet having estranged ourselves from God, we can only pretend to find it elsewhere, in *divertissement.* As William Wood puts it, "The pursuit of diversion therefore manifests the performative incoherence of sin: we seek happiness by means of the very activity that makes true happiness impossible to find."[73]

Fragment L148/S181 sets forth the explanation clearly.

> What else does this craving, and this helplessness, proclaim, but that there was once in man a true happiness, of which all that now remains is the empty print and trace? This he tries in vain to fill with everything around him . . . though none can help, since this infinite abyss can be filled only with an infinite and immutable object; in other words by God himself."

If true happiness were to be found in finite things, humans would have discovered it. They have not discovered happiness in finite things. Therefore, happiness cannot be found in finite things. God, the only being of infinite worth, is, of course, the only source of true happiness. "Our sole happiness," Pascal writes, "is in him, and our sole evil is in separation from him" (L149/S182). In summary, Pascal argues that the narrative of creation and fall can explain the happiness/misery duality of the human condition.

Certainty and skepticism explained. As with the duality of happiness and misery, the doctrines of creation and fall provide the explanation for our epistemic duality of certainty and skepticism discussed above. We were originally created to apprehend (though not comprehend) the truth about God and ourselves. But, as William Wood

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[72]Ibid., 159.

[73]Wood, *Blaise Pascal on Duplicity, Sin, and the Fall*, 45.

argues, "for Pascal, the fall is a fall into duplicity. . . . We are born into a duplicitous world that shapes us into duplicitous subjects, and so we find it easy to reject God continually and deceive ourselves about our own sinfulness."[74] Without a truthful assessment of God and ourselves, either we arrogantly assume that we can have certainty about any subject, including God and ourselves; or we despairingly deny that we can have certainty about any subject. In his "Discussion with Monsieur de Sacy," Pascal traces this duality to the creation and fall:

> It seems to me that the origin of these two sects' [i.e., dogmatism and Pyrrhonism] errors lies in not knowing that *man's present state is different from the one in which he was created*, so that the one [dogmatism], seeing traces of his initial greatness and ignorant of his corruption, treated nature as healthy and in no need of a healer, which leads him to the pinnacle of pride, whereas the other [Pyrrhonism], experiencing the wretchedness of the present age and unaware of the dignity of his inception, treats nature as inevitably weak and incurable, which pitches him into despair of attaining true good, and thereby into extreme laziness.[75]

The human fall into duplicity explains other epistemic dysfunctions as well. We are unable to "evaluate goods properly," and therefore seek satisfaction in things other than what will truly satisfy.[76] Our love is disordered because "each person thinks that he is the center of the universe."[77] Closely related, our self-concept is distorted. Unable to tolerate the idea that we are reprehensible sinners, we opt for the course that (to our thinking) preserves our dignity—an imaginary world in which one becomes one's own standard of morality.[78] Wood describes Pascal's portrait of the fallen self: "what I

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[74]Ibid., 1.

[75]Pascal, "Discussion with Monsieur de Sacy," 89.

[76]Wood, *Blaise Pascal on Duplicity, Sin, and the Fall*, 30.

[77]Ibid., 25.

[78]As a result, we succumb to ludicrous vanity and triviality. Pascal points out that vain and trivial behavior infiltrates the noblest of human pursuits. Even in love and war, the most inconsequential minutiae determine the causes and outcomes: "Anyone who wants to know the full extent of man's vanity has only to consider the causes and effects of love. . . . Cleopatra's nose: if it had been shorter the whole face of the earth would have been different" (L413/S32).[78] Further, a war can be incited by something so trifling as the length of a monk's robe ("An inch or two of cowl can put 25,000 monks up in arms," L18/S52), justified by something so arbitrary as geographical provenance ("'Why are you killing me for your own benefit?' . . . 'Well, do you not live on the other side of the water?'" L51/S84); or prompted by

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call my 'self' is just the story that I tell to myself about myself, my subjective narrative identity. The subjective self is just an imaginary construct that typically does not correspond to the way I really am."[79] Yet, as Wood explains, the picture is even bleaker. "The self is doubly imaginary, according to Pascal. One always sees oneself through the (imagined) eyes of other people. My subjective narrative identity is therefore the story that I imagine that other people would tell about me: my fantasy about your fantasy about me."[80] Thus, as Wood interprets Pascal, our epistemic dysfunction is best explained by the fall, for it plunges us into self-deceit about our very identity.

Greatness and smallness explained. As discussed above, the first two categories of duality (happiness/misery and certainty/skepticism) differs from the third category (greatness/smallness). Whereas the first two categories involve oppositions *internal* to the human subject, the third category involves oppositions *external* to the human subject, specifically, our paradoxical place within the cosmos.

As with the other dualities, Christian anthropology explains this duality. Humans stand midway between the immense and the infinitesimal because God wants us to understand that "we are something and we are not everything" (L199/S230). Like beasts, we depend on the earth; like angels, we may dwell with God. Still, we are neither angels nor beasts. "Man must not be allowed to believe that he is equal either to animals or to angels," he writes, "nor to be unaware of either, but he must know both"

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something so petty as the need for amusement ("Caesar was too old, it seems to me, to go off and amuse himself conquering the world," L49/S82). We are vain and trivial in our social habits as well. On one hand, "we are so presumptuous that we would like to be known all over the world, even by people who will only come when we are no more"; and on the other hand, "such is our vanity that the good opinion of half a dozen of the people around us gives us pleasure and satisfaction" (L120/S152). Finally, even in our pursuit of justice, the foundation of civil society, we succumb to triviality: "justice is as much a matter of fashion as charm is" (L61/S95).

[79]Wood, *Blaise Pascal on Duplicity, Sin, and the Fall*, 94.

[80]Ibid.

(L121/S153).[81] Unlike beasts, however, we were created to exercise dominion. "Man's dignity consisted, in his innocence, in making use of creatures and being their master" (L788/S645). Therefore, we need not feel disoriented, for God has marked out the position we should occupy.

But sin has twisted this God-intended duality into a source of wretchedness. Having abandoned God, under whose authority we find our place in the universe, we arrogantly see ourselves as everything or despairingly see ourselves as nothing. (L199/S230). Some people, failing to recognize their God-ordained limitations, have "rashly undertaken to probe into nature as if there were some proportion between themselves and her," writing books with such "pretentious" titles as *Of the principles of philosophy* or *Of all that can be known* (L199/S230). Others, failing to fulfill their God-ordained function, stoop to "submitting to" creatures (L788/S645). Pascal imagines God saying that "the creatures who were subject to [man] I incited to revolt and made his enemies, so that today man has become like the beasts" (L149/S182). Instead of exercising dominion over the beasts, "all creatures either distress or tempt him, and dominate him either by forcibly subduing him or charming him with sweetness, which is a far more terrible and harmful yoke" (L149/S182). In words reminiscent of Romans 1:25, Pascal laments that "man is vile enough to bow down to beasts and even worship them" (L53/S86). Thus, the paradox of our greatness and wretchedness finds its explanation in Christian anthropology. God appointed humans to occupy a certain position within the cosmos. Having rejected his authority, however, humans know where to place themselves, resulting in arrogance or despair, overreaching their God-given bounds or abdicating their God-given responsibilities.

As discussed in a later chapter, a fuller explanation for this aspect of our duality may be discovered in the doctrine of the *imago Dei*. According to this doctrine,

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[81]Pascal repeats this point in L678/S557: "Man is neither angel nor beast, and unhappily whoever wants to act the angel, acts the beast."

we may be understood in terms of a relational duality—divine sons and creaturely sovereigns. On one hand, as creatures, an infinite divide stands between us and the Creator; on the other hand, as divinely appointed sovereigns, an infinite divide stands between us and the rest of the cosmos.

Conclusion. In summary, for Pascal, Christian anthropology explains the duality of our condition. Our greatness is explained by God's having created us for his glory; our wretchedness is explained by our fallenness. With this account of the human condition to guide us, we expect humans to think and behave in paradoxical ways. The data and Pascal's proposed explanation occupy the first two stages of Pascal's abductive anthropological argument. As noted above, however, Pascal is not content to present Christian anthropology merely as a *plausible* hypothesis, but as the most plausible hypothesis. The third stage of this abductive argument, therefore, is the "eliminative stage" by which Pascal seeks to show that no other hypothesis adequately explains the duality of the human condition.[82]

Elimination: Inadequacy of
Other Explanations

In this final stage of the abductive argument, Pascal endeavors to eliminate rival hypotheses in order to show that Christian anthropology provides the *only* satisfactory explanation.[83] Compared with his thorough case for the Christian explanation of human duality, Pascal's case against other religions is less developed. As Wetsel notes, "the student of the comparative study of religions may well be disappointed by Pascal's scant knowledge of the non-Christian religions. Other than Islam, Pascal appears to be aware of the existence of only two religions: 'celle de la Chine' . . . and the religion

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[82]Lipton, *Inference to the Best Explanation*, 136.

[83]Miel, *Pascal and Theology*, 184.

recounted by 'les historiens de Mexico.' "[84] Still, Pascal endeavors to uphold Christianity as the only plausible explanation for humans' dual condition.

In several fragments, Pascal merely asserts that Christianity alone can bring about the paradoxical combination of deep humility and exalted satisfaction requisite for a true religion, for any other religion will tend either toward despair or pride. One such fragment is worth quoting here.

> The Christian religion alone has been able to cure these twin vices [pride and despair], not by using one to expel the other according to worldly wisdom, but by expelling both through the simplicity of the Gospel. For it teaches the righteous, whom it exalts, even to participation in divinity itself, that in this sublime state they will bear the source of all corruption, which exposes them throughout their lives to error, misery, death and sin; and it cries out to the most ungodly that they are capable of the grace of their redeemer. Thus, making those whom it justifies tremble and consoling those whom it condemns, it so nicely tempers fear with hope through this dual capacity, common to all men, for grace and sin, that it causes infinitely more dejection than mere reason, but without despair, and infinitely more exaltation than natural pride, but without puffing us up. This clearly shows that, being alone exempt from error and vice, it is the only religion entitled to teach and correct mankind. (L208/S240, cf. L421/S680, L149/S182)

In other places, Pascal shows his readers exactly how other philosophies fail properly to explain the human condition. He dilates on Pyrrhonism and dogmatism, which he sees as two opposite but equally untenable philosophies. In contrast to Christian anthropology, whose textured portrait of humanity depicts both our nobility and wretchedness, these two philosophies present unidimensional caricatures of our condition. In his "Discussion with M. Sacy" Pascal explains,

> It seems to me that the origin of these two sects' errors lies in not knowing that man's present state is different from the one in which he was created, so that the one [dogmatism], seeing traces of his initial greatness and ignorant of his corruption, treated nature as healthy and in no need of a healer, which leads him to the pinnacle of pride, whereas the other [Pyrrhonism], experiencing the wretchedness of the present age and unaware of the dignity of his inception, treats nature as inevitably weak and incurable, which pitches him into despair of attaining true good, and thereby into extreme laziness.[85]

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[84]Wetsel, *Pascal and Disbelief*, 177.

[85]Pascal, "Discussion with Monsieur de Sacy," 189.

Clearly, for Pascal, a philosophy that depends wholly on human reason devolves into either extreme, neither of which accurately depict human nature. "The philosophers did not prescribe feelings proportionate to the two states [i.e., greatness and wretchedness]," he writes, "They inspired movements of pure greatness and this is not the state of man. They inspired movements of pure abasement, and this is not the state of man" (L398/S17). Inevitably, then, mischaracterizations will bear fruit: pride, springing from dogmatism; or despair, springing from skepticism. "Your chief maladies are the pride that withdraws you from God," he writes, "and the concupiscence that binds you to the earth; all [the philosophers] have done is to keep at least one of these maladies going" (L149/S182). Pride comes from attempting to know God apart from Christ, for Christ's atoning death tells us how wretched our sin has made us: "[Pride] is the result of knowing God without Christ" (L190/S223).[86] Despair comes from knowing our wretchedness without knowing God: "Knowing our own wretchedness without knowing God makes for despair" (L192/S225). The solution comes only in knowing Christ: "Knowing Jesus Christ is the middle course, because in him we find both God and our wretchedness" (L64/S225).[87]

Conclusion

Pascal's abductive anthropological argument is straightforward. The way we feel, think, and act reveals that our condition is fundamentally dual, that we are both great and wretched. Moreover, this duality is paradoxical. Christian anthropology meets the evidence of this paradoxical duality point by point. Our greatness derives from having been created by God; our wretchedness derives from the fall and our resultant fallen condition. When we try to comprehend the human condition apart from Christian

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[86]See also L192/S225.

[87]Other fragments in which Pascal stresses the exclusivity of the Christian explanation of the duality of the human condition include L208/S240, L205/S237, L215/S248, L131/S164. See also Jean Mesnard, *Pascal: His Life and Works*, trans. G. S. Fraser (London: Harvill Press, 1952), 155.

anthropology, we get a unidimensional caricature that either flattens our greatness or raises our wretchedness. Only in Christian anthropology do we find a portrait of humanity both broad and detailed enough to encompass every twist and turn of our paradoxical condition.

This presentation of Pascal's anthropological investigation supports three observations relevant to my central thesis: (1) Pascal's overall apologetic project (of which the anthropological investigation is part) is best described as a *cumulative case* for Christian belief; (2) the anthropological investigation may be appropriately understood as a three-stage *abductive argument*—one that infers the best explanation for a given set of data; (3) within this abductive argument the doctrine of the *imago Dei* may be applied to the explanatory stage. From these observations, I argue that when we draw upon the *imago Dei* as a resource for strengthening the explanatory stage of this abductive argument, two benefits result. First, Pascal's argument finds greater biblical support. As we will see, his argument is not only psychologically compelling, but also biblically motivated. Second, the *imago Dei* explains aspects of the human condition Pascal does not mention, or to which he makes only passing reference.

CHAPTER 3

INTERPRETING THE *IMAGO DEI*
THROUGHOUT HISTORY

This dissertation seeks to answer the following question: Can considerations

arising from doctrine of the *imago Dei* strengthen Pascal's anthropological argument?

Pascal claims that Christian anthropology best explains the paradoxes of the human

condition. In other words, the basic tensions humans feel—between goodness and

baseness, certainty and doubt, happiness, and misery—are inexplicable unless seen in

light of Scripture's teaching that humans were originally good but now have fallen into

sin.[1] The doctrine of the *imago Dei*, to which Pascal does not explicitly refer, is

foundational to Christian anthropology.[2] Are there features of the *imago Dei* concept

which, when applied to the explanation for the human condition, render the

anthropological argument more compelling? This dissertation argues that the doctrine of

the *imago Dei* indeed strengthens the anthropological argument.

So far, I have taken two preliminary steps. First, I have traced Pascal's

formulation of the anthropological argument throughout the *Pensées*. Second, in order to

situate the doctrine of the *imago Dei* within the anthropological argument, I have argued

that the anthropological argument is an abductive one, and that the doctrine of the *imago*

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[1]These tensions include various manifestations of greatness and wretchedness (e.g., goodness and baseness, certainty and doubt, happiness and misery).

[2]Pascal mentions God's image twice in the *Pensées*, but in neither instance does he use it in the sense of the *imago Dei* in Gen 1. In one occurrence, "image" parallels the word "idol" ("for truth apart from charity is not God, but his image and an idol," L926/S757). In the other occurrence, Pascal uses it to refer to "nature" (not humans) as an imperfect reflection of God: "There are perfections in nature to show that she is the image of God and imperfections to show that she is no more than his image" (L935/S762).

Dei belongs to the "explanation" of this abductive argument.[3] The next step in this dissertation is to demonstrate that certain features of the doctrine of the *imago Dei* correspond to Pascal's explanation for humans' "unique paradoxicality."[4] But this step requires answering a prior question: Which account of the *imago Dei* is correct? In the next chapter, I will argue for a particular account of the doctrine of the *imago Dei*. In the present chapter, however, I will provide the necessary background: a survey of the history of the interpretation of the *imago Dei*.[5]

Importance of the Doctrine of the *Imago Dei*

> Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."
>
> So God created man in his own image,
> in the image of God he created him;
> male and female he created them.
>
> And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of

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[3]Here I use "explanation" in a technical sense: the hypothesis whereby a given data set is (supposedly) rendered least surprising. See Douglas Walton, *Abductive Reasoning* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2014), 18.

[4]G. C. Berkouwer, *Man: The Image of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962), 16.

[5]For histories and overviews of the varieties of interpretations of the *imago Dei,* see Claus Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, Continental Commentary Series (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994), 148–59; David Cairns, *The Image of God in Man* (London: Camelot, 1953); Gunnlaugur A. Jónsson, *The Image of God: Genesis 1:26-28 in a Century of Old Testament Research*, trans. Lorraine Svendsen and Michael S. Cheney, Old Testament Series 26 (Lund: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1988); Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, vol. 2, *God and Creation*, ed. John Bolt, trans. John Vriend (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004), 530-62; Anthony A. Hoekema, "The Image of God: Historical Survey," in *Created in God's Image* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 33-65; Douglas J. Hall, "Two Historical Conceptions of *Imago Dei*," in *Imaging God: Dominion as Stewardship*, Library of Christian Stewardship (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2004), 88-107; D. J. A Clines, "The Image of God in Man," *Tyndale Bulletin* 19 (1968): 54–61; Emil Brunner, *Man in Revolt: A Christian Anthropology*, trans. Olive Wyon (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1939), 91-96; John Haydn Gurmin, "A Study of the Development and Significance of the Idea of the 'Image of God' from Its Origins in Genesis through Its Historical-Philosophical Interpretations to Contemporary Concerns in Science and Phenomenology" (Ph.D. diss., National University of Ireland, Maynooth, 2010); J. Richard Middleton, *The Liberating Image: The Imago Dei in Genesis 1* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2005), 5-24.

the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth." (Gen 1:26-28)[6] These words, crowning the climax of the first creation narrative, have been the impetus for a great number of writings throughout the ages—from ancient Jewish Targums to recent books on gender equality.[7] Yet the phrases "image of God" and "likeness of God," seldom appear in Scripture.[8] Has the significance of this doctrine been exaggerated? Should not biblical scholars proportion their emphasis on the doctrine of the *imago Dei* to its few occurrences?

On the contrary, though the words themselves appear seldom, the concept of the *imago Dei* underlies much teaching in both the Old and New Testaments. It occurs at key points in human history, such as the creation of humans (Gen 1:26-28) and the divine authorization of capital punishment in cases of murder (Gen 9:6).[9] It defines the destiny of regenerate humans (Rom 8:29) and describes the nature of Christ himself (Col 1:15, 2 Cor 4:4). Regarding its relevance to Scripture as a whole, Thomas Schreiner stresses that its "importance can scarcely be exaggerated," since the themes of "God as sovereign creator," the universe as the realm of his sovereignty, and humans as his viceregents converge in the concept of the *imago Dei*.[10] To a similar effect, Stanley Grenz writes that the concept of the *imago Dei* "is central to the entire theology of the New Testament. In

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[6]All quotations from Scripture are from the 2016 text edition of the English Standard Version (ESV).

[7]Claus Westermann hyperbolically calls the literature on this passage "limitless" (*Genesis 1-11*, 148). Jónsson declares that the literature is "nearly infinite, irrespective of the discipline, whether it be systematics, the history of ideas or exegesis" (Jónsson, *The Image of God*, 1).

[8]Explicit references to the image of God occur in three passages in the OT (Gen 1:26-27, 5:1-3, and 9:6) and five in the NT (Col 1:13-18; 2 Cor 3:18, 4:4, Jas 3:9, Rom 8:29), though some scholars (e.g., Gerald Bray, "The Significance of God's Image in Man," *Tyndale Bulletin* 42, no. 2 [1991]: 209–22) debate whether all five of these are relevant to the Old Testament concept of the *imago Dei*). Writers who accept the documentary hypotheses about the authorship of the Pentateuch attach significance to the theory that "P" is responsible for Gen 1:26-27. For a brief critique of this view as it relates to the interpretation of the *imago Dei*, see Bray, "The Significance of God's Image in Man," 202–3.

[9]Bray, "The Significance of God's Image in Man," 201.

[10]Thomas R. Schreiner, *The King in His Beauty: A Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 6.

fact, one might even say that the New Testament cannot be understood in its fullness without taking into consideration what is declared in its pages about the *imago dei*."[11] Besides its importance to biblical studies, the concept of the *imago Dei* has been fundamental in the history of Western thought, particularly in the notion that each human is endowed with dignity and value. In recent times, the meaning of the *imago Dei* has rightly occupied an important role in controversies over racism, abortion, eugenics, homosexuality, human cloning, and transhumanism.

Challenges of Interpreting the Imago Dei

Yet if few other concepts have proven more determinative for anthropology than the concept of the *imago Dei*, it is equally true that few other concepts have proven more difficult to define. When approaching the topic in his commentary on Genesis, Martin Luther declares that "there is here agitated a whole sea of questions . . . as to what that 'image' of God was in which Moses here says that man was formed."[12] Half a millennium has done little to quell this "agitated sea," prompting J. R. Middleton's warning that there is not even a *status quæstionis* regarding the *imago Dei*.[13] Writers on the doctrine of the *imago Dei* blame past interpreters for inaccurately exegeting the relevant texts and for incorporating non-Christian philosophies. For example, Paul Ramsey complains that "Christians who follow in Aristotle's train simply make use of the religious label, the *imago Dei*, for everything [Aristotle] intended to say."[14] Expressing a similar complaint, Karl Barth claims that "authors merely found the [*imago*

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[11]Stanley J. Grenz, *The Social God and the Relational Self: A Trinitarian Theology of the Imago Dei* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 203.

[12]Martin Luther, *The Creation: A Commentary on the First Five Chapters of the Book of Genesis*, trans. Henry Cole (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1858), 87.

[13]Middleton, *The Liberating Image*, 38.

[14]Paul Ramsey, *Basic Christian Ethics* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1950), 250–51.

Dei] concept in the text and then proceeded to pure invention in accordance with the requirements of contemporary anthropology."[15] But students of Barth's interpretation accuse Barth of stumbling into the very eisegetical pit he decried, as David Cairns suggests, "Had not Martin Buber written *I and Thou*, *Dogmatik* III, 2 [which contains Barth's explication of his view on the *imago Dei*] might have had a different shape."[16] Hendrikus Berkhof criticizes systematic theologians, writing, "By studying how systematic theologies have poured meaning into Gen. 1:26, one could write a piece of Europe's cultural history."[17] Irenaeus in particular has been the object of much blame. As discussed below, his exegesis of Genesis 1:26 has often been cited as the cause for the medieval church's dichotomy between nature and grace.[18]

Taxonomies of the Views

Because there are so many different views of the *imago Dei,* writers who discuss these views have classified them according to similar features. One common schema of classification (or taxonomy) arranges the views into three categories, using the following terms: (1) substantive (also substantial, substantialistic, and structural), (2) relational, and (3) functional (sometimes "royal").[19] In his *Basics of Christian Ethics,*

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[15]Karl Barth, *The Doctrine of Creation: Church Dogmatics,* vol. 3, pt. 1, ed. G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance, trans. J. W. Edwards, O. Bussey, and Harold Knight (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1958), 193.

[16]Cairns, *The Image of God in Man*, 187.

[17]Hendrikus Berkhof, *Christian Faith: An Introduction to the Study of the Faith* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), 179.

[18]For authors who negatively evaluate the influence of Irenaeus's view of the image, see Cairns, *The Image of God in Man*, 83; David J. A. Clines, "The Image of God in Man," *Tyndale Bulletin* 19 (1968): 91–92; Anthony A. Hoekema, *Created in God's Image* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 35.; Bray, "The Significance of God's Image in Man," 219–20; Brunner, *Man in Revolt*, 93–94. For a critique that offers a mitigated assessment of Irenaeus's influence, see Philip Hughes, *The True Image: The Origin and Destiny of Man in Christ* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 67.

[19]For authors who use this taxonomy, see Beth Felker Jones and Jeffrey W. Barbeau, eds. *The Image of God in an Image Driven Age: Explorations in Theological Anthropology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2016), 13; Michael F. Bird, *Evangelical Theology: A Biblical and Systematic Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013), 1099–1107. Millard Erickson uses the word "substantive," Millard J.

Paul Ramsey identifies the "substantial" category as including those views of the *imago Dei* whereby "some inner capacity of mind, or soul, or will is identified as the image of God *within* man."[20] The "relational" category, by contrast, includes those views of the *imago Dei* whereby "the image of God is rather to be understood as a relationship *within which* man sometimes stands, whenever like a mirror he obediently reflects God's will in his life and actions."[21] In *The Image of God in a Century of Old Testament Research*, Gunnlaugur Jónsson identifies the "functional" category of interpretation, which, he argues, had been gaining ascendancy since 1961.[22] According to "functional" views, the *imago Dei* denotes primarily humans' exercise of dominion over other creatures. This more recent functional category, along with the older substantive and relational categories, has appeared in subsequent writers' taxonomies of views on the *imago Dei*, including, for example, J. R. Middleton's, Millard Erickson's, and Craig Blomberg's.[23]

Although this taxonomy brings order to what is otherwise a bewildering array of views of the *imago Dei*, it has disadvantages. First, writers do not agree on which views of the *imago Dei* belong in which category. According to Ramsey, Augustine's view belongs in the "relational" category, but Middleton calls Augustine's view "substantial."[24] Erickson includes Luther's and Calvin's view in the "substantive" category, but most writers present the Reformers as breaking *away* from "substantive"

Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1998), 460. Ramsey uses the word "substantial" in *Basic Christian Ethics*, 250. Middleton uses the word "substantialistic" (Middleton, *The Liberating Image*.). Stanley Grenz uses the word "structural" to refer to virtually the same category throughout *The Social God and the Relational Self*.

[20]Ramsey, *Basic Christian Ethics*, 250.

[21]Ibid., 255.

[22]Jónsson, *The Image of God*, 219.

[23]Middleton, *The Liberating Image*, 5–42; Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 517–36; Craig Blomberg, "'True Righteousness and Holiness': The Image of God in the New Testament," in *The Image of God in an Image Driven Age: Explorations in Theological Anthropology*, ed. Beth Felker Jones and Jeffrey W. Barbeau (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2016), 66-90.

[24]Ramsey, *Basic Christian Ethics*, 255; Middleton, *The Liberating Image*, 19.

views to uphold a "relational" view.[25] Another difficulty with this taxonomy is that it

gives the impression that the categories are rigid, or even mutually exclusive. Augustine's

view of the *imago Dei* may be properly categorized as "substantive," or "structural," but

it would be a mistake to overlook the highly relational aspects of his view. Calvin's view

of the *imago Dei* may be properly categorized as "relational," but it would be a mistake

to overlook the fact that he recognized humans' exercising of dominion as constituting

some "portion" of the *imago Dei*, as adherents to the "functional" views do.[26] The many

views of the *imago Dei* exhibit, for the most part, overlapping features; as such, they

should not be categorized rigidly. Instead of offering a taxonomy of views, then, I trace

the history of the interpretation of the *imago Dei* as it passes through the writings of

important Christian theologians, noting particularly how they articulated their views on

the *imago Dei* and responded to the views of others. This survey sets the stage for the

propositions about the *imago Dei* presented in the next chapter.

Irenaeus

Irenaeus is the proper starting point for the history of the Christian

interpretation of the *imago Dei,* for he was (as far as we know) the first post-New

Testament Christian writer to discuss this doctrine "as a theological framework."[27]

However, students of Irenaeus have found his views on the *imago Dei* difficult to

unravel. Did he conceive of the *imago Dei* as primarily intellectual, or primarily

physical? Some of his statements appear to support the view that the *imago Dei* "consists

[25]Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 463; Brunner, *Man in Revolt*, 93–94; Middleton, *The Liberating Image*, 20.; Cairns, *The Image of God in Man*, 121–22; James Leo Garrett, *Systematic Theology: Biblical, Historical, and Evangelical*, 4th ed. (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2014), 1:460–61n53.

[26]John Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, trans. James Anderson, *Calvin's Commentaries* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999), 94.

[27]George A. Maloney, *Man, the Divine Icon: The Patristic Doctrine of Man Made According to the Image of God* (Pecos, NM: Dove, 1973), 31.

in the freedom and rationality of [man's] nature."[28] Other statements seem to emphasize

the physicality of the *imago Dei.*[29] Did Irenaeus believe that the words "image" and

"likeness" denote two distinct concepts? Many scholars claim this distinction as being

one of Irenaeus's most important and long-lasting contributions, not only to the doctrine

of the *imago Dei*, but also to Roman Catholic anthropology.[30] But some statements in

Irenaeus conflict with this interpretation of his thought, leading to James Purves's

evaluation that "Irenaeus views the image and likeness of God as a *unitary* feature."[31]

Some of this confusion is likely a result of expecting from Irenaeus answers

which he was not concerned to provide.[32] Irenaeus's concerns were primarily pastoral,

and in his pastoral role he was occupied with driving away the wolves of Gnosticism.[33]

The doctrine of the *imago Dei* played a significant role in his combating of this heresy,

not only because the Gnostics had their own aberrant version of this doctrine, but also

because the Scriptural teaching about the *imago Dei* struck at the heart of other tenets of

Gnosticism.[34] As Steenberg explains,

> The fashioning of the human person 'in the image of God' comes to bear on
> Irenaeus' battle against speculative dualism. His conviction that God fashioned
> humanity, drawn together with the further point that he so fashions 'in his own
> image', comes as a counter to any anthropology that would separate the divine

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[28]Brunner, *Man in Revolt*, 93.

[29]Cairns, *The Image of God in Man,* 77.

[30]Brunner, *Man in Revolt,* 93–94; Jónsson, *The Image of God*, 12.

[31]James G. Purves, "The Spirit and the Imago Dei: Reviewing the Anthropology of Irenaeus of Lyons," *Evangelical Quarterly* 68, no. 2 (1996): 107, emphasis added.

[32]George Maloney writes that Irenaeus "is not primarily interested in working out a complete doctrine around the analogy of image and likeness. . . . His polemical purpose must be kept always in mind in an attempt to extricate a clear doctrine of Irenaeus," (Maloney, *Man, the Divine Icon*, 34). In a similar vein, Justo González cautions students of Irenaeus: "In attempting to expound Irenaeus' theology, one should keep in mind that we are not dealing with a systematic theologian," in Justo González, Justo L. González, *A History of Christian Thought*, vol. 1 (Nashville: Abingdon, 2010), 160.

[33]Maloney, *Man, the Divine Icon*, 31–32.

[34]Donald Juvenal Merriell, *To the Image of the Trinity: A Study in the Development of Aquinas' Teaching*, Studies and Texts 96 (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1990), 2–4.

realm from the human and deny qualitative goodness to the latter.[35]
Thus, our understanding of Irenaeus's view of the *imago Dei* will benefit from not expecting a systematic presentation of it, but rather being mindful of his pastoral concerns and polemical context.

Most scholars agree that Irenaeus saw a conceptual distinction between "image" and "likeness."[36] Further, some believe that according to Irenaeus, the "image" consists primarily in rationality, and is the possession of humans universally.[37] The "likeness," on the other hand, refers to humans' originally perfect moral condition which they lost at the Fall, and which they can regain only through Christ.[38] The distinction between these terms is evident from the following passage in Irenaeus:

> In the former times it was said indeed that Man was made in the Image of God, but it was not revealed. For the Word was yet invisible, after Whose Image Man had been made. And for this cause, you see, he easily cast off also the resemblance (homoiôsis) of Him. But when the Word of God became flesh, He made both good. For He both truly revealed the Image, Himself having become that very Thing, which the Image of Him was: and He firmly established the resemblance, by causing man to partake of His own complete likeness to the Invisible Father through the Visible Word.[39] (488, 5.16.2)

This passage also serves as evidence that Irenaeus understood "likeness" (*homoiôsis*) to refer to humans' original right standing before God, since it was that "likeness" that man "cast off," in the Fall, and which Christ can restore "by causing man to partake of his

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[35]M. C. Steenberg, *Of God and Man: Theology as Anthropology from Irenaeus to Athanasius* (London: T & T Clark, 2009), 33.

[36]Jónsson, *The Image of God*, 12; Brunner, *Man in Revolt*, 93–94; Hughes, *The True Image*, 7–8; John F. Kilner, *Dignity and Destiny: Humanity in the Image of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015), 196–97.; Nico Vorster, *Created in the Image of God: Understanding God's Relationship with Humanity*, Princeton Theological Monograph Series 173 (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011), 5.

[37]Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1999), 2:97.

[38]Jónsson, *The Image of God*, 12; Paul O'Callaghan, *Children of God in the World* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2016), 93; Maloney, *Man, the Divine Icon*, 34; John Lawson, *The Biblical Theology of Saint Irenaeus* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2006), 8; Cairns, *The Image of God in Man*, 74; Brunner, *Man in Revolt*, 93.

[39]Irenaeus, *Five Books of St. Irenaeus*, trans. John Keble (Oxford: James Parker, 1872), 488 [*Adversus Haereses* 5.16.2].

own complete likeness."[40]

But the assertion that he understood "image" to refer to man's reason and will is less clear in Irenaeus's own writings. In affirming that "Brunner is right in saying that for Irenaeus, the image of God in man is summed up in his nature as a rational and free being, a nature which was not lost at the Fall," Cairns's quotation of Irenaeus does not even mention the image, and, in fact, may be interpreted quite differently.[41]

> Man being rational, and therein like unto God, created free in will and in his own power, is the cause unto himself why he should become in one case wheat and in another chaff. Wherefore also he will be justly condemned, because being created rational he hath lost true reason, and living irrationally hath opposed the righteousness of God.[42]

Irenaeus clearly considers rationality to be one way in which humans are like God. But he does not connect this rationality specifically to the "image," in contradistinction to the "likeness." Further, Irenaeus makes the point that man "hath *lost* true reason," not retained it.[43] As for Brunner's and Cairns's contention that, for Irenaeus, God's image in humans refers to their free will, it is true that Irenaeus argues that humans retain their free will, but he connects their will to God's *likeness*, not his image: "But because man from the beginning has his determination free, and God, in whose *likeness* he is made, hath free determination, in every instance advice is given him, to retain that good thing which is perfected by obedience towards God."[44] Thus, while Irenaeus distinguished between image and likeness (though at times he used these words interchangeably), it is far from clear that he associated reason and will with the image, as distinct from likeness.

A second feature of Irenaeus's view of the *imago Dei* is its inclusion of the

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[40]Irenaeus, *Five Books of St. Irenaeus*, 488 [*Adversus Haereses* 5.16.2].

[41]Cairns, *The Image of God in Man*, 75; see Brunner, *Man in Revolt*, 93.

[42]Irenaeus, *Five Books of St. Irenaeus*, 317 [*Adversus Haereses* 4.4.2].

[43]Ibid.

[44]Ibid., 431 [*Adversus Haereses* 4.37.4].

human body. This emphasis on the physical aspect of the *imago Dei* accords with Irenaeus's polemic against the Gnostics, for, as Weinandy notes, "in contrast to the Gnostics, Irenaeus delighted in the . . . thought that human beings, in the totality of who we are, body and soul, are images of God."[45] Cairns, too, understands Irenaeus's view of the *imago Dei* to include the body: "There is, however, another element in human nature on which Irenaeus lays emphasis in speaking of the image in man. This is the body."[46] Statements from Irenaeus's writings clearly support this reading of his view of the *imago Dei*: "By man, I mean him who is a mixture of soul and flesh, formed after the likeness of God."[47] And again,

> Man is made after the Image of God: man, not a part of man. Now the Soul and Spirit may be part of man, but man they cannot be: the Perfect Man being a certain mingling and uniting of the soul, receiving the Spirit of the Father, which mixture is blended also with that flesh, which is moulded according to the Image of God.[48]

Third, for Irenaeus, humans were created specifically in the image of the incarnate Christ. Strictly speaking, the *imago Dei* is Christ, and he is the one in whose image and likeness humans were created. Irenaeus writes, "Who can be better and more excellent than that man who was made in the likeness of God, besides the Son of God, *in*

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[45]Thomas G. Weinandy, "St. Irenaeus and the Imago Dei: The Importance of Being Human," *Logos: A Journal of Catholic Thought and Culture* 6, no. 4 (2003): 17.

[46]Cairns, *The Image of God in Man*, 76.

[47]Irenaeus, *Five Books of St. Irenaeus*, 310 [*Adversus Haereses* 4, preface].

[48]Ibid., 460 [*Adversus Haereses* 5.6.1]. Irenaeus takes the view that God, knowing that Christ would take on human nature (including a human body), created humans with a body, and in this respect made them like Christ, who is the ultimate image according to which humans were created. To me, that view seems to put unnecessarily strain on the biblical data. As I explain in chap. 4, I understand the *imago Dei* to be more about God's purpose for and relationship with humans than about specific ways in which we are like God. Accordingly, God gives us bodies, not because *he* is embodied, nor because Christ would be embodied, but because our having a body is essential to our carrying out his purpose for us—namely, to exercise godly dominion over the rest of the cosmos. Humanity was thus meant to be the connection point between God and the cosmos, the priest of the garden, as it were. Having forfeited that privilege because of our sin, we need the restoration of the *imago Dei*, which can be effected only through Christ (the true Image of God) who himself became incarnate.

whose likeness man was created?"[49] More than Irenaeus's possible distinction between the image and likeness, this is perhaps the most important feature of Irenaeus's view of the *imago Dei,* for it connects human nature with human destiny: "God will be glorified in His own creature, moulding it in conformity and correspondence with His own Son."[50] Steenburg explains that the incarnate Christ is the "starting point" of Irenaeus's "theology of the image," and Purves stresses that "for Irenaeus the key to understanding man as the image of God is unmistakably found in the person of Jesus Christ."[51]

Fourth, Irenaeus understood the *imago Dei* to include an eschatological or telic aspect.[52] Referring to the eternal state, Irenaeus writes

> If that which is but an earnest [i.e., the Holy Spirit], wrapping the man up in itself, even now causes us to say, *Abba, Father;* what will be the effect of the entire grace of the Spirit, which God shall give unto men? It will render us like unto Him, and perfect us, by the will of the Father: for it will make man to be after the image and likeness of God.[53]

Grenz summarizes this feature of Irenaeus's view of the *imago Dei:* "According to Irenaeus, therefore, the *imago dei* was present in Adam in embryonic form—that is, in the form of God's intention for him and thus as the potential for what he could become. In short, the divine image was eschatological or *telic*."[54]

In summary, Irenaeus's view of the *imago Dei* may be described thus: the *imago Dei* is ultimately Christ, and the fact that humans were created in his image expresses their *telos*. Because of their sin, however, humans fail to fulfill this *telos*. By partaking in Christ, who is the true *imago Dei*, humans can realize, in their likeness to

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[49]Irenaeus, *Five Books of St. Irenaeus*, 407 [*Adversus Haereses* 4.33.4], emphasis added.

[50]Ibid., 460 [*Adversus Haereses* 5.6.1].

[51]Steenberg, *Of God and Man*, 33; Purves, "The Spirit and the Imago Dei," 105; Weinandy, "St. Irenaeus and the Imago Dei," 19; Cairns, *The Image of God in Man*, 80.

[52]Steenberg, *Of God and Man*, 43; Lawson, *The Biblical Theology of Saint Irenaeus*, 8–9.

[53]Irenaeus, *Five Books of St. Irenaeus*, 465 [*Adversus Haereses* 5.8.2].

[54]Grenz, *The Social God and the Relational Self*, 177.

Christ, their true destiny. Since this destiny involves the perfection of their bodies, present human embodiment is also integral to the meaning of being created in the image of God.[55]

The above description differs considerably with what Emil Brunner has averred to be Irenaeus's legacy in the history of the interpretation of the *imago Dei*. Although Irenaeus's emphasis on the Christological, eschatological, and bodily aspects of the *imago Dei* have clearer support and stronger emphasis in his writings, Brunner and others who have followed him stress that Irenaeus's view is mostly about free will and rationality.[56] Besides this, Brunner claims that Irenaeus "outlined the path the church was to follow for nearly fifteen hundred years," this "path" being a "two-storey" view of anthropology, comprised of "the *image of God,* which consists in the freedom and rationality of his nature, and *the likeness* to God, which consists in his self-determination according to the divine destiny."[57] Cairns follows Brunner in this assessment, claiming that Irenaeus "was the unconscious originator of the dichotomy between the natural and supernatural which led later to the acceptance of a natural theology as valid, and the undue dominance of the Aristotelian system in the medieval synthesis."[58] Even if this claim is true, neither Brunner nor Cairns provide sufficient evidence for it. Philip Hughes provides what seems to be a more reasonable assessment of Irenaeus's legacy: "He must not be held responsible for the aberrations of Semi-Pelagianism. His exegesis of Genesis

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[55]For a discussion of *telos* and the *imago Dei*, see Berkouwer, *Man*, 1962, 88–93.

[56]Cairns, *The Image of God in Man*, 73; Brunner, *Man in Revolt*, 93–94; Middleton, *The Liberating Image*, 21; Jónsson, *The Image of God,* 12; Kilner, *Dignity and Destiny*, 196–97; Colin E. Gunton, "Trinity, Ontology and Anthropology: Towards a Renewal of the Doctrine of the Imago Dei," in *Persons, Divine and Human: King's College Essays in Theological Anthropology*, ed. Christoph Schwöbel and Colin E. Gunton (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1991), 48.

[57]Brunner, *Man in Revolt*, 93.

[58]Cairns, *The Image of God in Man*, 83.

1:26 may be questionable, but the theology inherent in his interpretation is governed by sound scriptural instinct."[59]

Augustine

However much Irenaeus stresses rationality as a component of the *imago Dei*, Augustine stresses it even more. Whereas Irenaeus's *Adversus Haereses* uses the *imago Dei* in a polemical, non-systematic way to combat Gnosticism, Augustine's *De Trinitate* contains an elaborate, systematic *inquisitio* into God's triunity and its reflection in humans.[60] And whereas Irenaeus held that the image according to which humans were created is the second person of the Trinity, Augustine understood the *imago Dei* to be a reflection of all three divine persons.

First, Augustine believed that the *imago Dei* in man may be deduced from the Trinity. This is probably the most well-known and obvious of Augustine's contributions to the history of interpretation of the *imago Dei*. Commenting on Genesis 1:26, Augustine writes, "For it was not that gods might make, or make after the image and likeness of gods; but that the Father, and Son, and Holy Spirit might make after the image of the Father, and Son, and Holy Spirit, that man might subsist as the image of God. And God is the Trinity."[61] His reasoning appears to be as follows: God is triune. Whatever is created in God's image reflects God's triunity. Man is created in God's image. Therefore, man reflects God's triunity. "Let us seek then, in this image of God, a certain trinity of a special kind, with the aid of Him who Himself made us after His own image."[62]

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[59]Hughes, *The True Image*, 9. I agree with Hughes's assessment of Irenaeus. While he does not unqualifiedly embrace Irenaeus's exegesis (the distinction between "image" and "likeness" is unwarranted in light of Gen 5:3), neither does he go so far as to blame Irenaeus the way Brunner and others do.

[60]Merriell, *To the Image of the Trinity*, 16.

[61]Aurelius Augustine, *On the Trinity*, trans. Marcus Dods, *The Works of St. Augustine* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1871), 7:199 [*De Trinitate* 7.6.12].

[62]Ibid., 7:350 [*De Trinitate* 14.4.6].

Second, for Augustine, the *imago Dei* in humans may be discovered in a trinity of mental operations. Cairns oversimplifies the matter, stating that "the image is defined by St. Augustine as rationality."[63] For, though Augustine insists that "we must find in the soul of man, *i.e.,* the rational or intellectual soul, that image of the Creator," he does not define it *as* rationality, indicating instead that it is manifested *in* certain rational operations.[64] According to Augustine, "The mind remembers, understands, loves itself; if we discern this, we discern a trinity, not yet indeed God, but now at last an image of God."[65] Thus, Merriell comes closer to describing Augustine's actual account of the *imago Dei*; for Augustine, he states, "the image of God consists properly of the memory, understanding, and love of God," as long as it is stressed that this is a trinity not of mental "faculties" but of mental "activities."[66]

Subsequent writers have criticized Augustine for promoting an over-intellectualized account of the *imago Dei*. In his critique of Augustine's view, Cairns, for example, insists that rationality "is too narrow a basis on which to found the image of God in man."[67] But Augustine has Scriptural support for locating the *imago Dei* in mental operations. Passages in the New Testament that allude to believers' spiritual renewal refer to *thinking* as the activity in which this renewal takes place. In Book 7, Augustine quotes Romans 12:2, which urges believers to "be ye transformed by the renewing of [their] *mind*," and Colossians 3:10, which describes the "new man" as "renewed to the *knowledge* of God after the image of Him that created him"[68]

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[63]Cairns, *The Image of God in Man*, 100.

[64]Augustine, *The Works of Aurelius Augustine*, 7:378 [*De Trinitate* 14.4.6].

[65]Ibid., 357 [*De Trinitate* 14.8.11].

[66]Merriell, *To the Image of the Trinity*, 28; see John E. Rotelle, introduction to *The Trinity*, 2nd ed. (Hyde Park, NY: New City, 1991), 26.

[67]Cairns, *The Image of God in Man*, 100.

[68]Augustine, *The Works of Aurelius Augustine*, 7:200 [*De Trinitate* 7.6.12], emphasis added.

Third, Augustine held that the *imago Dei*, as a trinity of mental operations, persists in fallen humans to sustain the possibility of their entering into a relationship with God. Augustine writes, "For, as we have said, although worn out and defaced by losing the participation of God, yet the image of God still remains. For it is His image in this very point, that it is capable of Him, and can be partaker of Him; which so great good is only made possible by its being His image."[69]

Augustine's creative insights into the doctrine of the *imago Dei* have been enormously influential. From a Roman Catholic perspective, Merriell writes "since Augustine, no work has supplanted the *De Trinitate* as an authoritative guide for the theological reflection of the Western Church on the scriptural notion of the image of God."[70] Although Protestant theologians have generally been less enthusiastic about Augustine's view of the *imago Dei*, they nonetheless have continued to draw upon his insights.

Martin Luther's view of the *imago Dei* will be discussed below. But since he has been so formative in shaping the Protestant perspective on Augustine's view, here it is fitting to deal with his criticisms. According to Luther, Augustine understood "the image of God to be those powers of the soul, —memory, mind, or intellect, and will."[71] Augustine and his followers, writes Luther, "bent their minds on the discovery of certain *trinities* of natural qualities or endowments, in man."[72] Although Luther did not "altogether condemn and reprobate this diligence and these deep thoughts, by which divines desire to reduce all things to a kind of *trinity*," he was concerned that this view of

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[69]Augustine, *The Works of Aurelius Augustine*, 7:357 [*De Trinitate* 14.8.11].

[70]Merriell, *To the Image of the Trinity*, 3.

[71]Luther, *The Creation*, 87.

[72]Ibid., 88. Strictly speaking, this is not an accurate description of Augustine's view of the *image Dei*. As John Rotelle points out in his introduction to *The Trinity*, Augustine invariably describes the *imago Dei* in terms of the dynamic operations, not static "faculties," "powers," or "endowments" (Rotelle, *The Trinity*, 27).

the *imago Dei* could lead an anthropology according to which humans can save themselves; "For," Luther writes, "it is on these grounds that some rest their disputes in favour of *Free-will*: which, they say, naturally follows from this 'image of God.' "[73] Luther's concern is warranted. As Cairns states, "The motive for Luther's great change in interpretation of the content of the image is at least in part the fear that the doctrine of salvation by faith alone is endangered by any other exegesis than the one he adopts."[74]

Luther makes a strong case that bad soteriology may arise from bad anthropology, but his case that bad anthropology arises from Augustine's view of the *imago Dei* is, overall, unpersuasive. He apparently considers that sin's corruption of our "memory, mind, and will" serves to discredit Augustine's view of the *imago Dei*. But Augustine himself had stressed that this trinity of mental operations is "worn out and defaced by losing the participation of God."[75] It does no damage to Augustine's view of the *imago Dei* that this trinity of mental operations *imperfectly* reflects God's Trinity. As a further point against Augustine's view, Luther argues, "If these natural endowments [i.e., memory, mind, and will] therefore constitute the image of God, it will inevitably follow, that Satan also was created in the image of God; for he possesses all these natural qualities; and to an extent and strength, far beyond our own. For he has a memory and intellect the most powerful, and a will the most obstinate."[76] Here Luther argues via *modus tollens* that Augustine's account of the *imago Dei* is untenable. If Augustine's account is correct, then Satan is created in the image of God; Satan is not created in the image of God; therefore, Augustine's account is not correct. However, Augustine's view does not imply that Satan was created in the image of God. Apparently, Luther had

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[73]Luther, *The Creation*, 88.

[74]Cairns, *The Image of God in Man*, 125.

[75]Augustine, *The Works of Aurelius Augustine*, 7:357 [*De Trinitate* 14.8.11].

[76]Luther, *The Creation*, 89.

reasoned that, on Augustine's view, all beings created in the image of God have memory, understanding, and will. Satan has memory, understanding, and will. Therefore, according to Augustine, Satan is created in the image of God. Strictly speaking, this is the fallacy of the undistributed middle, as is clear by the counterexample: All men are mortal; all women are mortal; therefore, all men are women. Perhaps, however, this is uncharitable to Luther; he possibly meant to say that Augustine *defined* the *imago Dei* in terms of possessing this trinity of mental operations. In that case, Luther might be right to reject Augustine's view of the *imago Dei*, for such a definition appears to include Satan as being created in the image of God. It seems, however, that there are good reasons for believing that Augustine's view of the *imago Dei* does *not* include angels (fallen or unfallen). So, if Luther's rejection of Augustine's view is not based on faulty reasoning, it at least is based on a misconstrual of Augustine's true view of the *imago Dei*. Either way, Luther's arguments against Augustine's view are not compelling. Therefore, if Augustine's view of the *imago Dei* is to be discounted, it must be discounted on grounds other than the ones Luther has presented.

Whereas Luther was careful not to reject Augustine's view outright, subsequent interpreters have raised even more serious charges against Augustine's account of the *imago Dei*. Cairns claims that "in [Augustine's] doctrine of the image he has taken over just so much from non-Christian thought as will influence in the course of his teaching from time to time, and make him suggest *a capacity for self-salvation* by an interior process of reflection."[77] Admitting that such "self-salvation" does not cohere with the rest of Augustine's corpus, Cairns attributes this alleged aberration in Augustine to "an undigested relic of neo-Platonism."[78] Cairns's reasoning seems to be as follows: Augustine's view of the *imago Dei* assumes that "memory, understanding, and love of

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[77]Cairns, *The Image of God in Man*, 98, emphasis added.

[78]Ibid., 99.

self is itself also a capacity for the knowledge and love of God"; this "capacity for the knowledge and love for God" implies "that by the interior way of introspection and self-love we can come to know and love God."[79] But even if we grant that Augustine's suggested trinity of "memory, understanding, and will" entails a "capacity for the knowledge and love of God," the mere possession of a "capacity" does not entail the *fulfillment* of that capacity, just as a lightbulb's capacity to emit light does not guarantee that it will do so (in the absence of other factors). If, then, we are to reject Augustine's view of the *imago Dei*, we cannot appropriately do so on the grounds that Cairns suggests.

Both Augustine and Irenaeus sought to derive the meaning of the *imago Dei* from the full range of Scripture as a unified Christian revelation. But Augustine—unlike Irenaeus, whose account of the *imago Dei* emphasizes the role of the physical body—all but ignores physicality, making rationality the locus of the *imago Dei*. In light of Augustine's immense influence on subsequent interpreters of the *imago Dei*, his "understanding of the divine image eventually became the standard interpretation of this theological concept," at least "in the medieval Western church."[80]

Thomas Aquinas

The medieval emphasis on rationality as the locus of the *imago Dei* reaches full bloom in the writings of Thomas Aquinas.[81] In this respect, Aquinas's view of the *imago Dei* expands Augustine's view. According to Merriell, Aquinas "stands out among the disciples of Augustine, for he appears to have been the first of the scholastic masters

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[79]Cairns, *The Image of God in Man*, 97.

[80]Grenz, *The Social God and the Relational Self*, 157.

[81]Ibid., 161.

to grasp the true intention, structure, and development of Augustine's search for the image of the Trinity."[82]

Aquinas's account of the *imago Dei* may be summarized under two heads. First, and most evidently, Aquinas understood the *imago Dei* as located exclusively in rationality, both human and angelic. In Aquinas's words, "The soul's essence belongs to the *image* as representing the Divine Essence in those things which belong to the intellectual nature."[83] In reply to the question of "whether the image of God is in man as regards the mind only," Aquinas answers decisively: "This image of God is not found even in the rational creature except in the mind."[84] Thus, for Aquinas, the *imago Dei* belongs only to the non-material, intellectual part of a human. Merriell confirms this assessment, explaining that "Thomas' real aim is to formulate a definition of 'image' that will restrict the image of God to the higher part of the rational creature, where an image of the Trinity may be discerned among its faculties or habits."[85] This location of the *imago Dei* in rationality prompted Aquinas to argue that "the image of God is more perfect in the angels than in man, because their intellectual nature is more perfect."[86]

Second, Aquinas perceived three ways in which humans manifest the *imago Dei*: nature, grace, and glory. The first way (nature) belongs to all humans: "man possesses a natural aptitude for understanding and loving God; and this aptitude consists in the very nature of the mind which is common to all men."[87] The second way (grace) belongs only to "the just . . . inasmuch as man actually or habitually knows and loves

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[82]Merriell, *To the Image of the Trinity*, 4.

[83]Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, 2nd ed. (London: Burns & Washbourn, 1916), 304 [*Summa* I:93.9].

[84]Ibid., 292 [*Summa* I:93.6].

[85]Merriell, *To the Image of the Trinity*, 41.

[86]Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, 287 [*Summa* I:93.3].

[87]Ibid., 288 [*Summa* I:93.4].

God, though imperfectly."[88] The third way (glory) belongs only to the "blessed" (i.e., saints in heaven): "inasmuch as man knows and loves God perfectly."[89] In postulating this three-tiered gradation, Aquinas sought to answer the objection "that the image of God is not found in every man."[90] This objection has a serious basis: a person's sinfulness seems to nullify his or her status as being in the image of God. For, as the objection goes, "by sin man becomes unlike God. Therefore he loses the image of God."[91] While Aquinas's three-tiered solution may seem contrived, it resembles the solution later presented by Calvin, who posited an all-but-destroyed *imago Dei* in fallen humans, a progressive restoration of the *imago Dei* in the regenerate, and the consummation of the *imago Dei* in the saints in heaven. But Aquinas differed from Calvin in a crucial way: he expressed the *imago Dei* in fallen humans as a "natural aptitude for understanding and loving God."[92]

Protestant writers who discuss Aquinas's role in the history of interpretation of the *imago Dei* have faulted him for both his dependence on Aristotelian categories and his advocacy of the medieval "two-story" view of anthropology. Berkouwer opines that "Thomas does not seem too biblical-minded when, under the influence of Aristotle, he explains likeness (*similitudo*) as a participation in the unity of being, which like truth and goodness belong to the metaphysical category of transcendentals."[93] Cairns, critiquing Aquinas's axiom that "grace does not destroy nature, but perfects it," remarks that "St.

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[88]Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, 288 [*Summa* I:93.4].

[89]Ibid.

[90]Ibid.

[91]Ibid.

[92]Ibid., 289 [*Summa* I:93.4].

[93]G. C. Berkouwer, *Man: The Image of God*, Studies in Dogmatics (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962), 104.

Thomas has taken over with too little modification the Aristotelian way of thinking, and added a second storey of Christian ethic to it."[94]

Aquinas has been criticized also for upholding a "two-story" anthropology, to which his interpretation of the *imago Dei* is integral. According to this view of human nature, "original sin and the fall of man resulted in the loss of original righteousness, conceived of as a superadded gift (the 'likeness'), without, however, involving the loss or deterioration of man's constitution in the 'image.' "[95] Of course, Aquinas was not the originator of this view. Historians of biblical interpretation trace it back to Irenaeus's exegesis of Genesis 1:26 and through Augustine, Peter Lombard, and Anselm.[96] Still, Aquinas himself articulated this view, describing the "universal" *imago Dei* as a "natural aptitude for understanding and loving God," and Protestant theologians have detected semi-Pelagianism in this view.[97] Whether or not Aquinas deserves these criticisms, he does express a view of fallen human nature that is more optimistic than the view the Reformers propounded less than two centuries later. And in stressing that the *imago Dei* is seated exclusively in rationality, Aquinas differs from Irenaeus, who had affirmed that the body is essential to the meaning of the *imago Dei*.

Martin Luther

Luther marks a turning point in the history of the interpretation of the *imago Dei*. The narrative of his rejection of the medieval "substantial" or "structural" view—his outcry over a Pelagian anthropology putatively lurking in Irenaeus's view of the *imago Dei*, and his positing a view of the *imago Dei* as man's original righteousness—finds

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[94]Cairns, *The Image of God in Man*, 117. See also Grenz, *The Social God and the Relational Self*, 160.

[95]Hughes, *The True Image*, 9.

[96]Brunner, *Man in Revolt*, 93–94; Grenz, *The Social God and the Relational Self*, 157-58, 160; Jónsson, *The Image of God,* 12; Cairns, *The Image of God in Man*, 81.

[97]Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, 298 [*Summa* I:93.4]; Brunner, *Man in Revolt*, 93–94.

vivid expression in Brunner's *Man in Revolt.*

> It was not until Luther came . . . that this 'two-storey' edifice [i.e., the medieval anthropology described above] was destroyed and also its systematic basis, Irenaeus' doctrine of the *Imago* and the *Similitudo.* . . . In order to make a complete formulation of the doctrine of Original Sin, Luther abandoned the Catholic dualism. The *Imago Dei*, man's original nature—not merely the added element of 'supernature'—has been destroyed.[98]

Whether or not Brunner rightly blames Irenaeus for the "systematic basis" of this anthropology, one cannot deny that Luther presents this anthropology (and its associated interpretation of the *imago Dei*) as the foil against which he sets forth his own interpretation. Theologians who follow Augustine's interpretation of the *imago Dei*, says Luther, "affirm that the image of God consists in these *three* qualities [memory, mind, and will]: which image (they say) is found in all men."[99] When this three-fold image is perfected by grace, it becomes the "likeness" or "similitude." Thus, in his "likeness" to God, man's "memory [is] adorned with hope, his intellect with faith, and his will with love."[100] Luther rejects this view because it results in a view of human nature that grossly underestimates the corrosive effects of sin. "Memory, mind, and will," he writes, "we do most certainly possess; but wholly corrupted, and most miserably weakened; nay. . . utterly leprous, and unclean."[101] More seriously, it appeared to undermine man's desperate need for God's saving grace.[102]

Indeed, Luther wanted to avoid any interpretation of the *imago Dei* according to which one could save oneself. This is why he found the views of Augustine and his followers unsatisfactory. Not only do these views fail to "aid the right explanation of the 'image of God,'" but also (and most importantly), "others may push them too far. For it is

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[98]Brunner, *Man in Revolt*, 93–94.

[99]Luther, *The Creation*, 87.

[100]Ibid.

[101]Luther, *The Creation*, 89.

[102]Ibid.

on these grounds," Luther writes, "that some rest their disputes in favour of *Free-will*: which, they say, naturally follows from this 'image of God.' "[103] Luther further charged that this interpretation of the *imago Dei* took one step toward "that pernicious saying, 'God who *made* thee without thyself will not *save* thee without thyself.' "[104] Thus, Luther's dissatisfaction with the speculative views of the *imago Dei*, latent (as he thought) with semi-Pelagianism, prompted him to find an interpretation that more fully resonated with the strains of his soteriology.

Luther's account of the *imago Dei* may be summarized under three heads. First, the *imago Dei* refers to the moral standing required for a right relationship with God. He writes, "Wherefore I, for my part, understand the image of God to be this; that Adam possessed it in its moral substance, or nature;—that he not only knew God, and believed Him to be good, but that he lived also a life truly divine; that is, free from the fear of death and of all dangers, and happy in the favour of God."[105] Luther, as Cairns states, "equates the image with man's original righteousness," the active living out of righteous deeds in relationship with God.[106]

Second, Luther held that, for fallen humans, the *imago Dei* is utterly lost. After naming such sins as lust, hatred toward God, and blasphemy, Luther writes that "these are those sad evidences of the fall, which do indeed prove that the image of God in us is lost."[107] Such a gulf divides the *imago Dei* from fallen humans that

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[103]Luther, *The Creation*, 89.

[104]Ibid.*,* 88.

[105]Ibid., 90.

[106]Cairns, *The Image of God in Man*, 194; see also Martin Luther, *Luther's Works*, ed. Helmut T. Lehmann and Lewis W. Spitz (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1960), 34:194.

[107]Luther, *The Creation*, 91.

when we now attempt to speak of that image, we speak of a thing unknown; an image which we not only have never experienced, but the contrary to which we have experienced all our lives, and experience still. Of this image therefore all we now possess are the mere terms,—'*the image of God.*'[108]

Third, through the gospel, the *imago Dei* in man can be restored even beyond its protological manifestation. Although in fallen humans the *imago Dei* is utterly lost, "the divine object of the gospel is, that we might be restored to that original, and indeed to a better and higher image . . . in order that we might live in God, and with God, and might be 'one' with Him."[109] At present, believers in Christ enjoy a restored image—the original righteousness which Adam and Eve enjoyed in Eden. In eternity, however, this Edenic *imago Dei* is superseded by its eschatological manifestation. Luther writes,

> In this manner [i.e., through the work of the Holy Spirit] does the image of God *begin* to be restored in us, through the Gospel. . . . But in this life it is not perfected. When however it is perfected, in the kingdom of the Father, then will our will be truly free and good, our mind truly illuminated, and our memory constant and perfect.[110]

In viewing the *imago Dei* as original righteousness which humans have now utterly lost, Luther's interpretation agrees with his soteriology. But he has been criticized for carrying the idea of the "lostness" of the *imago Dei* too far. Reinhold Niebuhr argues that "Luther is so concerned to re-establish the Augustinian doctrine of original sin against the semi-Pelagianism of Catholicism that all his interpretations of the image are coloured by his eagerness to prove that, whatever the image is, it is now lost."[111] Some have called Luther's view "the doctrine of the Relic of the image" to reflect the alleged tension within Luther's view: while on the one hand the *imago Dei* is lost in fallen humans, on the other hand it is somehow not *so* lost as to be beyond restoration.[112]

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[108]Luther, *The Creation*, 91.

[109]Ibid., 92.

[110]Ibid., 93.

[111]Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Nature and Destiny of Man* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1941), 160.

[112]Cairns, *The Image of God in Man*, 125; Brunner, *Man in Revolt*, 94–95.

According to Brunner, this feature of Luther's view is "confused and dogmatically extremely doubtful."[113] Cairns claims that Luther's view fails to explain Genesis 9:6 which, he states, "indicates that the image still persists, and nothing is mentioned about its deterioration, much less its having been 'lost.' "[114]

Indeed, it is difficult to reconcile Luther's idea of the postlapsarian "lost" image with other Scriptural references to the *imago Dei*. For in addition to Genesis 9:6, 1 Corinthians 11:7 and James 3:9 refer, without qualification, to humans as being presently in the image of God. Further, when Luther argues that the image has been lost, he does so on experiential grounds, not exegetical data: "Wherefore, when we now attempt to speak of that image," he writes, "we speak of a thing unknown; an image which we not only have never experienced, but the contrary to which we have experienced all our lives, and experience still."[115] The tensions within Luther's view have thus prompted subsequent interpreters to seek a view of the *imago Dei* that better accords with Scripture's teaching about the *imago Dei* persisting even in fallen humans.[116]

John Calvin

In general, Calvin's interpretation of the *imago Dei* resembles Luther's. He believed that it amounted to humans' original righteousness before God.[117] Like Luther, Calvin found Augustine's trinitarian speculations about the *imago Dei* to be unsatisfactory.[118] He also disagreed with those who made a distinction between "image" and "likeness," arguing instead that "likeness is merely added by way of exposition" and

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[113]Brunner, *Man in Revolt*, 94–95.

[114]Cairns, *The Image of God in Man*, 126.

[115]Luther, *The Creation*, 91.

[116]Brunner, *Man in Revolt,* 95.

[117]Cairns, *The Image of God in Man*, 128.

[118]John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. Henry Beveridge (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2007), 108 [*Institutes* 1.15.4].

that these terms are sometimes used interchangeably.[119] He further rejected speculations arising from this unwarranted distinction. "Hence there is an obvious absurdity," he states, "in those who indulge in philosophical speculation as to these names, placing the צֶלֶם (*tselem*) that is the image, in the substance of the soul, and the דְּמוּת (*demuth*) that is the likeness, in its qualities, and so forth."[120]

Yet Calvin did agree on some points with Augustine's view of the *imago Dei*. Like Augustine, Calvin held that the *imago Dei* was a kind of "mirror" whereby humans reflect God's nature.[121] T. F. Torrance confirms this assessment of Calvin's view. "There is no doubt," he explains, "that Calvin always thinks of the *imago* in terms of a *mirror*. Only when the mirror actually reflects an object does it have the image of that object."[122] Calvin also agreed with Augustine that the *imago Dei* is seated primarily in man's immaterial aspect. However, whereas Augustine stressed that the seat of the *imago Dei* is *rationality*, Calvin refers to "mind" and "heart." "The chief seat of the Divine image was in his mind and heart, where it was imminent."[123] Whereas Aquinas argues that the *imago Dei* resides *exclusively* in man's rationality, Calvin admits that "though the primary seat of the divine image was in the mind and the heart, or in the soul and its powers, there was no part even of the *body* in which some rays of glory did not shine."[124]

That Calvin understood the *imago Dei* to refer to humans' original righteousness in relationship with God is clear from his writings. In his commentary on Genesis 1:26, Calvin writes that "by [the *imago Dei*] the perfection of our whole nature is

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[119]Calvin, *Institutes,* 107 [*Institutes* 1.15.3]; Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, 94.

[120]Calvin, *Institutes*, 107 [*Institutes* 1.15.3].

[121]Ibid.; Augustine, *The Works of Aurelius Augustine*, VII:393 [*De Trinitate* 15.814].

[122]Thomas F. Torrance, *Calvin's Doctrine of Man* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1997), 36.

[123]Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, 95; Charles Partee, *The Theology of John Calvin* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2008), 87.

[124]Calvin, *Institutes*, 107 [*Institutes* 1.15.3], emphasis added.

designated, as it appeared when Adam was endued with a right judgment, had affections in harmony with reason, had all his senses sound and well-regulated, and truly excelled in everything good."[125] Likewise in his *Institutes,* he writes, "Accordingly, by this term is denoted the integrity with which Adam was endued when his intellect was clear, his affections subordinated to reason, all his senses duly regulated, and when he truly ascribed all his excellence to the admirable gifts of his Maker."[126]

As to the *imago Dei* in fallen humans, Calvin differs from Luther. Whereas Luther claims that the image was completely lost, Calvin does not. For Calvin, the postlapsarian *imago Dei* became "vitiated and almost destroyed, nothing remaining but a ruin, confused, mutilated, and tainted with impurity."[127] It is presently "so corrupted that anything which remains is fearful deformity." [128] According to Niesel's understanding of Calvin's more mature thought (as found in his commentary on the book of Job), God sustains his image in fallen humans, and he does so by determining to see any degree of human virtue (albeit totally unmeritorious) as proceeding from himself.[129] Whether or not this accurately captures Calvin's final view of the *imago Dei*, it is evident that Calvin wrestled with this tension: the presence of the *imago Dei* as a universal bestowment to all humans on one hand, and, on the other hand, the reality of total depravity in all mere humans.

Calvin's attempt to resolve this tension resulted in a two-fold understanding of the *imago Dei*, which his followers have called the "broad" and "narrow" senses.[130] The

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[125]Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, 94–95.

[126]Calvin, *Institutes*, 107 [*Institutes* 1.15.3].

[127]Ibid., 108 [*Institutes* 1.15.4].

[128]Ibid., 107 [*Institutes* 1.15.3].

[129]Wilhelm Niesel, *The Theology of Calvin* (Cambridge: James Clarke, 1956), 94.

[130]Torrance, *Calvin's Doctrine of Man*, 35. Calvin himself never used the terminology "broad" and "narrow."

"broad" sense of the *imago Dei* refers to God's image that persists in all humans, regardless of their fallen state. The "narrow" sense of the image refers to the original righteousness which was lost in the Fall, but which may be restored in humans through their relationship with Christ. As Torrance explains, "Calvin's wider use of the *imago dei* is grounded upon the special relation of man to the Word of God, that is, upon the narrower sense of the *imago dei*. The narrower sense of the image is the important one, and it is in this sense that the expression *imago dei* should most properly be used."[131]

The legacy of Calvin's interpretation of the *imago Dei* is profound and far-reaching. Cairns, in fact, avers that "little that is radically new and important on the subject has been said since Calvin."[132] Even if Cairns exaggerates, the notion of the *imago Dei* as original righteousness and its subsequent deterioration in the Fall is often repeated among Reformed theologians. Following Calvinistic doctrine, the Westminster Confession of Faith affirms that God "created man, male and female, with reasonable souls, endued with knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness, after his own image, having the law of God written in their hearts, and power to fulfil it."[133]

Like Luther's view—that the *imago Dei* is completely lost in fallen humans—the Calvinistic "broad" and "narrow" senses of the *imago Dei* also finds little direct biblical support. It is, at least, a theologically consistent solution to the tension between the persisting *imago Dei* in lapsarian humans and the reality of human sinfulness. Calvin defends this interpretation of the *imago Dei* by arguing that we may infer the nature of the original *imago Dei* from the nature of the restored *imago Dei*.[134] From his reading of Colossians 3:19 that "the new man is renewed after the image of him that created him,"

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[131]Torrance, *Calvin's Doctrine of Man*, 42.

[132]Cairns, *The Image of God in Man*, 146.

[133]Westminster Assembly, *The Confession of Faith of the Assembly of Divines at Westminster*, ed. S. W. Carruthers (London: Presbyterian Church of England, 1946), 4.2.

[134]Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, 94.

and Ephesians 4:24 that this "new man . . . is created in righteousness, and true holiness,"

Calvin concludes that the original *imago Dei* must also comprise these qualities.[135]

Calvin's view introduces, as Aquinas's did, a gradation in humans' manifestation of the

imago Dei.

> Therefore, as the image of God constitutes the entire excellence of human nature, as it shone in Adam before his fall, but was afterward vitiated and almost destroyed, nothing remaining but a ruin, confused, mutilated, and tainted with impurity, so it is now *partly seen* in the elect, insofar as they are regenerated by the Spirit.[136]

In summary, Calvin's view of the *imago Dei* avoids the Augustinian and

Thomistic emphasis that the *imago Dei* is manifested primarily or exclusively in a

person's rationality. Further, it continues Luther's understanding of the *imago Dei* as

original righteousness, yet without holding that the *imago Dei* is completely lost in fallen

humans. At the same time, however, it introduces a distinction between the "broad" and

"narrow" senses of the view in an attempt to reconcile the tension between God's

persisting image in man and man's thorough sinfulness.

Karl Barth

Barth rejects much of the interpretive tradition that preceded him. After

summarizing the views of several thinkers, including Ambrose, Athanasius, Augustine,

Luther, Hegel, and Troeltsch, Barth waves them aside with these words:

> We might easily discuss which of these and the many other similar explanations is the finest or deepest or most serious. What we cannot discuss is which of them is the true explanation of Genesis 1:26ff. For it is obvious that their authors merely found the concept in the text and then proceeded to pure invention in accordance with the requirements of contemporary anthropology.[137]

As to the "functional view," Barth admits that "there is a good deal in its favour," since

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[135]Calvin, *Institutes*, 107 [*Institutes* 1.15.4].

[136]Ibid.

[137]Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics* vol. 3, pt. 1, *The Doctrine of Creation*, ed. G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1958), 193.

"the *dominium terrae* is portrayed as a consequence of the *imago Dei*."[138] But he doubts the author intended this connection, and so is not content with a view of the *imago Dei* that focuses on human dominion.

Barth credits W. Vischer and Dietrich Bonhoeffer as the pioneers of his own view. Vischer provided the insight that Genesis 1:26 means that "man is the eye of the whole body of creation which God will cause to see His glory; that all creation aims at the confrontation of God and man and the incontrovertible I-Thou relationship between Creator and creature."[139] But Bonhoeffer "comes closer to the text" since he points out the relevance of the male-female relationship to the meaning of the *imago Dei*. Thrice the author of Genesis repeats that God created *man and woman* in his own image. Thus, Barth reasons, "Could anything be more obvious than to conclude from this clear indication that the image and likeness of the being created by God signifies existence in confrontation . . . and then to go on to ask against this background in what the original and prototype of the divine existence of the Creator consists?"[140] This "prototype" is "the relationship and differentiation between the I and the Thou in God Himself. Man is created by God in correspondence with this relationship and differentiation in God Himself: created as a Thou that can be addressed by God but also as an I responsible to God; in the relationship of man and woman in which man is a Thou to his fellow and therefore himself an I in responsibility to this claim."[141] Thus, according to Barth, the *imago Dei* consists of humans' bisexuality ("male and female") reflecting God's interpersonality ("let us make").

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[138]Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, 194.

[139]W. Vischer, quoted in ibid.

[140]Ibid.

[141]Ibid., 198.

According to Barth, then, Luther and Calvin cannot be right in holding that the *imago Dei* is man's original righteousness. Further, there is no need to posit a "lost" *imago Dei* (as Luther does) or the "broad" and "narrow" senses of the *imago Dei* (as Calvin's followers do). For the *imago Dei* expresses God's relational intention for humans, and as such it cannot be damaged or lost. As Barth writes, "The divine intention at the creation of man, and the consequent promise and pledge given with it, cannot be lost or subject to partial or complete destruction."[142] Barth's doctrine of the *imago Dei* naturally centers on Christ as the true image. "The invisible God Himself," he states, "has become visible in [Christ]. In Him we have *the* image in face of which the question of the original is finally answered."[143]

Scholars have since pointed out exegetical difficulties with Barth's view, and noted its dependence on Martin Buber's *Ich und Du*.[144] Despite these criticisms, it remains a provocative and highly influential interpretation.[145] It draws upon a broad range of biblical themes and passages in its support. Further, it deals with the tension between the universal *imago Dei* and the reality of sin by presenting the *imago Dei* as God's *intention* for humans.

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[142]Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, 3, pt. 1, 194, 200.

[143]Ibid., 202.

[144]An early critique comes from one of Barth's colleagues. For a critique that seeks to uphold the relational view while "overcom[ing] some of the pitfalls of Barth's approach," see Randall E. Otto, "The Imago Dei as Familitas," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 35, no. 4 (1992): 503–13. For other critiques, see Berkouwer, *Man*, 1962, 73–74; Cairns, *The Image of God in Man*, 164–79; Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Justice: Rights and Wrongs* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010), 344; Gunton, "Trinity, Ontology and Anthropology," 58.

[145]Grenz, *The Social God and the Relational Self*, 299; Phyllis A. Bird, "'Male and Female He Created Them': Gen 1:27b in the Context of the Priestly Account of Creation," *The Harvard Theological Review* 74, no. 2 (1981): 152.

Consensus of Old Testament Scholars

In *The Image of God*, Gunnlaugur A. Jónsson points to 1882 as a "turning point . . . for the interpretation of the *imago Dei* texts."[146] The historical context of this change includes the rise of Darwinism, the availability of extra-Biblical writings (such as *Enuma Elish*) in shedding light on the ancient Near East culture, and new theories about the date and theological biases of the "Priestly document," which (according to the theories) contains the passages about the *imago Dei*.[147] Since that time, according to Jónsson, there has been an increasing consensus among Old Testament scholars in interpreting the *imago Dei* as "man's sharing the dominion of God."[148] As Jónsson writes, "It is clearly the case that [the] great majority of OT scholars believe that man's divine likeness consists, to use Ringgren's expression, 'in his dominion over the animal world, exercised by him as God's representative.' "[149] Since this "dominion" denotes man's function, as distinct from his essential nature or his relationship with God, this view has been called the "functional interpretation."[150]

In contrast with the other views of the *imago Dei,* this "functional" variety took shape in response to insights from ancient Near East culture. But noticeably absent—at least in Jónsson's description of these views—are the theological themes that were woven into the earlier interpretations of the *imago Dei*: human sin, redemption in Christ, and God's purpose for humans.

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[146]Jónsson, *The Image of God*, 15.

[147]Ibid., 24.

[148]Jónsson, *The Image of God*, 219.

[149]Ibid., 220.

[150]Ibid., 221.

Conclusion

In summarizing the history of the interpretation of the *imago Dei*, it is clear that there are significant differences among the views. At least two general factors contribute to these differences. First, the interpreters' unique *concerns* influence how they view the *imago Dei*. Irenaeus was concerned to discredit the heresy of Gnosticism. Augustine was concerned to discover how the *imago Dei* might reflect God's triune nature. Aquinas was concerned to establish in which aspect of humans the *imago Dei* is seated. Luther was concerned to determine the moral condition in which the *imago Dei* was originally manifested. Proponents of the functional interpretation (or, at least, many whose views Jónsson describes) are concerned to ask what the author of "P" most likely had in mind in writing Genesis 1:26ff. Second, and closely related, interpreters' *hermeneutics* influences how they view the *imago Dei*. Since he believed in the divine unity of Scriptural revelation, Augustine found it legitimate to posit that the plural cohortative of Genesis 1:26 was the speech of the three members of the Godhead, and thus that the *imago Dei* consisted of a kind of trinity in humans. Subsequent interpreters have denied the legitimacy of such an approach on the basis that the human writer was not thinking of the Trinity when writing these words. Calvin believed that he could discern what the original, Old Testament *imago Dei* was based on the New Testament's description of a believer's renewal in Christ. But, again, such a view depends on a hermeneutical principle whereby the Old and New Testaments may be interpreted in light of each other.

Our focus on these differences, however, should not obscure the important ways in which these views agree. Two agreements stand out as particularly important. First, all the views agree that the *imago Dei* means that humans are somehow fundamentally oriented toward God.[151] This agreement holds even among interpreters whose conception of God and beliefs about Scripture are at variance with traditional

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[151]Vorster, *Created in the Image of God*, 4.

Christian teaching.[152] An important implication of this agreement is that human nature is incomprehensible apart from a divine (or at least a supra-human) reference point. Second, most of the views (particularly those views held by interpreters who accept the Bible as the Word of God) attempt to address the apparent tension between the *imago Dei* in postlapsarian humans and the fact of human sinfulness. These attempts have been noted above. Augustine admitted that humans' trinity of rational operations has been "defaced by losing the participation of God."[153] Aquinas suggested a three-tiered manifestation of the *imago Dei*. Luther posited that it had been lost completely. Calvin hinted at a two-fold sense of the image. Barth denied that the *imago Dei* referred to an original ideal state at all.[154] Even some proponents of the functional interpretation recognize that sin has brought about a "distortion or diminution" of humans' ability to perform their God-intended role.[155] On one hand, we might count these various attempts as evidence that the views hopelessly disagree. On the other hand, however, we must acknowledge that these attempts reveal an underlying point of agreement that stands in contrast to the first point of agreement: humans have another orientation that is alien to and in conflict with their Godward orientation.

With this history as background, in the following chapter I defend a particular interpretation of *imago Dei* with the aim of demonstrating its potential to strengthen Pascal's anthropological argument.

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[152]Hegel is an example of such an interpreter. According to Barth, Hegel considered the *imago Dei* to mean "the divine likeness in man means that the genuine being of man in himself, the idea of man in his truth, is an element of God Himself in His eternal being, so that the nature of man is divine" (Barth, *Church Dogmatics,* 3, pt. 1, 193).

[153]Augustine, *The Works of Aurelius Augustine*, 7:357 [*De Trinitate* 14.8.11].

[154]Barth, *Church Dogmatics* 3, pt. 1, 200.

[155]Middleton, *The Liberating Image*, 207.

CHAPTER 4

IMAGE-BEARERS AND SINNERS: THE PARADOX
OF HUMANS CREATED IN THE IMAGE OF GOD

In their perverted way all humanity imitates you. Yet they put themselves at a distance from you and exalt themselves against you. But even by thus imitating you they acknowledge that you are the creator of all nature and so concede that there is no place where one can entirely escape from you.

Augustine, *Confessions*

Introduction

As argued in chapter 2, the anthropological motif in Pascal's *Apology for the Christian Religion* forms a three-stage abductive argument. The second stage in this argument (the "explanatory" stage) draws upon Christian anthropology to explain the paradoxical duality of human nature. As an essential element of Christian anthropology, the doctrine of the *imago Dei,* I argue, can enhance Pascal's argument in this stage. Because many different accounts of the doctrine of the *imago Dei* have been put forward throughout history, chapter 3 provides a historical overview of the way various interpreters have understood this doctrine. That overview provides background for this chapter.

Drawing upon Scripture and broad areas of agreement among interpreters of the *imago Dei*, I present six propositions about this doctrine. The next chapter applies these propositions to Pascal's apology in order to show that, viewed as an explanation of the human condition, the doctrine of the *imago Dei* strengthens Pascal's anthropological argument. This chapter does not seek to articulate and defend a particular interpretation of the *imago Dei*. Instead, it highlights aspects of the doctrine—as understood by a variety of scholars—relevant to the anthropological argument.

Before proceeding, an explanation of the term "imagedness" seems needful. Following Colin Gunton, I use this term to refer to humanity's having been created in the image of God.[1] This term conveniently allows one to refer to imagedness as an immutable fact of human nature. Further, it avoids confusion that results when the term "image of God" is used to denote indiscriminately both imagedness and its various expressions.[2]

Imagedness Means that Humans Are,
by Their Very Nature, Relational

Interpreters agree that Genesis 1:26-27 tells us something essential about what it means to be human. Peter Gentry, for example, claims that "Genesis 1:26 . . . defines

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[1]Colin E. Gunton, *Christ and Creation: The Didsbury Lectures, 1990* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2005), 101. The term "image-bearing" would be less cumbersome, but the verbal component ("bearing") renders it less satisfactory: it too easily suppresses the ontological aspect of the concept and gives one the sense that being created in God's image is primarily something humans *do*. With that in mind, however, I can find no satisfactory replacement for the term "image-bearers" to designate humans as those who have been created in God's image. 1 Corinthians 15:49 supports this terminology: "Just as we have *borne* [ἐφορέσαμεν] the image of the man of dust," Paul writes, "we shall also *bear* [φορέσωμεν] the image of the man of heaven" (emphasis added). While φορέω sometimes takes clothing as its object (rendered "to wear," Matt 11:18, Jas 2:3), it may also refer to a *state of being*. Indeed, Johannes P. Louw and Eugene A. Nida include it in the semantic subdomain "indicating various aspects of states, existence, and events," in *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains*, 2nd ed. (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 149. To "bear" x, then, means that x is an aspect of one's being. Therefore, to bear the image of God means that the image of God is an aspect of one's being. Accordingly, I use "image-bearers" as a shorthand reference to humans as created in the image of God, while stressing that being an "image-bearer" is fundamentally something humans *are*.

[2]Consider, for example, the various senses of "image of God" used here: "In the Old Testament all men are the image of God; in the New, where Christ is the one true image, men are image of God in so far as they are like Christ. The image is fully realized only through obedience to Christ; this is how man, the image of God, who is already man, already the image of God, can become fully man, fully the image of God" (David J. A. Clines, "The Image of God in Man," *Tyndale Bulletin* 19 [1968]: 103). Writers who have used the term "image of God" or *imago Dei* to refer to humans' imagedness have been misunderstood as saying that the image of God *itself* can be distorted, marred, or effaced. John Kilner believes that John Calvin's teaching that the *imago Dei* has been marred by sin is "dangerous" and "biblically unsupported," putting "at risk" "human accountability to God," "human dignity," and "human destiny," in *Dignity and Destiny: Humanity in the Image of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015), 175. Craig Blomberg observes that Kilner's "laudable concern is to avoid giving grounds for concluding that physical and mentally challenged people are less in God's image than others, but these weaknesses are not sins so it seems that he has confused two separate categories," Craig Blomberg, "'True Righteousness and Holiness': The Image of God in the New Testament," in *The Image of God in an Image Driven Age: Explorations in Theological Anthropology*, ed. Beth Felker Jones and Jeffrey W. Barbeau (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2016), 68n7.

human ontology," stressing that "it is important to note that this definition of the divine image is not a functional but an *ontological* one."[3] Although he does not use the word "ontology," Hughes's description of imagedness likewise has ontological overtones. "Nothing is more basic," he writes, "than the recognition that being constituted in the image of God is of the very essence and absolutely central to the humanness of man. It is the key that unlocks the meaning of his authentic humanity. Apart from this divine reality he cannot exist truly as man."[4]

If the fact that God created humanity in his image has any ontological significance, it means (at least) that the question of what humans are cannot be rightly answered apart from their relationship to God. Indeed, the terms used in Genesis 1:26-27 suggest that human nature is relational. As G. C. Berkouwer explains, צֶלֶם and דְּמוּת "refer to a *relation* between man and his Creator,"[5] implying, in the words of Richard Lints, that "the origin of human identity lies in the relationship of reflection to the Creator." Thus, Colin Gunton affirms (with qualification) Barth's insight that "it is in our relatedness to others that our being human consists."[6] He further infers from Genesis 1:26-27 that "the human person is one who is created to find his or her being in relation."[7] To a similar

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[3]Peter J. Gentry, "The Covenant with Creation in Genesis 1-3," in *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants*, by Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 200.

[4]Philip Hughes, *The True Image: The Origin and Destiny of Man in Christ* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 4.

[5]G. C. Berkouwer, *Man: The Image of God*, Studies in Dogmatics (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962), 69; emphasis added. Similarly, Stephen Dempster writes that these terms "stress the unique relationship humanity has to its Creator," *Dominion and Dynasty: A Biblical Theology of the Hebrew Bible*, New Studies in Biblical Theology (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2003), 59. See also Richard Lints, "Imaging and Idolatry: The Sociality of Personhood in the Canon," in *Personal Identity in Theological Perspective*, ed. Richard Lints, Michael S. Horton, and Mark R. Talbot (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 209.

[6]Colin E. Gunton, "Trinity, Ontology and Anthropology: Towards a Renewal of the Doctrine of the Imago Dei," in *Persons, Divine and Human: King's College Essays in Theological Anthropology*, ed. Christoph Schwöbel and Colin E. Gunton (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1991), 58.

[7]Ibid., 59.

effect, Vorster writes that imagedness means that "the human is a being focused on God, dependent on God, defined by his relationship with God, who finds his true destination in God."[8] The doctrine of the *imago Dei,* then, informs our understanding of a basic feature of human nature: we are *relational*.

Imagedness Means that Humans Are Constituted for a Relationship with God and the Rest of Creation

Yet the affirmation that imagedness means that humans are "beings-in-relation" says little *about* imagedness.[9] We want to avoid, as Michael Horton warns, the "reductionism that renders the *imago* nothing more than relational."[10] Indeed, the meaning of imagedness goes much further than mere relationality. It suggests that imagedness involves two relationships: a primary relationship with God and a secondary relationship with the rest of creation. These relationships may be identified as "sonship" and "dominion," respectively, and described as "vertical" and "horizontal," respectively. Gentry explains this dual relationality in terms of covenant.

> Genesis 1:26 defines a divine-human relationship with two dimensions, one vertical, and one horizontal. First, it defines human ontology in terms of a covenant relationship between God and man, and second, it defines a covenant relationship between man and the earth. The relationship between humans and God is best captured by the term sonship. The relationship between humans and the creation may be expressed by the terms kingship and servanthood, or better, servant kingship.[11]

Without using covenantal language, Gunton expresses basically the same idea about the dual relationality inherent in our imagedness. "It is in our relatedness to others,"

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[8]Nico Vorster, *Created in the Image of God: Understanding God's Relationship with Humanity*, Princeton Theological Monograph Series 173 (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011), 19. See also Lints, "Imaging and Idolatry," 206–7.

[9]Lints, "Imaging and Idolatry," 206–7.

[10]Michael S. Horton, *Lord and Servant: A Covenant Christology* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2005), 104.

[11]Gentry, "The Covenant with Creation in Genesis 1-3," 200.

he writes, "that our being human consists. That relatedness takes shape in a double orientation. In the first place, we are persons insofar as we are in a right relationship to God. . . . The second orientation is the 'horizontal' one, and is the outcome of the work of the first."[12]

Sonship: The Godward, Vertical Relationship

The primary, Godward relationship originates from God's having made humanity in his own image (Gen 1:27). The nature of this relationship finds fuller explanation in Gen 5:1-3, which recounts God's creating humanity in his image, then correlates it to Seth's being in Adam's image: "When God created man, he made him in the likeness of God. Male and female he created them, and he blessed them and named them Man when they were created. When Adam had lived 130 years, he fathered a son in his own likeness, after his image, and named him Seth." The same words ("image" and "likeness") that express the relationship between humanity and God can also express the relationship between a son and his father.[13] Not surprisingly, then, Luke closes his record of Christ's genealogy by describing Adam as "the son of God" (Luke 3:38). That humanity's imagedness implies a relationship with God that may be termed "sonship" finds further confirmation in parallels in ancient Near Eastern literature which, as Catherine McDowell points out, "demonstrate the link between image and likeness language and sonship."[14] Thus, as Gentry states, "The relationship between humans and

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[12]Gunton, "Trinity, Ontology and Anthropology," 58–59. Gunton's statement that "we are persons insofar as we are in a right relationship with God," must be rejected, for this would imply that unbelievers, who are not in a right relationship with God, are not persons. Further, Gunton appears to treat "human" and "person" synonymously, when in fact, they must be kept distinct (for example, God and angels are non-human persons). Still, Gunton rightly identifies a dual relationality, vertical and horizontal, inherent in imagedness.

[13]Kenneth A. Mathews, *Genesis 1-11:26*, vol. 1A, The New American Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1996), 169.

[14]Catherine McDowell, " 'In the Image of God He Created Them': How Genesis 1:26-27 Defines the Divine-Human Relationship and Why It Matters," in *The Image of God in an Image-Driven*

God is best captured by the term sonship."[15] Further, as Kline indicates, the "image of God and son of God are thus twin concepts."[16] Because this relationship is toward God, conceived as "above" us, it may be described as our *vertical* relationship.

Dominion: The Otherward, Horizontal Relationship

Only within this primary relationship may humanity's secondary relationship—with the rest of creation—be properly realized.[17] On the heels of the divine deliberation to "make man in our image, after our likeness," God expresses his intention that humans "have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth" (Gen 1:26). The grammatical relationship between "make" and "have dominion" suggests that human dominion over the earth is a purpose for which God made humans in his image, so the verse may be translated, "let us make man . . . *so that* they may rule."[18] The close connection between imagedness and dominion has led many to believe "that man's having been given dominion over the earth is an essential aspect of the image of God." [19] Clines goes even further, arguing that the image of God "comes to expression not so much in the nature of man so much as in his activity and function. The function is to represent God's lordship to the lower orders of creation."[20] Whether Clines is correct to emphasize functionality over ontology, humanity's relationship to the rest of the creation is integral to imagedness.

Age: Explorations in Theological Anthropology, ed. Beth Felker Jones and Jeffrey W. Barbeau (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2016), 40.

[15]Gentry, "The Covenant with Creation in Genesis 1-3," 200.

[16]Meredith G. Kline, *Images of the Spirit* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1980), 23.

[17]Berkouwer, *Man*, 81.

[18]Gentry, "The Covenant with Creation in Genesis 1-3," 188.

[19]Berkouwer, *Man*, 78.

[20]Clines, "The Image of God in Man," 1968, 101.

Scripture continues to unfold the meaning of this "dominion." Psalm 8, considered a "commentary" on Genesis 1:26, describes humanity's status in terms of kingship and glory over the rest of creation.[21] Some scholars have seen in Psalm 8 and Genesis 1:26 a "cultural mandate." Hoekema, for example, sees the implication that "man is called by God to develop all the potentialities found in nature and in humankind as a whole. He must seek to develop not only agriculture, horticulture, and animal husbandry, but also science, technology, and art . . . to develop a God-glorifying culture."[22] Regardless of whether one uses the term "cultural mandate" to describe this activity, humans, by virtue of their imagedness, are clearly expected to rule the rest of creation so as to bring glory to its Maker. As Hughes states, "It is in and through God's personal creature man, who has been given dominion over all the earth, that the created order as a whole relates to God and achieves the purpose of its creation."[23] Indeed, this accords with Romans 8:22, in which Paul reflects on the state of the postlapsarian cosmos. "For we know," he writes, "that the whole creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God." Thus, the destiny of the cosmos is bound up with the destiny of humanity, which has been created in the image of God.

**Representation: The Purpose of This
Dual Relationality**

Humanity, having been created in the image of God, thus exists for two relationships, the first with God and the second with the rest of creation. Humanity was created to *represent* God to the rest of the created order. Indeed, "representation" nicely

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[21]Clines, 95; Berkouwer, *Man*, 71–72. See also John M. Frame, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Christian Belief* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 2013), 785–86.

[22]Anthony A. Hoekema, *Created in God's Image* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 14.

[23]Hughes, *The True Image*, 5.

describes this dual relationality, for it implies both one represented and one represented *to*. Scholars of ancient Near Eastern studies emphasize the representational nature of the *imago Dei*, pointing to parallels between the language of Gen 1 and the practice of kings' erecting images of themselves in conquered territories.[24] Berkouwer argues that the concept of representation "has the essence of the image of God in view."[25] Similarly, Hoekema writes that "man . . . was created in God's image so that he or she might represent God, like an ambassador from a foreign country."[26] Gentry comes to the same conclusion about the meaning of our imagedness, emphasizing "that the character of humans in ruling the world is what *represents* God."[27] Likewise Clines affirms that human imagedness "means that [man] is the visible corporeal representative of the invisible, bodiless God." [28] Merrill invokes this concept without using the word "representation." "Man," he writes, "is to [other creatures] as God is to man; and just as God has dominion over man, so man is to dominate the animal world."[29]

In summary, a proper understanding of our imagedness reveals that fundamental to human nature is a dual relationality—primarily toward God and secondarily toward the rest of the cosmos. Within these two relationships, humans, as God's "children" are to be God's representative rulers, exercising dominion so that the cosmos fulfills its doxological purpose.[30]

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[24]Eugene H. Merrill, *Everlasting Dominion: A Theology of the Old Testament* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2006), 170; J. Richard Middleton, *The Liberating Image: The Imago Dei in Genesis 1* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2005), 27.

[25]Berkouwer, *Man*, 114.

[26]Hoekema, *Created in God's Image*, 68.

[27]Gentry, "The Covenant with Creation in Genesis 1-3," 200.

[28]Clines, "The Image of God in Man," 101.

[29]Merrill, *Everlasting Dominion*, 171.

[30]Herman Bavinck calls man, in his capacity of being in God's image, "the prophet who explains God and proclaims all his excellencies," Herman Bavinck, *God and Creation,* vol. 2 of *Reformed Dogmatics*, ed. John Bolt, trans. John Vriend (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004), 562.

Sin Perverts Expressions of Imagedness

The preceding description of imagedness has a ring of unrealistic idealism. Indeed, it describes *pre*lapsarian imagedness. But the question of what imagedness means for us *now* may be properly answered only in view of sin's present effects. As observed in chapter 3, the tension between imagedness and sinfulness has given rise to important differences among interpreters of the *imago Dei*. These differences, however, point to a basic agreement: sinfulness and imagedness are fundamentally at odds with each other.

Imagedness and Sin in Conflict

Yet to be faithful to Scripture, these two conflicting aspects of fallen humans must be held in tension. Even after the Fall, when humans are thoroughly sinful, Scripture does not admit any diminishing of our status as image-bearers: Genesis 9:6 and James 3:9 refer to our imagedness without qualification. As Clines puts it, "No hint is given that man has ceased to be the image of God."[31] However, while fallen humans remain in the image of God, something about the expression of their imagedness is flawed. Mathews suggests this flaw can be seen as early as Genesis 5:3, which repeats the teaching about humanity's creation in the image of God without referring to dominion. "What we observe in [Gen] 5:3," writes Mathews, "is that the former emphasis in [Gen] 1:26–28 on human dominion is absent. This leads us to suspect that something has gone awry."[32]

The New Testament also intimates that something is awry when it speaks of the need for a "renovated" or "renewed" self, created in the image of God. In Colossians Paul exhorts his readers upon the basis of their having "put on the new self," he writes, "which is being *renewed* in knowledge after the image of its creator" (Col 3:9-10). Likewise, in Ephesians Paul reminds his readers that they had been taught to "put on the

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[31]Clines, "The Image of God in Man," 99; Mathews, *Genesis 1-11:26*, 1A:169.

[32]Mathews, *Genesis 1-11:26*, 1A:169.

new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness" (Eph 4:24). The necessity of such renewal indicates, at least, a deficiency in our expressions of imagedness. Calvin's explanation in the *Institutes* suggests a similar line of reasoning: "Although we grant that the image of God was not utterly effaced and destroyed in him," he writes, "it was, however, so corrupted that anything which remains is a fearful deformity; and, therefore, our deliverance begins with that *renovation* which we obtain from Christ."[33] Thus, our imagedness, while not eradicated, now remains in conflict with another reality: our sinfulness. The parable of the prodigal son provides an analogy for imagedness after the Fall. [34] As a rebellious vagrant in a distant land, the prodigal remains his father's son. The distance and rebellion cannot nullify his sonship. Yet something has gone awry in the way that sonship is expressed. His clothing and habits no longer disclose his status as his father's son. In fact, his filial bond exacerbates his sense of wretchedness: "How many of *my father's* hired servants have more than enough bread, but *I* perish here with hunger!" (Luke 15:17, emphasis added) Similarly, human sin stands in direct opposition to imagedness but does not nullify it.

Expressions of Imagedness, Perverted

Therefore, instead of saying that sin nullifies or damages imagedness, it is better to say that sin perverts *expressions* of imagedness. In this way, we both uphold imagedness as an abiding feature of human nature *and* affirm the full effects and consequences of sin. Three expressions of imagedness are noted.

The Relational Expression. As discussed above, our imagedness means that humans were, and remain, relational creatures, ontologically constituted for communion

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[33]John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. Henry Beveridge (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2008), 107, emphasis added.

[34]An allusion to the parable of the prodigal son is found in Emil Brunner, *Man in Revolt: A Christian Anthropology*, trans. Olive Wyon (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1947), 171.

with God and dominion over the rest of creation. [35] But our sin has perverted our relationships.[36] Instead of love and obedience, enmity characterizes our relationship with God; instead of godly dominion, self-gratification characterizes our relationship with creation. We have, as Paul states, "exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator" (Rom 1:25). We ought to assent to "the truth about God," exercise dominion over creation, and worshipfully serve the Creator. Instead, in our fallen state, we do precisely the opposite. Whereas Gen 1:26 teaches that one of God's purposes for creating humans in his image was that they exercise dominion "over the birds of the heavens, and over the livestock . . . and over every creeping thing," they have now "exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things" (Rom 1:23). Rather than exercising dominion *over* other creatures, humans have abdicated dominion *to* other creatures, representing them as gods, instead of representing God to them. Since the relational expression of our imagedness has been thus perverted, it is evident, as Schwöbel explains, that

> after the Fall the image of God can no longer be read off from the factual existence of human beings. The dislocation of human beings in the created cosmos and their subsequent disorientation does not permit an unambiguous distinction between what in human existence is indicative of the created destiny of humanity and what documents the fate of sin.[37]

While continuing to affirm that our imagedness remains intact, other writers also describe our relational "dislocation" and "disorientation." Bray, for example, encourages us to "think of the image as something given and immutable, an ontological

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[35]So long as we recognize that Brunner refers not to the image of God *itself* but rather to our imagedness.

[36]Brunner, *Man in Revolt*, 136.

[37]Christoph Schwöbel, "Human Being as Relational Being: Twelve Theses for a Christian Anthropology," in *Persons: Divine and Human: King's College Essays in Theological Anthropology*, ed. Christoph Schwöbel and Colin E. Gunton (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1991), 151–52.

reality in the human being."[38] Yet because of the Fall, man's "relationship with God was altered from one of obedience to one of disobedience, but there was no ontological change in man himself."[39] Sin does not eradicate our relationality, for relationality is an immutable aspect of imagedness. Instead, sin distorts our relationships. Fallen humans exist in conflict with God, and, as a consequence, in distorted relationships with others. This conflict and these distorted relationships are a perversion, not a nullification, of the relational expression of our imagedness.

The teleological expression. Our imagedness has a teleological expression as well. Moving beyond Genesis into the New Testament, we discover that God's creating humans in his image adumbrates his Christiformic purpose for believers.[40] For Christ, the only unfallen human, perfectly satisfies everything God intended for his image-bearers. As the very image of God, he submitted to his Father perfectly and represents him faithfully (2 Cor 4:4, Col 1:15, Heb 1:3). Therefore, our imagedness finds its consummation in Christiformity (Rom 8:29, 1 Cor 15:49). Mathews uses telic language to explain the New Testament's development of the *imago Dei* concept. "Thus," he writes, "Paul's appeal to Jesus as 'image of God' in 2 Cor 4:4 and Col 1:15 is not the created humanity of Gen 1:26–27; rather, it refers to Christ, who must be understood uniquely as one with God, who is a glorified humanity. That the 'image of Christ' is the Christian's destiny is certain, but not that it was Adam's starting point."[41]

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[38]Gerald L. Bray, "The Significance of God's Image in Man," *Tyndale Bulletin* 42, no. 2 (1991): 223.

[39]Bray, "The Significance of God's Image in Man," 224. See also Brunner, *Man in Revolt*, 135.

[40]Robert J. Woźniak, "The Christological Prism: Christology as Methodological Principle," in *The Oxford Handbook of Christology*, ed. Francesca Aran Murphy and Troy A. Stefano (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 528.

[41]Mathews, *Genesis 1-11:26*, 1A:170.

Romans 8:29 also suggests the teleological expression of our imagedness: "For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers." When God's final decree for believers is accomplished and each believer is not only justified but also glorified, then their "family" resemblance to Christ will be displayed as it was meant to be: a vast throng of brothers and sisters, of whom Christ, as the firstborn, is also their God (see also Heb 2:10-12; 1 John 3:1-3). Stanley Grenz explains that this verse

> delineates the final exegesis of Gen. 1:26-27. In his risen glory, Jesus Christ now radiates the fullness of humanness that constitutes God's design for humankind from the beginning. Yet God's purpose has never been that Christ will merely radiate this fullness, but that as the Son he will be preeminent among a new humanity who together are stamped with the divine image.[42]

Other writers use the telic language in discussing imagedness. Calvin states that "the Celestial Creator himself, however corrupted man may be, still keeps in view the need of his original creation; and according to his example, we ought to consider for what *end* he created men."[43] More explicitly, Lutheran theologian Philip Hefner explains that "the image of God (*imago dei*) presents a fundamental image of human being as *being-with-a-destiny*."[44] Likewise, Grenz observes that the *imago Dei* may be legitimately viewed "as humankind's divinely given *goal* or *destiny*, which lies in the eschatological future and toward which humans are directed."[45] Along similar lines, Gunton affirms that "it is the specific distinction of humanity to share not only in the ontological status of createdness

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[42]Stanley J. Grenz, *The Social God and the Relational Self: A Trinitarian Theology of the Imago Dei* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 231–32.

[43]John Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, trans. James Anderson, *Calvin's Commentaries* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999), 296, emphasis added.

[44]Philip J. Hefner, "The Creation," in *Church Dogmatics*, ed. Carl E. Braaten and Robert W. Jenson, vol. 1 (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 330, emphasis added.

[45]Grenz, *The Social God and the Relational Self*, 177, emphasis added.

with the whole creation, but to have a specific *destiny* in being created in the image of God."[46]

Because of sin, however, this *telos* is yet unrealized. Fallen image-bearers have made themselves unfit for the purpose for which they were created. Therefore, the consummation of imagedness will be accomplished only through the events of redemptive history—the incarnation, death, and resurrection of the divine Son. As Dorner explains, "Even after the *Fall* the divine image remains still man's destination, although its fulfilment has been interrupted, nay, deflected into a by-path, by the Fall."[47] God intends that Christ be the "firstborn among many brothers," but, as Hebrews 2:10-18 declares, Christ's "suffering" is necessary "in bringing many sons to glory" (Heb 2:10).

The normative expression. When God declared his intent to "create man in our image," he also expressed what he wants humans to *do* as his image-bearers: "let them have dominion" (Gen 1:26-27).[48] As discussed above, this "dominion" denotes humans' "horizontal" relationship toward creation: they are to represent God. But they cannot properly represent God unless they themselves submit to *his* dominion. Indeed, their obligation toward the creation is inseparable from their obligation toward their Creator. Imagedness, then, means that humans have duties to fulfill with respect to both God and creation.

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[46]Gunton, "Trinity, Ontology and Anthropology," emphasis added. For others who use telic language in referring to imagedness, see Horton, *Lord and Servant*, 100; Vorster, *Created in the Image of God*, 19; Clines, "The Image of God in Man," 103; Hughes, *The True Image*, 27; Ronald A. Simkins, "Image of God," in *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. David Noel Freedman (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 632-33. Isaak August Dorner puts it this way: "The divine image according to Holy Scripture is partly original *endowment,* partly *destination*" in *A System of Christian Doctrine*, trans. Arthur Cave and J. S. Banks, vol. 2 (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1881), 78; emphasis original.

[47]Dorner, *A System of Christian Doctrine*, 2:83; emphasis original.

[48]Clines observes that "Genesis 1:26 may well be rendered: 'Let us make man as our image . . . so that they may rule' (i.e. *waw* joining two jussives with final force for the second)," in "The Image of God in Man," 96.

The life of Christ provides further insight into what is meant by the normative expression of imagedness, since Christ himself is the very image of God. Because Christ fully submitted to God (humans' "vertical" relationship), he perfectly represents God (John 1:14-18, Heb 1:1-3) and thus exercises perfect dominion (humans' "horizontal" relationship, see 1 Cor 15:24-28). Paul, in fact, presents a causal link between Christ's complete obedience to God and his reigning as Lord of heaven and earth: Christ "humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. *Therefore* God has highly exalted him . . . so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow . . . and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil 2:8-11, emphasis added). Therefore, as suggested by the meaning of God's creating humans in his image, and as exemplified by Christ the divine image of God, imagedness implies certain moral norms. Granted, imagedness is not the *only* grounds for moral responsibility (angels, though not image-bearers, are nevertheless morally responsible creatures). Nevertheless, humans, by virtue of at least their status as image-bearers, stand morally responsible to God.

By sinning, however, humans violate the normative expressions of imagedness. The first sin, in fact, involved humans' failure to exercise dominion over creation. Instead of representing God *to* the serpent, humans allowed the serpent to (mis)represent God to them.[49] For, in claiming "You will not surely die," the serpent contradicted God's spoken word, which up to that point had produced only what is good (Gen 3:4; 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31). Besides violating the "horizontal" norm, human' also violated the "vertical" norm: Adam and Eve broke the only stipulation God had given them. Perversely, what beguiled them to break this stipulation was the prospect of being "like God, knowing good and evil," even though they were *already* in God's image

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[49]Mark Twain humorously comments that Adam "did not want the apple for the apple's sake; he wanted it only because it was forbidden. The mistake was in not forbidding the serpent; then he would have eaten the serpent," in "Pudd'nhead Wilson," in *The Writings of Mark Twain*, vol. 14 (Hartford, CT: The American Publishing Company, 1908), 19.

and likeness (Gen 3:5, 1:26). The same pattern of violating norms implied by imagedness persists throughout biblical history: prophets misrepresent God (Num 20:10-13, 1 Kgs 22:5-8, Ezek 13:19, Jer 23:16); priests approach God improperly (Lev 10:1-3); even the best kings exercise self-centered dominion (2 Sam 11, 1 Kgs 11:1-10). Yet, as argued above, sinfulness does not eradicate imagedness. Humans remain in the image of God, even as their actions violate the normative expressions of imagedness.

Imagedness and Sinfulness Together Render the Human Condition Paradoxical

As sinful image-bearers, therefore, humans stand in the paradoxical condition of being constituted for a relationship with One whom they have rejected, intended for a *telos* for which they have made themselves unfit, and accountable to norms they have violated. As Brunner states,

> the real enigma of man is the conflict within his own nature, not the fact that he is composed of body and soul; the real problem does not lie in the fact that man is part of the world and is yet more than the world; the real problem is that the unity of all these elements . . . has been lost, and that instead of complementing and aiding one another, they are in conflict with one another. . . . It is this duality which gives its particular imprint to human life as it actually is. Because man has been created in the image of God, and yet has himself defaced this image, his existence differs from all other forms of existence, as existence in conflict.[50]

To return to the analogy of the prodigal son, as the son's sonship exacerbates his misery, so also our imagedness makes our sinful condition appalling to us. What makes actions sinful for humans is the very fact that we are constituted as beings who, by virtue of our imagedness, stand responsible to God. As Bray states, "The presence of the image is the presence of responsibility, which is at once the glory and the tragedy of fallen Adam."[51]

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[50]Brunner, *Man in Revolt*, 168. While Brunner is right that human existence is "existence in conflict," he probably overstates his case in saying that this conflict is why "his existence differs from *all other* forms of existence" (emphasis added). Angels, for example, were created for God's glory, but many of them have rejected God's purpose for them. Therefore, a case could be made that the fallen angels' form of existence is also "existence in conflict."

[51]Bray, "The Significance of God's Image in Man," 225.

Similarly, Berkouwer writes that "the image of God stands before us in the contexts of guilt and restoration, of being lost and being found." [52] Hughes also affirms the paradoxical nature of our imagedness, stating man's "refusal to conform to the true image of his being, his contradiction of himself, is also his judgment and his condemnation in the presence of his Creator."[53]

Even for redeemed humans, the tension that accompanies our experience of postlapsarian imagedness remains unresolved. In fact, this tension increases as some expressions of imagedness are restored, while others continue to be impacted by the fall (2 Cor 4:7). In Romans 8:23, Paul writes, "And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies." The context of this verse indicates that the "adoption as sons" refers to believers' eschatological conformity to the image of Christ "in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers" (Rom 8:29). Thus, the unfinished project of believers' Christiformity creates a longing expressed by "inward groaning." Whether redeemed or unredeemed, then, fallen image-bearers possess a nature in which two components are in fundamental opposition: imagedness and sinfulness.

This Paradoxical Condition Has Epistemic Implications

When considering the effects of sin, theologians often discuss its cognitive or epistemic consequences. Scripture speaks of the "deceitfulness of sin" (Heb 3:13); the "futile," "darkened" and "blinded" minds of unbelievers (Eph 4:17-18, 2 Cor 4:4); the danger of self-deception (Gal 6:7; 1 Tim 4:1; 1 John 1:8); and the devil as "the father of lies" (John 8:44). As sin brings about epistemic damage, so redemption brings about epistemic restoration. Salvation may be conceived as coming "to the knowledge of the

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[52]Berkouwer, *Man*, 117.

[53]Hughes, *The True Image*, 69.

truth" (2 Tim 3:7) and the effect of the proclamation of the gospel as opening "their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light" (Acts 26:18). Further, in contrast to the "wisdom of this age" (1 Cor 2:6), believers have received "the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given to us by God" (1 Cor 2:12).

Imagedness and Sin's Epistemic
Consequences

Our imagedness also holds epistemic implications. As image-bearers, we have a God-given impulse to form beliefs about our Creator: "For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them" (Rom 1:19). The pagan Athenians, for example, worshiped at an altar with the inscription "To the unknown God" (Acts 17:23), whom Paul affirmed to be the true God "who made the world and everything in it" (17:24). The Athenians' beliefs about this God were misguided, however, for they worshiped him "as unknown" (17:23). Indeed, our fallenness guarantees that, apart from special revelation, our beliefs about God are mingled with error, and thus do not constitute knowledge: "Although they knew God," Paul writes about fallen humans, "they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and creeping things" (Rom 1:21-23).

The epistemic effects of sin are evident in the record of the fall. The very first enticement to sin came from the serpent's duplicitous assurance to Eve that she would be "like God" (alluding to God's having created humanity "after his" "likeness" (Gen 1:26), specifically by "knowing good and evil" (Gen 3:5). Of course, this assurance was not *entirely* false. Eve perceived that "the tree was to be desired to make one wise" (Gen 3:6); and after she and Adam ate from it, "the eyes of both were opened" in accordance with the serpent's assurance. They had indeed gained moral experience, only at the expense of their moral standing before God. Hughes describes this newly-found

godlikeness as "a perverted godlikeness, for now that [man's] life is based on the devil's lie he calls good evil and evil good."[54] As a result, Adam and Eve's first postlapsarian awareness was of nakedness—moral vulnerability—and their first response was subterfuge. Adam and Eve "sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths" (Gen 3:7) and later "hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden" (Gen 3:8).

In language that echoes the record of Eve's false belief "that the tree was to be desired to make one wise" (Gen 3:6), Paul writes of fallen humans that, "claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and creeping things. . . . They exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator" (Rom 1:22-23, 25). That fallen humans engage in "worship" accords with what was argued earlier about the horizontal orientation of our imagedness and about the pagan Athenians' worship of the "unknown God" (Acts 17:23): we remain beings related to something "above" us. But now we deceive ourselves about what is "above" us. Because of imagedness, our perception of God cannot be eradicated ("what can be known about God is plain to them," Rom 1:19); yet because of sinfulness, that perception is perverted ("they have exchanged the truth about God for a lie," Rom 1:25). As doxastic agents, then, our cognitive faculties have been damaged, but not so damaged as to form no beliefs about God at all.

Other writers have explored the connections between epistemic dysfunction and fallen imagedness. In *Warranted Christian Belief*, Alvin Plantinga, builds on John Calvin's teaching about the noetic effects of the fall, connecting humanity's original expression of imagedness with a proper knowledge of God, and humanity's fallen expression of imagedness with a distorted knowledge of God and thus of everything

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[54]Hughes, *The True Image*, 117.

else.[55] "God has created us human beings," Plantinga writes, "*in his own image*: this centrally involves our resembling God in being *persons*—that is, beings with *intellect* and *will*."[56] As a result, humans "loved and hated what was lovable and hateful; above all, they knew and loved God."[57] But as a consequence of the fall, "our original knowledge of God and of his marvelous beauty, glory, and loveliness has been severely compromised. . . . We no longer know God in the same natural and unproblematic way in which we know each other and the world around us."[58] Besides connecting fallenness with doxastic shortcomings, Plantinga also points out the paradox of these shortcomings. As he states, "we know (in some way and to some degree) what is to be loved (what is objectively lovable), but we nevertheless perversely turn away from what ought to be loved and instead love something else." In keeping with Romans 1, Plantinga affirms that "the condition of sin involves *damage* to the *sensus divinitatis,* but not obliteration; it remains partially functional in most of us."[59] Likewise, Schwöbel also recognizes the epistemic dysfunction of our fallen imagedness. "In the Fall," he writes, "human beings have dislocated themselves in the relational order of created being. Dislocation produces disorientation. . . . Sin is not only self-deception, but also self-contradiction as by sinning human beings contradict their own destiny in the created order."[60]

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[55]Strictly speaking, Plantinga is not defending Calvin's view *per se*; he is only, for the sake of his overall argument, offering Calvin's (and Aquinas's) ideas as a possible way in which belief in God would be warranted. Nevertheless, his explanation of Calvin helpfully elucidates the connections between the fall and our cognitive malfunctioning.

[56]Alvin Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 204; emphasis original.

[57]Ibid.

[58]Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief*, 205. Plantinga does not mean that our knowledge of "each other and the world around us" is wholly unproblematic but rather that our knowledge of God has been corrupted far more deeply.

[59]Ibid., 210.

[60]Schwöbel, "Human Being as Relational Being," 149.

Christ as the True Image of God

Scripture thus teaches that fallen humans' capacity to form true beliefs about God has malfunctioned. But Scripture further teaches that this capacity may be restored in redeemed humans. Specifically, by believing in Christ, fallen image-bearers may be restored to properly know God and themselves. This restoration is due, partly at least, to the fact that Christ "is the image [εἰκών] of the invisible God" (Col 1:15). In 2 Corinthians 4:4, Paul explains that Satan "has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image [εἰκών] of God." Moreover, in a third passage (though it does not use the word εἰκών) the writer uses the word χαρακτὴρ to similar effect. "He is," the author of Hebrews states, "the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint [χαρακτὴρ] of his nature" (Heb 1:3). Barmby explains that χαρακτὴρ "more distinctly brings out the idea of the Son being the Manifestation of what the Godhead is, and especially of what it is to us."[61] If one objects that affirming that he is the image of God seems to diminish Christ's divinity, it may be replied that the semantic range of εἰκών includes "image" not only as the representation of something (e.g., Luke 20:24), but also as the thing *itself*. Since other passages clearly teach Christ's deity, and since the semantic range of εἰκών as standing for the *thing itself* is an option, it makes most sense to read it in this way here in Hebrews 1:3: Christ's being the image of God means that he *is* God. Gerhard Kittel agrees with this assessment: "When Christ is called the εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ in 2 C. 4:4; Col. 1:15," he writes, "all the emphasis is on the equality of the εἰκὼν with the original."[62]

Other writers also agree that Christ is to be understood as the divine image of God. Gunton writes that Christ "is not only the true image of God, but also the source of

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[61]J. Barmby, *The Epistle of Paul to the Hebrews*, Pulpit Commentary (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1909), 5. See also Grenz, *The Social God and the Relational Self*, 221.

[62]Gerhard Kittel, "Εἰκών," in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, G. W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 395. See also Bray, "The Significance of God's Image in Man," 211.

human renewal in it."[63] Likewise, Clines summarizes his studies of various NT terms with the conclusion that "the greatest weight in the New Testament doctrine of the image lies upon the figure of Christ, who is the true image of God."[64] Central to the argument of Hughes' book is that "he who is eternally the Son of God is also eternally the Image of God."[65] Grenz explains the connection between the original creation of humans in the "image of God" and Christ's designation as the image of God by positing that, for the writers of the NT, "the Genesis narrative points to Jesus Christ, who as the revelation of the nature and glory of God is the image of God."[66] Finally, Calvin affirms that, from the New Testament, "we now see how Christ is the most perfect image of God."[67]

Imagedness and Epistemic Remedy

Although sin perverts the epistemic expression of our imagedness (we form false beliefs about God and ourselves), Christ, as the true image of God, remedies believers' knowledge of God and thus of themselves. This epistemic remedy is evident throughout the New Testament. In Colossians 3:10, Paul exhorts his readers, "Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices, and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator." Fallenness brought epistemic dysfunction; renewal in the image of God leads to "the new self" being "renewed in *knowledge*" (Col 3:10, emphasis added). Paul further calls his readers to "put off" deception as a practice of the "old self." Deception precipitated the fall; self-deception characterizes the lives of those in sin (Rom 1:22-23, 25). Therefore, deception has no place in the life of one being conformed to the image of the Creator. In

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[63]Gunton, "Trinity, Ontology and Anthropology," 100.

[64]Clines, "The Image of God in Man," 102.

[65]Hughes, *The True Image*, 3.

[66]Grenz, *The Social God and the Relational Self*, 223.

[67]Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 108.

writing to the believers in Ephesus, Paul makes a similar point, exhorting those who "learn Christ" (Eph 4:20) "to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through *deceitful* desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your *minds*, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness" (Eph 4:22-24, emphasis added). Against the background of fallen humanity's epistemic dysfunction, Paul focuses on putting away "*deceitful* desires" and being "renewed in the spirit of your *minds*" as essential to putting "on the new self." Whereas fallen humans yield to duplicity, humans who have put on the "new self" are being restored to a proper grasp of truth.

This epistemic remedy is possible because Christ, as the divine image of God, discloses both God and perfect humanity to those who believe in him. As discussed above, Hebrews 1:2-3 makes it clear that God has spoken to us "by his Son," who is the "radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature." Whereas humans were created to represent God, *Christ* has become God's infallible representative, as he is himself both God and man. Accordingly, John writes that, though "no one has ever seen God," "the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known" (John 1:18). In response to Philip's plea, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us," Jesus replies, "Whoever has seen me has seen the Father" (John 14:8-9). As Grenz states, "Christology informs the doctrine of God, for we cannot know who God truly is except through Jesus who as the true *imago Dei* is the revelation of God."[68] Similarly, Kline demonstrates a connection between "glory" and "image," noting that "the biblical exposition of the image of God is consistently in terms of a glory like the glory of God."[69] Thus, John writes of Christ, "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and

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[68]Stanley Grenz, "Jesus as the Imago Dei: Image-of-God Christology and the Non-Linear Linearity of Theology," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 47, no. 4 (2004): 627.

[69]Kline, *Images of the Spirit*, 30.

truth" (John 1:14). Although fallen humans have "exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man," redeemed humans, "with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord [i.e., Christ, the true image of God], are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another" (2 Cor 3:18). Thus, fallen image-bearers form false beliefs about God; those who believe in Christ—the divine image of God—see God as he truly is.

Yet Christ, as the divine image of God, reveals not only God as he truly is, but humanity as it truly should be. The author of Hebrews highlights Christ's humanity, explaining that, "since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, [Christ] himself likewise partook of the same things" (Heb 2:14), because "he had to be made like his brothers in every respect" (Heb 2:14). Unlike every other human, however, Christ was "in every respect . . . tempted as we are, yet without sin" (Heb 4:15). As a man, Christ perfectly exemplifies humanity. Thus, believers look "unto Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith" as the one in whom they realize their own *telos* (Heb 12:2). Peter urges his readers to "follow in [Christ's] steps" as the human exemplar of sinless suffering (1 Pet 2:21). Thus, Schwöbel insists, "the image of Christ is the only way in which human beings are enabled to recognize their created destiny as the image of God. . . . The humanity of Christ is therefore the pattern for rediscovering the image of God."[70] Similarly, Alan Spence builds on John Owen's work to argue that "Jesus Christ exemplifies the true nature of man."[71] Fallen image-bearers are blind to the true nature of God and humans. As Christ reveals God's true nature, so he also reveals humanity's perfected nature.

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[70]Schwöbel, "Human Being as Relational Being," 152.

[71]Alan Spence, "Christ's Humanity and Ours: John Owen," in *Persons, Divine and Human: King's College Essays in Theological Anthropology*, ed. Christoph Schwöbel and Colin E. Gunton (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1991), 97.

In summary, our imagedness and epistemic capacity are closely related. As image-bearers, we form beliefs about God and ourselves; but as sinners, these beliefs are guaranteed to be false. This is no surprise, for our sinfulness means not only that we stand guilty before God, but also that we attempt to convince ourselves that we are right, and God is wrong. The epistemic consequences of sin are brought into fuller light by the New Testament's description of the *reversal* of these consequences, namely, believers' renewal into the image of Christ. Only Christ, as the divine image of God, the perfect revealer of both God and true humanity, can restore fallen humans to properly know God and themselves.[72]

The Image of God Is Being
Restored in Believers

As mentioned above, the expressions of imagedness, once perverted by sin, may be restored in believers. In other words, they will be transformed to the image of Christ (Rom 8:29). Yet Scripture describes this transformation as an incremental process: "And we all," Paul writes, "with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another" (2 Cor 3:18). Similarly, he teaches that, though believers are *already* sons and daughters of God, they nevertheless await the consummation of their "adoption as sons" (Rom 3:23). The already/not-yet nature of believers' Christiformity is evident also in 1 John. Believers are *already* "God's children now," but "what we will be has not yet appeared" (1 John 3:2). Nevertheless, "when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is"

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[72]For an argument that Jesus' humanity is "the creational and teleological ground and goal for all other human beings," see Marc Cortez, *ReSourcing Theological Anthropology: A Constructive Account of Humanity in the Light of Christ* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2018). Cortez argues that "if we say that Jesus is the true telos of humanity, the eschatological end that God had in mind from the beginning," it follows that "we must also maintain that this telos is intrinsic to the meaning of humanity. In other words, we cannot fully understand what it means to be human until we have seen true humanity revealed in Jesus," Cortez, 36.

(1 John 3:2). Although believers know God through Christ the image of God, we still "see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face" (1 Cor 13:12).

This inceptive Christiformity involves both knowledge of God and transformed behavior. That our knowledge of God is restored has been argued earlier, but it is also evident in other passages of Scripture. For example, Paul affirms that believers "have the mind of Christ" (1 Cor 2:16). Similarly, in his "high priestly prayer," Jesus tells the Father that he "made known to [his disciples] your name, and will continue to make it known" (John 17:26). We also see transformed *behavior* as a result of Christiformity. Paul describes this behavior in terms of "true righteousness and holiness" (Eph 4:24) in contrast to conformity "to this world" (Rom 12:2). Scripture further indicates that such behavior may be a kind of apology for Christian belief. In Philippians 2:15-16, Paul exhorts his readers to be "blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world." An allusion to the *imago Dei* may be seen in Paul's description of believers as God's "children," who, bearing the likeness of their heavenly Father, represent him to others. Thus, an integral aspect of the doctrine of the *imago Dei* is that the expressions of imagedness which have been perverted by sin, may be restored in redeemed image-bearers as they become increasingly like Christ. Christiformity as the ultimate *telos* of imagedness is being inceptively realized in redeemed humans.

Conclusion

Fallen humans remain image-bearers. As an immutable feature of our nature, imagedness cannot be eradicated, corrupted, or marred. We are ineradicably constituted for a relationship with God as his children, and with creation as God's representatives. But the *expressions* of imagedness have been thoroughly perverted by sin. As fallen image-bearers, our relationships have gone awry. We fail to submit to God and fulfill his expectations. Moreover, our knowledge of God and others has malfunctioned: we form

false beliefs about God and others. Nevertheless, imagedness and sinfulness coexist in fallen human nature. These Scriptural observations support this general statement about the doctrine of the *imago Dei:* imagedness and sinfulness conspire to render the human condition paradoxical. Fallen human nature exists in opposition to itself.

If, then, the doctrine of the *imago Dei* discloses a true account of humanness—that fallen human nature exists in opposition to itself—we should expect to find this opposition instantiated in human behavior and feelings. Such instantiations would strengthen the claim that Christian anthropology (at the heart of which is the doctrine of the *imago Dei*) best explains the human condition. This, in fact, is the claim of Pascal's anthropological argument. The aim of the next chapter, then, is to correlate Pascal's anthropological argument with the doctrine of the *imago Dei* to discover precisely how the argument may be strengthened.

CHAPTER 5

THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL ARGUMENT
STRENGTHENED

I acknowledge, Lord, and I give thanks that You have created Your image in me, so
that I may remember You, think of You, love You. But this image is so effaced and
worn away by vice, so darkened by the smoke of sin, that it cannot do what it was
made to do unless You renew it and reform it.

—Anselm of Canterbury, *Proslogion*

Introduction

"Man's greatness is so obvious," Blaise Pascal observes, "that it can even be

deduced from his wretchedness" (L117/S149). Therefore, he reasons, "is it not clear as

day that man's condition is dual?" (L131/S164). As argued in chapter 4, a similar duality

is evident in the doctrine of the *imago Dei*. Humans, as both image-bearers and sinners,

exhibit a paradoxical mix of imagedness and fallenness.[1] This similarity leads to the

question at the heart of this dissertation: can insights from the doctrine of the *imago Dei*

strengthen Pascal's anthropological argument? This chapter seeks to answer that

question. The first section identifies agreements and differences between Pascal's

anthropology and the doctrine of the *imago Dei*. The agreements validate the alliance

between these two subjects, and the differences suggest two ways the doctrine of the

imago Dei may strengthen Pascal's argument. The second and third sections enlarge

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[1]The doctrine of the *imago Dei* and doctrine of sin are both needed to explain the human
condition. Thus, Henri Blocher aptly chose "illuminating the riddle" as the subtitle to his book *Original
Sin*. "Illuminating the riddle," Blocher explains, "is simply an echo of Pascal's overwhelming argument.
Following his line, after we have studied scriptural foundations of the doctrine [of original sin], we should
perceive how that doctrine sheds light on and into human darkness, and how it accounts for the tangles and
knots of experience." Quite fittingly, then, Blocher notes that this "attempt causes our exploration in
dogmatics to verge on apologetics," Henri Blocher, *Original Sin: Illuminating the Riddle*, 2nd ed., New
Studies in Biblical Theology (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000), 84.

respectively on these two ways. First, the doctrine of the *imago Dei* supplies more explanatory detail for the paradoxical dualities which Pascal identifies—happiness and misery, certainty and doubt, greatness and smallness. Second, the doctrine of the *imago Dei,* as an explanation for the human condition, encompasses instances of humans' paradoxical duality which Pascal does not mention, or mentions only briefly. For these reasons, I argue, the doctrine of the *imago Dei* strengthens Pascal's anthropological argument.

The Anthropological Argument and the Doctrine of the *Imago Dei*: Agreements and Differences

In chapter 2, I argued that if the doctrine of the *imago Dei* strengthens Pascal's anthropological argument, it does so in the explanatory stage of that argument. That argument, however, rests upon an assumption that must now be defended, namely, that there is basic agreement between Pascal's anthropology and the doctrine of the *imago Dei*. This agreement is critical to my thesis, for if Pascal's explanation for the human condition conflicts with *imago Dei* anthropology, then the doctrine of the *imago Dei* must correct, not support, Pascal's argument. Therefore, it is important to demonstrate that Pascal's anthropology and the doctrine of the *imago Dei* agree with each other.

Agreements

Pascalian scholars note a correlation between Pascal's apologetic and the doctrine of the *imago Dei*. William Wood, for example, writes that for Pascal, "we are great because we are created *in the image of God*, but wretched because we are no longer in the pristine stage of our creation."[2] Likewise, Thomas Morris recognizes that the doctrine of the *imago Dei* plays a role in Pascal's anthropology. "Pascal here hints," he writes, "at the central Christian doctrines of creation and original sin: we were created by

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[2]William Wood, *Blaise Pascal on Duplicity, Sin, and the Fall: The Secret Instinct*, Changing Paradigms in Historical and Systematic Theology (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 6.

God *in the image of God*, to enjoy blissful fellowship with God and God's creatures."[3] Morris also understands that the *imago Dei* is involved in Pascal's explanation for human cruelty: "From a Pascalian perspective these are all dark shadows of our having been created in the image of God (*imago Dei*)."[4] Finally, Morris summarizes—in terms of the *imago Dei*—what Pascal teaches about humans' noetic capacity: "As created in the image of God," he writes, "we are capable of knowing God. As fallen and sinful, we are not worthy of knowing God."[5]

Similarly, writers on the *imago Dei* also refer to Pascalian anthropology. In *Man: The Image of God,* Berkouwer favorably mentions Pascal's concept of "greatness" in contrast with an over-optimistic view of "the *humanum*" in man.[6] Emil Brunner likewise mentions Pascal in the chapter that discusses the conflict between man as the image of God and the present "perversion" of the human condition, noting that "the '*misère de l'homme'* is one of the main themes of the *Pensées* of Pascal."[7]

But these quotations merely suggest that Pascalian anthropology may be correlated with the doctrine of the *imago Dei*. To what degree, if any, we may ask, does this correlation constitute agreement? In what follows I aim to demonstrate that Pascal's portrayal of the human condition and the anthropology derived from the doctrine of the *imago Dei* agree on a point that is central to both: fallen humans exhibit two opposing aspects of their condition. Pascal calls these aspects "greatness" and "wretchedness," and they overlap in important ways with "imagedness" and "fallenness."

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[3]Thomas V. Morris, *Making Sense of It All: Pascal and the Meaning of Life* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 138, emphasis added.

[4]Ibid., 134–35.

[5]Ibid., 143–44.

[6]G. C. Berkouwer, *Man: The Image of God,* Studies in Dogmatics (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962), 129.

[7]Emil Brunner, *Man in Revolt: A Christian Anthropology*, trans. Olive Wyon (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1947), 169, 181.

Imagedness and greatness. First, "imagedness" overlaps with Pascalian "greatness." Prelapsarian imagedness, as we have seen, describes the condition Adam and Eve enjoyed before they sinned. Likewise, Pascalian "greatness" refers to humans' primal condition and its present traces. Pascal describes this original greatness in a speech he imagines God delivering. "I created man," God declares, "holy, innocent, perfect, I filled him with light and understanding, I showed him my glory and my wondrous works. Man's eye then beheld the majesty of God. He was not then in the darkness that now blinds his sight, nor subject to death and the miseries that afflict him" (L149/S182). Even though "greatness" describes that "degree of perfection from which we have unhappily fallen" (L127/S160), it nevertheless continues to be detected in "traces." Humans, Pascal explains, "retain some feeble instinct from the happiness of their first nature" (L149/S182). This agrees with the doctrine of the *imago Dei*, which teaches that humans' abiding imagedness is the ground upon which God forbids murder (Gen 9:6) and cursing others (Jas 3:9). It also grounds our moral responsibility toward God and continues to be an impulse for our innately-formed beliefs about God.

Fallenness and wretchedness. Second, "fallenness" overlaps with Pascalian "wretchedness." As discussed in chapter 4, "fallen" describes image-bearers who no longer fulfill the purpose for which God created them in his image. Likewise, by "wretched," Pascal denotes humans who have "fallen from [their] true place and cannot find it again" (L400/S19). For Pascal, humans' wretchedness (like fallenness) derives from their primal state. "It is the wretchedness of a great lord," he declares, "the wretchedness of a dispossessed king" (L116/S148). This opposition within the human condition, brought about by sin, compels Pascal's appalling description of the human condition: "What sort of freak then is man!" he cries, "how novel, how monstrous, how chaotic, how paradoxical, how prodigious, Judge of all things, feeble earthworm, repository of truth, sink of doubt and error, and glory and refuse of the universe!"

(L131/S164). This, in fact, also describes humans as fallen image-bearers. Like the prodigal son, whose sonship served to heighten the misery of his vagrancy, so our imagedness shows the tragedy of fallenness.

Moral inability. Third, Pascal's anthropology and the doctrine of the *imago Dei* agree that humans' greatness/imagedness does not enable them to achieve salvation. This is clear from Pascal's presentation of the human condition. For Pascal, when humans show signs of "greatness," they are not evincing their potential to regain it, but the tragedy of having lost it. That is, evidence of greatness points to what had been, not what humans, by themselves, might achieve.[8] Berkouwer helps confirm this: "Pascal's words," he writes,

> have nothing to do with any relativizing or 'reduction' of man's misery along humanistic lines. He is not concerned with 'greatness' which is the hidden center of man, which is 'left over' from man's apparent evil, and which finally lessens the seriousness and range of the misery. He is not speaking of a 'remainder' which shows that the damage is after all not so catastrophic. For Pascal, on the contrary, man's 'greatness' and 'misery' are so closely related to each other. Man's misery is the 'misery of a nobleman, the misery of a dethroned king.' The greatness of man, created by God, is reflected in the depth of his fall.[9]

Anthony Levi finds fault with this aspect of Pascal's anthropology, claiming that his view of human nature and embrace of Augustine's theory of grace "left the individual human being just as helpless as did Calvin's."[10] What Levi finds distasteful in Pascal's theology agrees with the Reformers' view of total depravity. Perhaps Pascal's "Reformed" view of humans' total inability is one feature of his writings that prompted Peter Kreeft to remark that "Pascal is too Protestant for Catholics and too Catholic for Protestants."[11]

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[8]For Pascal's view on human inability and his alleged Jansenism, see Jan Miel, *Pascal and Theology* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins Press, 1969), 133–47.

[9]Berkouwer, *Man*, 17.

[10]Anthony Levi, introduction to *Pensées and Other Writings*, by Blaise Pascal, trans. Honor Levi, Oxford World's Classics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), xxviii.

[11]*Peter Kreeft, Christianity for Modern Pagans: Pascal's Pensées Edited, Outlined, and Explained* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1993), 13.

With regard to the doctrine of the *imago Dei*, we have seen that some have adopted an interpretation that contributed to a semi-Pelagian anthropology.[12] The Reformers, by contrast, were eager to set forth an interpretation of the *imago Dei* that was consonant with humans' complete moral inability. This concern was what prompted Luther to reject Augustine's interpretation of the *imago Dei,* "for," Luther writes, "it is on these grounds that some rest their disputes in favour of *Free-will*: which, they say, naturally follows from this 'image of God.'"[13] For the same reason, John Calvin's writings on the *imago Dei* suggest a "broad" and "narrow" sense of the *imago Dei*.[14] In its "broad" sense, all humans are endowed with the image of God; in its "narrow sense," only believers possess the "renewed" image of God "in knowledge, purity, righteousness, and true holiness."[15] However the matter is stated, no Reformed interpretation of the *imago Dei* leaves space for semi-Pelagianism.[16] In this respect Pascalian anthropology and the *imago Dei* agree: the opposing aspects in humans' fallen condition reveal their depth of depravity, not their capacity for self-salvation.

Thus, in these three respects—the overlap of greatness/imagedness, the overlap of wretchedness/fallenness, and humans' moral inability—Pascal's anthropology agrees

[12]For a discussion of Pelagian and semi-Pelagian interpretations of the *imago Dei*, see Philip Hughes, *The True Image: The Origin and Destiny of Man in Christ* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 185-210.

[13]Martin Luther, *The Creation: A Commentary on the First Five Chapters of the Book of Genesis*, trans. Henry Cole (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1858), 88.

[14]John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. Henry Beveridge (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2008), 106–8. See also Thomas F. Torrance, Calvin's Doctrine of Man (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1997), 42.

[15]Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 108 [Institutes 1.15.4].

[16]My sympathies lie with the Reformers' concern to reject an interpretation of the imago Dei that could be a foot in the door to a semi-Pelagian anthropology. But I have also avoided positing that the imago Dei is obliterated in fallen humans (*a la* Luther), and that there is a "broad" and "narrow" sense of the image (*a la* Calvin's followers). A more helpful way to express the problem of humans' coexistent fallenness and imagedness, I believe, is as follows: humans' imagedness remains as an unqualified, immutable fact of their nature which grounds human dignity (Jas 3:9) and the sacredness of human life (Gen 9:6), but expressions of imagedness are now perverted. Another way to say this is that to be fallen is to express one's imagedness in perverted ways.

with *imago Dei* anthropology. Without this basic agreement, the argument could hardly be made that the doctrine of the *imago Dei* strengthens Pascal's argument. Because they do agree, we are on solid ground to see how they may complement each other in an apologetic argument.

Differences

In order to complement each other, however, the doctrine of the *imago Dei* and Pascalian anthropology must also differ from each other. This difference may be seen in their respective aims. Pascal's anthropology is selective, serving the limited purpose of explaining the paradoxical condition of humans. *Imago dei* anthropology, on the other hand, has a broader scope. It stands as the background to everything God has revealed about humans in Scripture. Knowing what Pascal says about human nature is like using the index of a book to discover what the book says about a particular theme. Understanding *imago Dei* anthropology, on the other hand, is like being familiar with the entire content of the book. Thus, while Pascal's anthropology is faithful to Scripture, it lacks both the granularity and scope inherent in the doctrine of the *imago Dei*. These differences suggest two ways whereby the doctrine of the *imago Dei* strengthens Pascal's anthropological argument: (1) by supplying more explanatory detail, and (2) by explaining more instances of humans' paradoxical duality.

The Doctrine of the *Imago Dei* Supplies More Explanatory Detail

A version of an explanation that supplies more detail is stronger than a version of an explanation that supplies less detail, provided those additional details convincingly correspond to the data they purport to explain.[17] This is evident from the following example. I suspect that my chronic cough is caused by black mold in my home. But my

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[17]See Dov M. Gabbay and John Woods, *A Practical Logic of Cognitive Systems,* vol. 2, *The Reach of Abduction: Insight and Trial* (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2005), 63–69.

grasp of the connection between my cough and black mold is vague and imprecise—I only remember hearing someone say that black mold can cause a cough. When I consult a medical dictionary, I discover a detail that strengthens the connection between my cough as the data and black mold as the explanatory hypothesis: black mold produces spores that, if inhaled, irritate one's respiratory system, causing a person to cough. Of course, that additional level of detail does not prove that black mold in my home caused my cough. Quite possibly, there is black mold in my home, but my cough is caused by a something far more serious. Or perhaps the black mold is in the walls of the office building where I work. But, at least, the detail renders the explanation more plausible. Even if the explanation turns out to be false, I feel more inclined to accept an explanation in which the observable data are more precisely answered by details in the explanation. If, then, the doctrine of the *imago Dei* supplies a finer level of detail to the explanation, then it strengthens Pascal's anthropological argument.

**Detail for the Duality of
Happiness and Misery**

Pascal argues that humans' condition is a duality of happiness and misery by exposing their vain pursuit of *divertissement* and their obsession with the past and future but never the present. In light of his observations, he insists that "we have an idea of happiness but we cannot attain it" (L131/S164), and that "man wants to be happy, only wants to be happy, and cannot help wanting to be happy" (L134/S167). Christian anthropology alone, reasons Pascal, can explain this paradox. It is "obvious," he concludes, "that we once enjoyed a degree of perfection from which we have unhappily fallen" (L131/S164). "Man tries in vain to fill with everything around him. . . though none can help, since this infinite abyss can be filled only with an infinite and immutable object; in other words by God himself" (L148/S181).

The doctrine of the *imago Dei* enlarges on this explanation for humans' conflict between happiness and misery, in particular by emphasizing the relational nature

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of human happiness, and by identifying the pursuit of *divertissement* with idolatry. First, being created in the image of God, as argued in chapter 4, means that human nature is *relational*. That is, we are constituted to live in relationship with God and his creation. This Godward relationship may be described as sonship, which implies the duties of love and obedience (Gen 5:1-3, Luke 3:22, John 8:29). To live in this relationship with God— or, in biblical terms, to be in God's presence—is the sole foundation of an image-bearer's joy; it is that apart from which no joy can be truly understood or experienced.

This is evident from the many Scripture passages that tell us on one hand, of the joy to be found in God's presence, and on the other, of the misery of being estranged from God. As a consequence for their sin, Adam and Eve were driven "out from the garden of Eden" (Gen 3:23). Likewise, in response to his punishment for murdering Abel, Cain despaired at the thought of being hidden from God's face (Gen 4:14). Several times throughout the psalter, the psalmist begs God not to hide his face from him (Ps 27:9, 69:17, 102:2). Positively, in a song of adoration, the psalmist exults that

> You make known to me the path of life
> in your presence there is fullness of joy;
> at your right hand are pleasures forevermore. (Ps 16:11)

Moreover, the birth of Christ, who came to reconcile humans to God, was accompanied by expressions of joy—from angels (Luke 2:10), Mary (1:47), Zechariah (1:14) and even John the Baptist *in utero* (1:44). This fits with the theme that joy is to be found only in a relationship with God, since Jude extols Christ as "him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with *great joy*" (Jude 24, emphasis added). The joy experienced in the presence of God, then, is an outcome of the relational aspect of our imagedness. By virtue of our having been created in the image of God, image-bearers find joy only in the relationship for which they were created—living in the presence of their Creator.

Fallenness, however, is the perversion of the relational expression of our imagedness. In other words, to be fallen is to live in rebellion against God. With echoes of the sonship aspect of human imagedness, God proclaims "children I have reared and brought up, but they have rebelled against me" (Isa 1:2). Further, from Isaiah we learn that it is the nature of sin to make "a separation between you and your God," so that God's face is hidden from us (Isa 52:2). Therefore, the misery which sinners experience is not merely the misery of being culpably separated from God, but of being constituted for a relationship with the One from whom they are separated. For God's image is, as it were, ineradicably "stamped" within us. We remain image-bearers. So, as long as a human is in rebellion against God, the feeling of misery cannot be removed by undoing imagedness, for imagedness is an immutable feature of human nature.

Therefore, the duality of happiness and misery that Pascal describes, is, in terms of the doctrine of the *imago Dei*, the opposition between our constitutionally God-ward nature and rebellious, self-centered condition—a opposition which produces misery. To explain humans' misery, Pascal had affirmed that "there was once in man a true happiness, of which all that now remains is the empty print and trace" (L148/S181). The doctrine of the *imago Dei* takes this a step further. This "trace" of true happiness—our original Godward nature—is not merely a memory of the distant past, but something we constantly bear within ourselves by virtue of our imagedness. As image-bearers are constituted for a relationship with God as the source of true happiness, it is their nature to seek happiness; as sinners, however, we find no happiness in a relationship with God. In keeping with our imagedness, therefore, we seek happiness; and in keeping with our fallenness, we seek it in anything but God.

Second, from the perspective of the doctrine of the *imago Dei*, then, the Pascalian theme of *divertissement* may also be explained in terms of idolatry. For as *divertissement* is the delusional pursuit of fulfillment in anything but God, so is idolatry. Just as those who pursue *divertissement* are never satisfied, so, "man who is made in the

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image of God," writes Reinhold Niebuhr, "is unable, precisely because of those qualities in him which are designated as 'image of God,' to be satisfied with a god who is made in man's image."[18] The perversity of idolatry is evident in the fact that, while God created humans in his image, they now so utterly fail to express their imagedness that they invent things which, they imagine, can "image" God, then they worship those images. "Although they knew God" fallen image-bearers "exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things" (Rom 1:21, 23). It is no wonder, then, since God created humans in his image as a part of our nature, that humans' making and worshiping of "images" becomes in itself part of the punishment. The idols of the nations, declares the psalmist

> are silver and gold,
> the work of human hands.
> They have mouths, but do not speak;
> they have eyes, but do not see;
> they have ears, but do not hear,
> nor is there any breath in their mouths.
> Those who make them become like them,
> so do all who trust in them. (Ps 115:4-8)

Brian Rosner summarizes the polemics of the Old Testament prophets against idolatry: "Idol worship," he writes, "leads only to the disappointment and embarrassment of those who trust in them."[19]

In light of the doctrine of the *imago Dei,* then, Pascal's theme of *divertissement,* finds a more expanded explanation in terms of idolatry. The pursuit of *divertissement* is more than a delusional attempt to find happiness apart from God. It is the very perverting of the relational expression of our imagedness. Our fallenness guarantees that, no matter what humans pursue, they will be frustrated and miserable. In

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[18]Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Nature And Destiny Of Man: A Christian Interpretation*, vol. 1 (London: Nisbet, 1941), 177.

[19]Brian S. Rosner, "Idolatry," in *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, ed. T. Desmond Alexander and Brian S. Rosner (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000), 570.

summary, therefore, these additional details provided by the doctrine of the *imago Dei*—in particular, the relational nature of humans' pursuit of happiness, and the idolatrous nature of *divertissement*—strengthen Pascal's anthropological argument.

Detail for the Duality of Humans'
Epistemic Condition

The doctrine of the *imago Dei* explains, in greater detail, why humans find themselves in a paradoxical epistemic condition. This section summarizes Pascal's explanation for humans' epistemic paradox, then shows how the doctrine of the *imago Dei* provides more explanatory detail. Specifically, as image-bearers, humans hold beliefs about God. As sinners, however, they hold false beliefs about him, and these beliefs are further exacerbated by Satanic deception.

According to Pascal, man "has within him the capacity for knowing truth," but "he possesses no truth which is either abiding or satisfactory" (L119/S151). We crave to know the truth, but we can neither completely eliminate our doubts nor our desire to know, for man is "equally incapable of knowing and of not desiring to know. He cannot even doubt" (L75/S110). This cloud of certainty and uncertainty, truth and error, applies with respect to our knowledge of God and of ourselves. God's existence is insufficiently evident to eliminate all doubt, and insufficiently obscure to eliminate all belief (L429/S682). This paradox emerges particularly in the controversy between dogmatism (which insists on absolute certainty) and radical skepticism (which insists that everything should be doubted).

Pascal argues that this epistemic paradox may be explained by Christian anthropology. "The origin of these two sects' [i.e., dogmatism and Pyrrhonism] errors," writes Pascal,

> lies in not knowing that man's present state is different from the one in which he was created, so that the one [dogmatism], seeing traces of his initial greatness and ignorant of his corruption, treated nature as healthy and in no need of a healer, which leads him to the pinnacle of pride, whereas the other [Pyrrhonism],

experiencing the wretchedness of the present age and unaware of the dignity of his inception, treats nature as inevitably weak and incurable.[20]

This epistemic paradox, which amounts to noetic dysfunction, is further traceable to humans' tendency to deceive themselves. "Man," Pascal declares, "is nothing but disguise, falsehood and hypocrisy, both in himself and with regard to others. He does not want to be told the truth. He avoids telling it to others, and all these tendencies, so remote from justice and reason, are naturally rooted in his heart" (L978/S743). As William Wood argues, for Pascal, the Fall is a plunge into self-deceit about ourselves and God. Regarding our self-deception, Wood writes, "The self is doubly imaginary, according to Pascal. One always sees oneself through the (imagined) eyes of other people. My subjective narrative identity is therefore the story that I imagine that other people would tell about me: my fantasy about your fantasy about me."[21] Wood also aptly summarizes the Pascalian theme of humans' culpable rejection of truth about God:

> Because no worldly good can satisfy our innate desire for happiness and truth, we face a stark choice. We can recognize our limitations, accept our fallen nature, and turn to God through Christ for redemption. Or we can lie to ourselves, and to others and pretend to be happy even though we know deep down that we are not. This path is the one most people take, according to Pascal. As fallen selves in a fallen world, human beings have an innate aversion to the truth that is also, at the same time, an aversion to God. The Fall is a fall into duplicity.[22]

For Pascal, then, Christian anthropology explains the paradox of our dual capacity for doubt and certainty: God gave humans enough truth to know what truth is and pursue it, but not enough to achieve knowledge of him apart from humbling themselves before him. Furthermore, because of their sin, humans deceive themselves about who God and they truly are.

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[20]Blaise Pascal, "Discussion with Monsieur de Sacy," in *Pensées and Other Writings*, ed. Anthony Levi, trans. Honor Levi, Oxford World's Classics (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 189.

[21]Wood, *Blaise Pascal on Duplicity, Sin, and the Fall*, 94.

[22]Ibid., 9.

The doctrine of the *imago Dei* supplies more detail to this explanation for fallen humans' epistemic dysfunction. Being created in the image of God entails not only relationality, but also the capacity for holding beliefs about the one in whose image we are created. Fallenness, however, perverts this capacity, so that it is now "darkened by the smoke of sin."[23] We still hold beliefs about the one in whose image we are created, but now we do so as rebels against him.[24] But, since God is good, and one cannot, presumably, rebel against one he knows to be good, then sinners must hold beliefs about God that do not include his goodness or any other of God's attributes.[25] Therefore, as image-bearers, humans form beliefs about God and themselves; but as sinners, these beliefs are false. That fallen humans continue to hold beliefs *about* God is evident from Romans 1:21-22, which teaches that though sinners "knew God, they did not honor him as God," but "exchanged the truth about God for a lie." As noted in chapter 4, this tendency to form beliefs about God is evident in the Athenians' altar "to the unknown God" (Acts 17:23). Yet these passages also teach that the beliefs sinners hold about God are false, "a lie" (Rom 1:22). Paul did not condemn the Athenians for having an altar "to the unknown God," but in the sermon that followed, he corrected their false beliefs about this God. He "does not," Paul declares, "live in temples made by man, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything" (Acts 17:24-25).

Holding false beliefs about God cannot be disentangled from holding false beliefs about oneself. "If we say we have not sinned," the Apostle John writes, "We make

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[23]Anselm of Canterbury, *Anselm of Canterbury: The Major Works*, ed. Brian Davies and G. R. Evans (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 87.

[24]Reflecting on humans as fallen image-bearers Herman Bavinck writes, "Human beings who violate God's law do not cease to be human; they retain their body, soul, faculties, powers, intellect, will, and so on. But now these faculties are all devoted to the service of sin and function in the wrong direction," *Reformed Dogmatics*, ed. John Bolt, trans. John Vriend, vol. 3, *Sin and Salvation in Christ* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 175.

[25]Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 107. See also Stephen K. Moroney, *The Noetic Effects of Sin: A Historical and Contemporary Exploration of How Sin Affects Our Thinking* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2000), 5.

him a liar, and his word is not in us" (1 John 1:10). Likewise, Paul touches on the mutuality of false beliefs about God and about oneself. "Claiming to be wise," he writes, "they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man" (Rom 1:22-23). Apart from a proper understanding of the one in whose image we are created, therefore, we have no proper understanding of ourselves. Yet as image-bearers we are unable to abolish our propensity to form beliefs about God and ourselves, for this epistemic capacity is an entailment of imagedness. Alvin Plantinga dilates upon this dysfunction in discussing the noetic effects of sin:

> Our grasp of ourselves as image bearers of God himself, the First Being of the universe, can also be damaged or compromised or dimmed. For example, we may think the way to understand human characteristics and ventures such as love, humor, adventure, art, music, science, religion, and morality is solely in terms of our evolutionary origin, rather than in terms of our being image bearers of God. By failing to know God, we can come to a vastly skewed view of what we ourselves are, what we need, what is good for us, and how to attain it.[26]

Although humans remain culpable for their false beliefs about God, these false beliefs are reinforced from an outside source: Satanic delusion. Paul explains that "the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God" (2 Cor 4:4). This accords with what Scripture teaches about Satan.[27] Not only did he tempt Eve by lying about God, but he is identified as "a liar and the father of lies" (John 8:44). True to his deceptive character, he tried to pervert the Word of God in his failed attempts to ensnare Christ (Matt 4:1-11) and "filled [Ananias'] heart" so that he "lied to the Holy Spirit" (Acts 5:3). John aptly calls him the "deceiver of the whole world" (Rev 12:9). As archdeceiver, Satan's strategy is not merely to tell random fibs, but to prompt humans to form false beliefs about God and themselves—about God, that his character is

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[26]Alvin Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 214. Millard Erickson also discusses self-deceit as a consequence of sin, *Christian Theology*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1998), 634.

[27]Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 3:185.

questionable, and about themselves, that they can achieve wisdom or godlikeness apart from God (Gen 3:1-7). The solution to this Satanic delusion is found in the doctrine of the *imago Dei*. For, although fallen image-bearers fail to form true beliefs about God and themselves, Christ as the divine image of God reveals God as he truly is and humanity as it truly should be (2 Cor 4:3-6; Heb 1:1-3).

Thus, the doctrine of the *imago Dei* supplies more explanation for humans' epistemic dysfunction: not only are we culpably self-deceived as fallen image-bearers, but we are Satan-deceived. Because our sin blinds us, we are unable ourselves to rectify our perverted epistemic capacity. The solution is found only in Christ, the only unfallen image-bearer, who is the divine image of God.

**Detail for the Paradox of
Greatness and Smallness**

What I call the "paradox of greatness and smallness" is the Pascalian theme of humans' paradoxical place in the universe. To this theme, the doctrine of the *imago Dei* adds detail that strengthens the explanation. This section summarizes Pascal's case for humans' paradox of greatness and smallness, then points out the added details found in the doctrine of the *imago Dei*. Specifically, the doctrine of the *imago Dei* reveals that our sense of disorientation may be seen as a consequence of our failure to exercise dominion as a God-intended function of our imagedness.

Humans, according to Pascal, occupy a midpoint between the infinitely small and infinitely large, producing a kind of existential disorientation. "When I consider," he marvels,

> the brief span of my life absorbed into the eternity which comes before and after . . .
> the small space I occupy and which I see swallowed up in the infinite immensity of
> spaces of which I know nothing and which know nothing of me, I take fright and am
> amazed to see myself here rather than there: there is no reason for me to be here
> rather than there, now rather than then. Who put me here? By whose command and
> act were this time and place allotted to me? (L68/S102)

In addition to this sense of disorientation, Pascal recognizes that human beings are at the mercy of the mindless cosmos, even though our power of reason gives us an advantage. Although "the universe grasps me and swallows me up like a speck," writes Pascal, yet "through thought I grasp it" (L113/S145). Still, this is a dubious benefit, for the reason that dignifies us can be rattled by a buzzing fly or a squeaky weathervane (L48/S81). "What an absurd god [man] is!" Pascal cries, "Most ridiculous hero!" (L48/S81).

The doctrine of the *imago Dei* supplies more explanatory detail for humans' paradoxical placement in the universe, for it more fully discloses God's intent for humans' role in the universe. As his image-bearers, they are to "have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth" (Gen 1:26). This "dominion," means that humans are to represent God to the rest of the created order, allowing it to fulfill its doxological purpose.[28] Psalm 8, as a commentary on Genesis 1:26-27, expands on the theme of humans' God-intended dominion:

> You have made [man] a little lower than the heavenly beings
> and crowned him with glory and honor.
> You have given him dominion over the works of your hands;
> You have put all things under his feet,
> all sheep and oxen,
> and also the beasts of the field,
> the birds of the heavens, and the fish of the sea,
> whatever passes along the paths of the sea. (Ps 8:5-8)

Whatever capacities humans possess, then (including their physical and intellectual abilities), may be understood as their God-given equipment to carry out this royal function of their imagedness, as is evident when "the Lord God took the man and

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[28]Berkouwer, *Man*, 114; David J. A. Clines, "The Image of God in Man," *Tyndale Bulletin* 19 (1968): 101; Peter J. Gentry, "The Covenant with Creation in Genesis 1-3," in *Kingdom Through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants*, by Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 101; Anthony A. Hoekema, *Created in God's Image* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 68; Eugene H. Merrill, *Everlasting Dominion: A Theology of the Old Testament* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2006), 171.

put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it," and when "the man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field" (Gen 2:15, 20). As fallen image-bearers, however, humans pervert these capacities. Instead of accurately representing God to the rest of creation, they exploit the rest of creation for selfish ends, allow other creatures to stand in for God as false objects of worship, ultimately making themselves rather than God the center of "their" universe.[29] Humans continue to exercise dominion, but they exercise this dominion in rebellion against the one who gave it to them. Thus, fallen humans are morally unfit to be God's viceregents. Besides this moral perversion of their dominion, fallen image-bearers face physical limitations to their dominion—most significantly, death. As a consequence of sin, man will "return to the ground, for," God declares, "you are dust, and to dust you shall return" (Gen 3:19).

Not only are humans morally and physically incapable of exercising proper dominion over creation, but the post-Fall universe itself resists humans' attempts to bring it under their physical and intellectual mastery. As a consequence of human sin, the earth now yields "thorns and thistles," and cultivating it brings "pain" and "the sweat of [man's] face" (Gen 3:18-19). Conspiring with humans' noetic dysfunction, the universe's ambiguous display of both curse and blessing renders it inscrutable and even loathsome to humans (Eccl 2:17). The recurring seasons, part of God's good design (Gen 1:14), now seem to be a senseless cycle of "vanity" (Eccl 1:1-11). Just like animals, humans themselves "return to dust," making them wonder whether God "is testing them that they may see that they themselves are but beasts" (Gen 3:19; Eccl 3:18-21). Even human labor, which God intended to be an enterprise of godly dominion, is now motivated by "a man's envy of his neighbor," and so labor appears to be "vanity and a striving after wind"

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[29]Remarking on humans' self-centeredness, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn observes that "the Universe has as many different centers as there are living beings in it. Each of us is a center of the Universe," Aleksandr I. Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago 1918-1956: An Experiment in Literary Investigation*, trans. Thomas S. Whitney, vol. 1 (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), 3.

(4:4). Thus, humans' attempts to master the world are foiled by the limits of their minds and apparent irrationality of the cosmos (Eccl 7:23-24; 8:16-9:3). Humans' influence over the cosmos, then, may be described as perverted and frustrated dominion. It is perverted because the dominion we exercise is self-centered instead of God-centered; it is frustrated because our endeavors are cut short by death and repelled by the bewildering senselessness of the universe. While agreeing in substance with Pascal's explanation for humans' paradoxical placement in the universe, the doctrine of the *imago Dei* offers a more detailed explanation. Humans' disorientation may be seen as arising from the perverted expression of our imagedness within a morally ambiguous cosmos.[30] In light of the doctrine of the *imago Dei*, it is no wonder that humans feel "lost in this corner of this universe," "take fright" (L68/S102) and find themselves "moved to terror" (L198/S228).

In summary, to each of these three categories—the duality of happiness and misery, the duality of humans' epistemic condition, and the paradox of greatness and smallness—the doctrine of the *imago Dei* supplies a finer level of detail. With these details added, the connection between the explanation and the data becomes even more secure, strengthening the argument as a whole.

The Doctrine of the *Imago Dei* Provides a Broader Explanatory Scope

The second way in which the doctrine of the *imago Dei* strengthens the anthropological argument is by explaining more instances of humans' paradoxical duality. In abductive reasoning, a version of an explanation whose explanatory scope accounts for more data is stronger than a version of the same explanation whose explanatory scope accounts for less data.[31] Suppose I consult a doctor to discover whether my cough is

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[30]Christoph Schwöbel, "Human Being as Relational Being: Twelve Theses for a Christian Anthropology," in *Persons: Divine and Human: King's College Essays in Theological Anthropology*, ed. Christoph Schwöbel and Colin E. Gunton (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1991), 151–52.

[31]See Gabbay and Woods, *A Practical Logic of Cognitive Systems*, 2:63–69.

caused by black mold. He asks me whether I have had prolonged headaches, which, in fact, I have. His version of the black mold explanation included the idea that black mold can cause headaches as well as coughing. Therefore, his version of the explanation, because its explanatory scope encompassed more data about my condition, strengthened its plausibility. The same strengthening, I argue, occurs when applying the insights from the doctrine of the *imago Dei* to Pascal's anthropological argument. In other words, the doctrine of the *imago Dei*—as a broadened "version" of Pascal's explanation—encompasses within its explanatory scope more kinds of human behavior.

In what follows, therefore, I suggest several instantiations of paradoxical beliefs and behaviors. For each instantiation, I endeavor to demonstrate how the doctrine of the *imago Dei* supplies a plausible explanation. If successful, these demonstrations reinforce my central argument that the doctrine of the *imago Dei,* when applied to Pascal's anthropological argument, makes it more compelling.

Paradoxical Behavior

In identifying instances of paradoxical behavior, I refer to alternative explanations for this behavior. My aim, however, is not to refute these explanations, but to show that this behavior (1) is sufficiently paradoxical from at least one major perspective (e.g., Darwinism) to require an explanation, and (2) is explicable from the perspective of *imago Dei* anthropology. The task of demonstrating that Christian anthropology is a *better* explanation belongs to the eliminative stage of the anthropological argument. All that is necessary to advance this argument is to show that the doctrine of the *imago Dei* offers a *plausible* explanation for the given behavior or belief.

Life instinct and death drive. Early in his career, Sigmund Freud postulated the idea that humans possess a "life instinct" or "Eros."[32] This instinct, he believed, manifested itself in humans' drive to survive, thrive, and give life to others. Later in his life, however (significantly, in the wake of World War I), he proposed another principle that runs contrary to Eros—the "death drive" (*Todestriebe*).[33] This drive is a destructive impulse whose aim is to disintegrate others or oneself.[34] It mirrors, Freud believed, a feature of the biological world in which "two kinds of processes of opposite directions" operate within living matter—one is "anabolic" and "assimilatory," and the other is "katabolic" and "disintegrating."[35] "Shall we venture to recognize," Freud asks, "in these two directions of the vital [i.e., biological] process the activity of our two instinctive tendencies, the life-instincts and the death-instincts?"[36] While the death drive stands in tension with Freud's earlier-developed life instinct, he believed that this darker impulse was needed to fully account for human behavior. "Only by the concurrent or mutually opposing action of the two primal instincts—Eros and the death-instinct," he reasons, and "never by one or the other alone, can we explain the rich multiplicity of the phenomena of life."[37]

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[32]Sigmund Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, trans. C. J. M. Hubback, The International Psycho-Analytical Library 4 (London: International Psycho-Analytical, 1922), 1; Sigmund Freud, "Analysis Terminable and Interminable," in *On Freud's Analysis Terminable and Interminable*, ed. Joseph Sandler, Contemporary Freud: Turning Points and Critical Issues 1 (London: Karnac Books, 2013), 33.

[33]Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, 54.

[34]Steven H. Cooper, "Drive," ed. Alan E. Kazdin, *Encyclopedia of Psychology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 3:89.

[35]Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, 62–63.

[36]Ibid. As James R. Scroggs explains, "Freud's new theory . . . is that there are two basic sources of psychic energy, one creative and the other destructive." It is, in other words, "a dualistic conceptualization of what presents itself in human experience as a volitional paradox—as a contradiction of wills," James R. Scroggs, "The Paradoxical Nature of Man," *Journal of Religion and Health* 5, no. 1 (1966): 37.

[37]Freud, "Analysis Terminable and Interminable," 30.

Not all psychoanalysts, however, embrace Freud's theory of the death drive.[38] Some feel that such a self-destructive impulse clashes with Darwinism. After all, "an innate urge to die," explains Paul Robinson, "would hardly give an organism a competitive advantage in the struggle for existence."[39] Not surprisingly, then, Freud's death drive theory has "proven to be an embarrassment to Freud's orthodox biographers, who have reacted by invoking Freud's personal psychology."[40] Of course, the genesis of an idea *per se* does not invalidate it, and the reality of self-destructive human behavior still begs for an explanation. Therefore, while behavioral theorists might shrink from the theory itself, they still must wrestle with the clinical data that prompted Freud to postulate it. Call it what they will, as Steven Cooper writes, "there is still the problem of explaining seemingly irrational human behavior, including the ubiquitousness of aggressive and destructive forces."[41]

How does the death drive express itself in human behavior? Suicide quite obviously falls under its purview, but this is only an extreme case, and is not well representative of the true nature of the death drive. For, while this drive *might* result in the biological death of a human being, its manifestations are broader and generally more mundane. Not only pathological behavior, Freud insists, but "numerous facts of normal mental life call for an explanation of this kind, and the sharper our eye grows, the more copiously they strike us."[42]

Freud himself did not multiply such examples, so this task was left to his followers. One such Freudian is Karl Menninger, who vigorously defended the death

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[38]Freud cites homosexuality as one manifestation.

[39]Paul A. Robinson, *Freud and His Critics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 86.

[40]Robinson, *Freud and His Critics*, 86.

[41]Cooper, "Drive," 3:91.

[42]Freud, "Analysis Terminable and Interminable," 31.

drive theory. "Whoever studies the behavior of human beings," he insists in his book *Man Against Himself*, "cannot escape the conclusion that we must reckon with an enemy within the lines. It becomes increasingly evident that some of the destruction which curses the earth is *self*-destruction; the extraordinary propensity of the human being to join hands with external forces in an attack upon his own existence is one of the most remarkable of biological phenomena."[43] Further, he declares, the "destructiveness of mankind appears to include a large amount of self-destructiveness, in paradoxical contradiction to the axiom that self-preservation is the first law of life."[44] The paradox consists in the fact that the death drive is operative in the very drive for life. In other words, it is not only in humans' self-conscious and intentional self-destruction, but also in their attempt at self-preservation that they succumb to self-destruction. Menninger further argues that the death-drive manifests itself not only in masochism, asceticism, and alcohol addiction, but also in more subtle ways, for example: "the employee who is successfully promoted only to throw away his chances for the final and ultimate promotion toward which he would seem to have been striving, by what sometimes appears to be studied carelessness or even intentional neglect;" or "the man who achieves a notable success only to nullify its benefits and the status of his own reputation by a series of acts calculated to inspire precisely the contrary attitudes in those about him."[45]

Another important way in which the death drive manifests itself is in warfare, which may be viewed as humans' death drive on a "grand scale."[46] The paradox is not hard to see: humans summon their technological genius to destroy other humans, and in

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[43]Karl Menninger, *Man Against Himself* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace, 1956), 4.

[44]Ibid., 71.

[45]Ibid., 89–90.

[46]Ibid., 407.

the process, they destroy themselves.[47] "Throughout [World War II]," Menninger laments, "men of all countries were slaughtered by weapons invented, developed, and distributed to the foe by their own countrymen."[48] In the modern era of atomic and hydrogen bombs, war threatens to be even more perversely ironical: among our most advanced technological achievements is a weapon that can destroy all achievements. This gloomy consequence of scientific advance distressed Albert Einstein, who, in a letter to Freud expressed his bewilderment over the paradox of humans' warmongering. "How is it possible," he asked,

> for the ruling minority to force the masses to observe a purpose which rewards them only with suffering and loss? Why do the masses permit themselves to be inflamed to the point of madness and self-sacrifice by these means? Do hatred and destruction satisfy an innate human drive which ordinarily remains latent but which can easily be aroused and intensified to the point of mass psychosis? And is it possible to modify human psychic development in such a way as to produce an increasing resistance to these psychoses of hatred and destruction?[49]

Even though Menninger's book is replete with examples of self-destructive behavior, he lines these clouds with rays of optimism: "The sum of the whole matter is that our intelligence and our affections are our most dependable bulwarks against self-destruction. To recognize the existence of such a force within us is the first step toward its control. To 'know thyself' must mean to know the malignancy of one's own instincts and to know as well one's own power to deflect it." Perhaps, however, this hope-filled statement betrays that Menninger failed to grasp the depth of the problem he meant to solve. If the "bulwarks against self-destruction" are intelligence and affections, these bulwarks may be sabotaged with the intelligence to invent bombs, and the affections for violence. Further, if the "death drive" is operative in all human behavior, even the

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[47]Obviously, warfare and means of destroying human life may be considered to be both self-destructive (humans destroy themselves) or others-destructive (humans destroy other humans). Either way, the astonishing capacity for humans to act in such ways calls for explanation.

[48]Menninger, *Man Against Himself*, 407.

[49]Einstein's letter to Freud, quoted in ibid., 410.

exertions of Eros, how is Menninger's own proposed solution not *itself* a manifestation of the death drive? Is it not naïve to assume that the death drive may operate in suicide, alcoholism, or warmongering, but *not* in philosophizing, psychologizing or psychoanalyzing? Menninger's own assumption—that the death drive is operative in the very drive for life—seems to undermine his optimism.

The basic question, then, is this: why do humans behave in ways—even in ways intended to improve, enhance, or extend their lives—that end up worsening, diminishing, and truncating them? Why do humans, in their very attempts at self-preservation, tend to self-destroy?

Many try to answer this puzzle within the framework of Darwinism, and this chapter does not attempt to determine whether their answers succeed. It is sufficient to argue, however, that life instinct and death drive find a plausible explanation in the doctrine of the *imago Dei*. Such an explanation might proceed as follows: God created humans to live—to thrive, prosper, and flourish—in a relationship with him. This Godward relationality, in fact, is a great part of the meaning of imagedness. Thus, by virtue of imagedness, humans have a life-seeking impulse, a "drive," so to speak, for life. Further, since imagedness remains an immutable feature of human nature, this "drive" for life cannot be extinguished. Yet human sinfulness—as rebellion against the God in whom alone is life—perverts this life-seeking expression of imagedness. Augustine describes this godless perversion thus: "The soul fornicates when it is turned away from you and seeks outside you the pure and clear intentions which are not to be found except by returning to you. *In their perverted way all humanity imitates you*."[50] Fallen image-bearers, then, have an irrepressible tendency (apart from divine intervention) to seek to thrive, create, and flourish *apart* from God, and so in ways that bring sorrow, chaos, and death.

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[50]Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. Henry Chadwick (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 32, emphasis added.

This perversion of imagedness was evident at the moment of the Fall, for in the very taking of the forbidden fruit, Eve acted in a way she *intended* would bring flourishing. She "saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desired to make one wise," and therefore "took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate" (Gen 3:6). The biblical narrative gives no evidence that Adam and Eve misunderstood the nature of the fruit itself: it was not ugly or poisonous. Rather, what precipitated the consequences of the Fall was their decision to seek life independently from God.

Scripture bears abundant testimony to humans' propensity for seeking life and well-being apart from God, in ways that bring disaster and death. At the close of Deuteronomy, Moses invites God's people to choose between "life" by obedience and "death" by rebellion: "See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil" (Deut 30:15). The story of Israel's history, however, discloses their intractable bent to choose disobedience, resulting in "death," even when their decision sprang from their thirst for "life." Thus, Jeremiah records Yahweh's contention that "my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water" (Jer 2:13). Reflecting on humans' inclination to choose ways that appear beneficial, Solomon warns, "There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death" (Prov 14:12). In the New Testament, Jesus teaches the same paradox: "Whoever would save his life," he declares, "will lose it" (Luke 9:24, also Matt 16:25, Mark 8:35). That is, whoever seeks autonomous self-preservation is actually choosing self-destruction.[51] Even the Apostle

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[51]As the divine image of God, Jesus did what the people of God, as fallen image-bearers, could not do. He chose life—that is, complete and constant obedience to God. His obedience, however, would mean "becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross" (Phil 2:8). Therefore, while fallen humans gain death for themselves by seeking life in disobedience to God, Christ gained life for others by seeking death in obedience to God (Rom 6:23).

Paul discovered this very drive toward self-destructive rebellion as a "law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand" (Rom 7:21).

Other voices join Scripture in testifying to humans' self-destructive tendency, manifested even in the pursuit of life. "That the whole human race has been condemned in its first origin," Augustine observes, "this life itself, if life it is to be called, bears witness by the host of cruel ills with which it is filled."[52] Martin Luther compares the self-destructive force of the sinful human heart to a millstone. "When you put wheat under it," he explains, "it turns and grinds and bruises the wheat to flour; if you put no wheat, it still grinds on, but then 'tis itself it grinds and wastes away."[53] "Man, according to Christian doctrine," explains James R. Scroggs, "far from trying intentionally to destroy himself, is rather constantly trying to assert himself over against God. Yet it is in the nature of existence that this kind of self-assertion leads inevitably to self-destruction."[54]

In summary, the doctrine of the *imago Dei* reveals that humans, as image-bearers, are irrepressible life-seekers, for imagedness means that they are constituted for a relationship with the God the life-giver. Yet as sinners, humans are also rebels: they seek to live autonomously, and thus they find death, disaster, and sorrow. If this doctrine is true, then we should expect human behavior to be a paradoxical alloy of life and creativity, and death and destruction. Indeed, this is precisely what we observe—in ways so striking that Sigmund Freud himself felt compelled to postulate the "mutually opposing action of two primal instincts—Eros and the death-instinct."[55]

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[52]Augustine, *The City of God*, trans. Marcus Dods (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2009), 762.

[53]Martin Luther, *The Table Talk of Martin Luther*, trans. William Hazlitt (London: George Bell and Sons, 1902), 275.

[54]Scroggs, "The Paradoxical Nature of Man," 22.

[55]Freud, "Analysis Terminable and Interminable," 30.

Altruism and selfishness. Emerging from the shadows of the Freudian death drive, we arrive at a sunnier topic—altruism. A human being, it seems, can act altruistically: that is, he or she "intends and acts for the other's sake as an end in itself rather than as a means to public recognition or internal well-being."[56] While we recognize individuals throughout history who have become icons of altruism (Mother Teresa, Mahatma Gandhi, for example), some may also wonder whether altruism, so defined, is possible. Not only does it conflict with powerful egoistic inclinations, but it stands awkwardly with respect to Darwinism. Darwin himself attempted to incorporate an explanation for altruism into his theory of biological evolution. In recent decades, however, as Stephen Post, et al. report, "there has been a trend in social scientific research, as well as in evolutionary biology, that generates cause for honest doubt about the very possibility of human altruism in any form."[57] The problem is not hard to recognize: how can a human, whose every action is apparently prompted by self-interest, ever act in a way that is entirely free from self-interest?

This paradox of biological altruism and selfishness is at the heart of Christopher Boehm's *Moral Origins: The Evolution of Virtue, Altruism, and Shame.* "Why do so many members of a supposedly egoistic and nepotistic species," he asks, "in some contexts become quite giving to people they aren't related to and sometimes don't even know?"[58] Put differently, he seeks to explore "how . . . natural selection manage[d] to work its way around the powerful degrees of genetic egoism that are built into our nature?"[59] As mentioned above, this question goes back to a problem that Darwin himself

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[56]Stephen G. Post et al., eds., *Altruism and Altruistic Love: Science, Philosophy, and Religion in Dialogue* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 3.

[57]Ibid., 5.

[58]*Christopher Boehm, Moral Origins: The Evolution of Virtue, Altruism, and Shame* (New York: Perseus, 2012), 10.

[59]Ibid., 54.

raised. "How within the limits of the same tribe," he inquires, "did a large number of members first become endowed with these social and moral qualities, and how was the standard of excellence raised? It is extremely doubtful whether the offspring of the more sympathetic and benevolent parents, or of those who were the most faithful to their comrades, would be reared in greater numbers than the children of selfish and treacherous parents belonging to the same tribe."[60]

Clearly, as Boehm and Darwin would readily acknowledge, this propensity for egoism has not been extinguished; it is alive and well among members of the human race. Thus, we find ourselves searching for an explanation when we observe that two human beings—say, Adolf Hitler and Mother Teresa—exhibit the opposite poles of egoism and altruism.[61] Even more perplexing, however, is that these opposing traits may be present, not just in two individuals of the same species, nor even in a single individual at different times, but in a single individual engaged in a single endeavor. During World War II, for example, Bob Davies distinguished himself as a national hero for volunteering to undergo the life-threatening task of diffusing and extracting German bombs that had fallen in London, including one that had embedded itself 28 feet into the ground dangerously close to St. Paul's Cathedral. Less than two years later, however, as historian Max Hastings writes, "Davies was court-martialed on almost thirty charges involving large-scale and

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[60]Charles Darwin, *The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex* (London: Penguin, 2004), 155.

[61]Hitler is often touted as the paragon of pure evil, but, as evolutionary ethicist Michael Shermer insightfully reminds us, "calling Adolf Hitler evil moves us no closer to an understanding of the causes of what he did. What he did may be worse than almost anything anyone ever did to anyone else in history, but it is all within the realm of human possibilities. The Holocaust may be the supreme act of inhumanity (indeed, the Nuremberg trials established the legal precedence of convicting individuals for their acts of inhumanity), but we must always keep in mind that these inhuman acts were committed by humans, inhuman acts within our behavioral repertoire," Michael Shermer, *The Science of Good and Evil: Why People Cheat, Gossip, Care, Share, and Follow the Golden Rule* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2004), 77. To a similar point, Ron Rosenbuam writes that "the shapes we project onto the inky Rorschach of Hitler's psyche are often cultural *self*-portraits in the negative. What we talk about when we talk about Hitler is also who *we* are and who we are not," Ron Rosenbaum, *Explaining Hitler: The Search for the Origins of His Evil*, 2nd ed. (New York: Da Capo, 1998), xxv.

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systematic theft through his time in charge of his UXB squad; he also exploited his role

to extract cash payments from some of those whose premises he saved from bombs,

compounded by later passing dud cheques."[62] Hasting's assessment of Davies' conflicted

behavior reflects our paradox. "A lesson of his story," Hastings concludes, "was that

scoundrels as well as heroes played their parts in the blitz, and some people were a tangle

of both."[63]

Another example of egoistical altruism comes from the area of philanthropy.

Etymologically, the word itself denotes love for one's fellow humans, and the action

associated with it (giving to others) suggests charity and goodwill. However, sociologists

insist that self-centered concerns are in inextricable part of charitable giving. Sometimes

these self-centered motives involve little more than the feeling of satisfaction for having

done a good deed. Often, however, the motives involve a desire to manipulate and

control. "Disruptive philanthropy," argue sociologists Aaron Hovath and Walter W.

Powell, "seeks to shape civic values in the image of funders' interests and, in lieu of

soliciting public input, seeks to influence or change public opinion and demand."[64] Thus,

humans are somehow capable of mingling apparently selfless actions with self-centered

motives, aims, and methods.

The question, for our purpose, is why these two conflicting traits—altruism

and selfishness—are both apparently expressions of human nature. Attempts to answer

this question range from denying the possibility of altruism altogether to attempting to

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[62]Max Hastings, *Inferno: The World at War, 1939-1945* (New York: Vintage, 2012), 95. To a similar point, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn writes, "If only there were evil people somewhere insidiously committing evil deeds, and it were necessary only to separate them from the rest of us and destroy them. But the line dividing good and evil cuts through the heart of every human being," Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago*, 1:168.

[63]Hastings, *Inferno*, 95.

[64]Aaron Horvath and Walter W. Powell, "Contributory or Disruptive: Do New Forms of Philanthropy Erode Democracy?" in *Philanthropy in Democratic Societies: History, Institutions, Values*, ed. Rob Reich, Chiara Cordelli, and Lucy Bernholz (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016), 90.

hold both altruism and egoism together as an evolutionary useful compromise. For some, such as Herbert Spencer, altruism is only a disguised form of egoism.[65] "Purely altruistic and benevolent actions and desires," they insist, "do not exist."[66] In reality, they argue, "all human actions when properly understood can be seen to be motivated by selfish desires."[67] Others, such as Boehm see altruism as a real, beneficent product of biological evolution—developed as prehistoric humans punished the selfish behavior of social deviants. "By learning to internalize rules," Boehm speculates, "humankind acquired a conscience, and initially this stemmed from the punitive type of social selection . . . which also had the effect of strongly suppressing free riders." It was this "newly moralistic type of free-rider suppression"[68] that "helped us evolve our quite remarkable capacity for extrafamilial generosity."[69]

From the perspective of the *imago Dei*, the paradox of altruism and egoism may be explained in terms of imagedness and fallenness. Created in God's image, humans are capable of engaging in activities that reflect God's good, self-giving nature.[70] It is unsurprising, then, that they behave in ways that appear altruistic. As fallen image-bearers, however, humans express their imagedness in perverted ways. It is equally unsurprising, then, to observe "altruistic" behavior perverted for self-serving ends. For

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[65]Herbert Spencer argues that "ethics has to recognize the truth . . . that egoism comes before altruism. The acts required for continued self-preservation, including the enjoyment of benefits achieved by such acts, are the first requisites to universal welfare. Unless each duly cares for himself, his care for all others is ended by death; an if each thus dies, there remain no others to be cared for," in Herbert Spencer, *The Principles of Ethics, A System of Synthetic Philosophy* (New York: Appleton, 1895), 187.

[66]Joel Feinberg, "Psychological Egoism," in *Ethical Theory: An Anthology*, ed. Russ Shafer-Landau, Blackwell Philosophy Anthologies (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), 183.

[67]Ibid.

[68]Boehm, *Moral Origins*, 17.

[69]Ibid.

[70]For an exposition of the Trinitarian shape of God's self-giving nature, see Kelly M. Kapic, *The God Who Gives: How the Trinity Shapes the Christian Story* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2018).

fallen image-bearers, even when acting "altruistically" still operate in rebellion against God.[71]

To summarize, the explanatory scope of the doctrine of the *imago Dei* encompasses a variety of paradoxical behaviors. These behaviors include various manifestations of humans' life-instinct/death-drive and of altruism/egoism. From the perspective of the doctrine of the *imago Dei* these behaviors are unsurprising. Imagedness and fallenness conspire to render human nature paradoxical, so we expect to see humans behaving in ways that are creatively self-destructive, or egoistically "altruistic." Therefore, the doctrine of the *imago Dei* strengthens Pascal's argument that Christian anthropology explains humans' paradoxical condition.

Paradoxical Beliefs

The doctrine of the *imago Dei,* when viewed as an explanation for human nature, encompasses not only paradoxical behavior, but also paradoxical beliefs.

Conflicting beliefs about the divine. Among these paradoxical beliefs include humans' conflicting conceptions of deity. Cultural anthropologists report that religion and (in most cases) belief in deity are integral to virtually every human culture. At the same time, however, they note the remarkable differences *among* religions, and even *within* a given religion.[72] Religions vary not only in their cultic practices, but also in their conceptions of the divine, which genuinely conflict with each other.[73] Some religions are

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[71]In this respect, then, the Christian view of altruism is in partial agreement with Herbert Spencer's view that altruism is impossible, albeit for different reasons.

[72]Jack David Eller, *Introducing Anthropology of Religion: Culture to the Ultimate* (London: Routledge, 2014), 1.

[73]*Contra* John Hick's "pluralistic hypothesis" in John Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion: Human Responses to the Transcendent*, 2nd ed. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004), 240. For arguments against Hick's version of pluralism, see Harold Netland, *Encountering Religious Pluralism: The Challenge to Christian Faith & Mission* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2001) and Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief*, 31–63.

polytheistic, some duotheistic, and others monotheistic. Still other religions—Jainism and

Buddhism, for example—may be described as "atheistic" because they do not explicitly

hold to the existence of a deity. Not only does belief about the divine vary from religion

to religion, but individual religious adherents find themselves, over time, holding to

different beliefs about the divine, or holding to those beliefs with varying degrees of

certainty.

These observations about humans' religious beliefs raise puzzling issues. On

one hand, if no gods exist, why do humans display this "religious impulse," this

propensity to believe in gods? If, on the other hand, the gods exist, why do humans'

various beliefs about deity conflict so dramatically? These questions have elicited

responses from scholars across a spectrum of disciplines including religious

epistemology, philosophy of religion, psychology, and evolutionary biology. Some, such

as Richard Dawkins, argue that "religious behavior" is a kind of "evolutionary

misfiring"—a lingering glitch from some once-useful prehistoric habit.[74] Others

maintain, with John Hick, "that the great world faiths embody different perceptions and

conceptions of, and correspondingly different responses to, the Real from within the

major variant ways of being human."[75]

Christian anthropology—informed by the doctrine of the *imago Dei*—also

offers an explanation that encompasses not only humans' inclination to form beliefs about

the divine, but also their propensity to differ from each other about what (or whether) the

divine is. The doctrine of the *imago Dei* means that humans are constituted for a

"vertical" relationship with their Creator. This relationality suggests that humans also

form beliefs about what is "above" them, as Paul indicates in Romans 1: "For what can

be known about God is plain to them," Paul declares, "because God has shown it to

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[74]Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2008), 209. See also Yuval Harari, *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind* (New York: Harper Collins, 2015), 212.

[75]Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion*, 240.

them" (Rom 1:19). These beliefs may include such propositions as "God is powerful" or "a divine being exists" (Rom 1:20).

Human fallenness, however, guarantees that apart from divine intervention, these beliefs do not constitute knowledge of God.[76] For, due to the noetic consequences of sin, fallen image-bearers display an equally immutable propensity to invent their own (false) beliefs about God (Rom 1:21-23). This is because knowledge of God entails knowledge of God's righteous and holiness (Exod 15:11).[77] But a fallen image-bearer cannot know such things without at the same time knowing that he is unholy and unrighteous (Isa 6:1-5, 1 John 1:8). It is, however, the propensity of a fallen image-bearer to hold the false belief that one is *not* unholy and *not* unrighteous (Rom 10:3, e.g., Gen 3:12-13). Therefore, a fallen image-bearer cannot know that God is righteous and holy, and so whatever beliefs he or she holds about God do not constitute knowledge of God.[78]

The doctrine of the *imago Dei*, however, does not imply that these false beliefs about God will be the same for all, or even some, humans. Neither does it imply that the same human may not hold different beliefs about God from time to time, or even two conflicting beliefs about God at the same time. It implies only that whatever beliefs fallen image-bearers hold do not amount to knowledge of God as he truly is. The number of

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[76]I say "apart from divine intervention" because the matter is different for redeemed fallen image-bearers. Redeemed humans, as it will be argued in the next chapter, are still "fallen," but they are now being transformed into the image of Christ. Fundamental to this transformation is a knowledge of God as he truly is. Believers have, as Paul writes, "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" in contrast to unbelievers, whose "minds" are "blinded . . . from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God" (2 Cor 4:4, 6). To avoid being cumbersome throughout this chapter, however, I do not always make the qualification between redeemed fallen image-bearers who do hold true beliefs about God, and unredeemed fallen image-bearers who do not.

[77]I use the word "know" to denote not only propositional knowledge of the object, but also the engagement of one's affections with the object, in the sense described by Alvin Plantinga (following Jonathan Edwards) in Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief*, 303.

[78]Plantinga expresses a similar idea when he writes that "one of the most far-reaching of the noetic effects of sin is that it skews belief about our origins and the origins of our cognitive systems: it prevents us from seeing that we are the creatures of a just and loving God who has created us in his own image. We may come, instead, to think that God is terrible and to be feared rather than a good and loving Father, or distant and far off, or indifferent to us and our welfare" (Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief*, 281–82).

false conceptions about God may be, theoretically, equal to the population of fallen image-bearers.

This understanding of the doctrine of the *imago Dei* provides a plausible explanation for the diversity of beliefs about deity *among* religions, *within* a given religion, and even within an *individual*. If, in fact, as the doctrine of the *imago Dei* teaches us, no unaided fallen image-bearer holds true beliefs about God, we should expect this sort of diversity of religious beliefs.

Furthermore, a fallen image-bearer might hold her beliefs about the divine with varying degrees of certainty. This might be explained by a corollary of the doctrine of the *imago Dei*—the difficulty for fallen-image bearers to accurately read the evidence of a sin-cursed earth. Why do not "the heavens proclaim the glory of God" in a way that all humans find indubitable (Ps 19:1)? As observed earlier, the duplicitous impulse of our fallen minds conspires with the cosmic effects of the Fall to produce an ambiguous case for God's nature and existence (Eccl 7:23-24; 8:16-9:3). Not surprisingly, then, an individual finds himself sometimes believing and sometimes disbelieving in the existence of God. On one hand, as James K. A. Smith writes, "believing doesn't come easy. Faith is fraught; confession is haunted by an inescapable sense of its contestability. We don't believe instead of doubting; we believe *while* doubting."[79] On the other hand, we seem to "live in the twilight of both gods and idols. But their ghosts have refused to depart, and every once in a while we might be surprised to find ourselves tempted by belief, by intimations of transcendence."[80] As Plantinga puts it, "The condition of sin involves *damage* to the *sensus divinitatis,* but not obliteration; it remains partially functional in

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[79]James K. A. Smith, *How (Not) to Be Secular: Reading Charles Taylor* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), 4.

[80]Ibid., 3–4.

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most of us. We therefore typically have some grasp of God's presence and properties and demands, but this knowledge is covered over, impeded, suppressed."[81]

In the doctrine of the *imago Dei*, then, we find a plausible explanation for a puzzle in religious epistemology: why humans seem entrenched in religious beliefs that are neither universal nor consistent. Because we are created in the image of God, we are disposed to form beliefs about God; because we are fallen, these beliefs are false, and may differ from religion to religion, from person to person.

Self-knowledge. The quest for self-knowledge has occupied thinkers since at least the time of the ancient philosophers. In Plato's *Charmides,* Socrates commends self-knowledge as the "very essence of knowledge," agreeing with "him who dedicated the inscription, 'Know thyself!' at Delphi."[82] Tracing the inward quest for the self from Augustine to our modern times, Charles Taylor concludes that "self-exploration" is "central to our culture."[83]

Despite the apparent simplicity of the Delphic oracle, the dictum to "know thyself" is, in the words of Montaigne, "a paradoxical command."[84] How, we might ask, will the one seeking to know himself know when he has known himself, unless he knew from the beginning whom he was seeking to know? But if he knew himself to begin with, then why does he now seek to know himself? For, as Taylor writes, "The assumption behind modern self-exploration is that we don't already know who we are."[85] Some even acknowledge that we are culpable for our self-ignorance. "If most of us remain ignorant

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[81]Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief*, 210.

[82]Plato, *The Dialogues of Plato*, trans. B. Jowett, vol. 1 (New York: Charles Scribner, 1873), 19–20.

[83]Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 178.

[84]Michel de Montaigne, *The Complete Works of Michel de Montaigne*, ed. William Hazlitt (London: Templeman, 1842), 464.

[85]Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, 178.

of ourselves," writes Aldous Huxley, "it is because self-knowledge is painful and we prefer the pleasures of illusion."[86] The editors of the *Great Treasury of Western Thought* acknowledge the conundrum of self-knowledge, observing that, "though it would appear that we have access to the innermost core of our individual being, and there is nothing in the world with which we are on more intimate terms than our own self, the self remains an elusive object of knowledge and understanding."[87]

Clearly, then, the topic of self-knowledge touches many avenues of inquiry.[88] The relevant inquiry, however, is what explains humans' perennial quest for self-knowledge. The doctrine of the *imago Dei* supplies a plausible account, which might proceed something like this: Imagedness means that humans were created for a relationship with God, and thus are relational beings. To be a relational being one must have the capacity for self-knowledge; therefore, humans have the capacity for self-knowledge. Fallen image-bearers, however, hold false beliefs about themselves. This is because they cannot accept that God is holy, and that they are unholy, guilty, or condemned. So, they choose to believe that they are *not* unholy, guilty, or condemned. (Thus, Aldous Huxley is right in observing that "self-knowledge is painful and we prefer the pleasures of illusion.")[89] Moreover, they may hold other false beliefs about themselves besides these: for example, that they are the product of evolutionary forces, or not accountable to a holy God, or the masters of their own fate. Yet, by virtue of their immutably relational nature, they continue to have the capacity for self-knowledge, and this capacity may be what prompts them to seek to know themselves. Therefore, while

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[86]Aldous Huxley, *The Perennial Philosophy* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1946), 185.

[87]Mortimer Adler and Charles Van Doren, eds., *Great Treasury of Western Thought: A Compendium of Important Statements and Comments on Man and His Institutions by Great Thinkers in Western History* (New York: Libraries Unlimited, 1977), 55.

[88]Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, 178.

[89]Huxley, *The Perennial Philosophy*, 185.

humans as image-bearers continue to have a capacity for self-knowledge, and thus seek it, they are unable as fallen image-bearers (apart from divine revelation) to achieve it. Calvin aptly expresses the relationship between knowledge of God and knowledge of self: "it is evident," he writes, "that man never attains to a true self-knowledge until he have previously contemplated the face of God, and come down after such contemplation to look into himself. For (such is our innate pride) we always seem to ourselves just, and upright, and wise, and holy, until we are convinced, by clear evidence, of our injustice, vileness, folly, and impurity."[90] Indeed, as argued above, knowledge of self and knowledge of God are inextricably connected. We can know ourselves if and only if we know God.

The paradoxical quest to know oneself, then, finds a plausible explanation in light of the doctrine of the *imago Dei.* As fallen image-bearers, our knowledge of ourselves, apart from divine intervention, will be distorted due to our alienation from God and duplicity. Even when confronted with the truth that we are sinners, condemned in the sight of a holy and righteous God, our sinfulness guarantees that we will attempt to justify ourselves, which means deceiving ourselves about who we are. Yet as image-bearers, we crave to discover our true nature.

Conclusion

In Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's "The Red-Headed League," the fictional detective Sherlock Holmes suspects that his client's employee has been digging a tunnel to rob the London Bank. Holmes knows that if his hunch is right, he should expect to see the suspect wearing trousers with dirty knees. When Holmes and Watson briefly visit the suspect under the pretense of asking for directions, Watson, who is unaware of Holmes's hunch, tries to discover the purpose of Holmes's inquiry.

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[90]John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. Henry Beveridge (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2008), 5 [*Institutes* 1.1.2].

'Evidently,' said I, 'Mr. Wilson's assistant counts for a good deal in this mystery of the Red-headed League. I am sure that you inquired your way merely in order that you might see him.'
'Not him.'
'What then?'
'The knees of his trousers.'
'And what did you see?'
'What I expected to see.'[91]

In light of his theory, Holmes was not surprised to see the employee's muddy trousers, for it was precisely what he "expected to see." Likewise, in light of the doctrine of the *imago Dei*, paradoxical human behavior is no surprise; rather, it is what we "expect to see." We are not surprised to encounter self-destructive impulses operative in the very endeavor for self-preservation, or egoistic actions masquerading as altruism. Neither are we surprised that humans differ in their conception of the divine, or that they engage in a paradoxical pursuit in which the seeker and the sought are the same. Thus, the doctrine of the *imago Dei,* with its broader explanatory scope, lends more plausibility to Pascal's anthropological argument. This, of course, is not the only way in which the doctrine of the *imago Dei* strengthens the anthropological argument. As argued above, when allied with the *imago Dei* as the background for Christian anthropology, the explanatory stage of the argument gains a new level of detail, thus increasing the connection between the data (human behavior) and hypothesis (Christian anthropology).

Strengthened by the insights of the doctrine of the *imago Dei,* Pascal's reasoning becomes even more compelling: "What else does this craving, and this helplessness, proclaim," Pascal asks, "but that there was once in man a true happiness, of which all that now remains is the empty print and trace? This he tries in vain to fill with everything around him. . . though none can help, since this infinite abyss can be filled only with an infinite and immutable object; in other words by God himself." (L148/S181)

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[91]Arthur Conan Doyle, *The Complete Sherlock Holmes* (New York: Doubleday, 1930), 184.

CHAPTER 6

THE EMBODIED ANTHROPOLOGICAL ARGUMENT

Introduction

Humans behave in bizarre ways and believe absurd things. We love comfort, pleasure, and life, but turn to masochism, asceticism, and suicide. We soar in scientific progress but twist these achievements into self-destructive ends. We believe in gods but cannot agree who they are. We do not even know our own selves. To this paradoxical alloy of intelligence and irrationality, virtue and vice, we give a name—human nature. But it seems anything but natural and defies our efforts to explain it.

Perhaps this enigma presents itself because what we call "human nature" is actually a perversion of what humanity was meant to be.[1] Perhaps, moreover, humanity was created in God's image so that humans would love and obey him, but they have rebelled against him and now express their imagedness in perverted ways.[2] Indeed, this is

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[1]Some refer to human nature as "sinful," meaning that fallen humans inherit corruption and an intractable "disposition to sin," for example Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 496. Similarly, C. S. Lewis, with poetic flourish, writes that "what man lost by the Fall was his original specific nature. . . . [I]t was the emergence," he continues," of a new kind of man—a new species, never made by God, had sinned itself into existence," C. S. Lewis, "The Problem of Pain," in *The Complete C. S. Lewis Signature Classics* (New York: Harper Collins, 2002), 597.While I agree with these statements as descriptions of the human condition, I find it more helpful to use the term "human nature" to refer to essential humanness, which cannot be lost, and of which sin has no part (see Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 2nd ed. [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1998], 737). This distinction of terms is especially important for orthodox Christology, which affirms that Christ is sinless and possesses human nature. If human nature includes sinfulness, then Christ is not sinless. Therefore, it is better to speak of humans' sinfulness in terms that do not suggest that it is constitutive of human nature.

[2]Language of "perversion" with respect to our expression of imagedness resonates with Augustine's statement that "in their perverted way all humanity imitates you. Yet they put themselves at a distance from you and exalt themselves against you. But even by thus imitating you they acknowledge that you are the creator of all nature and so concede that there is no place where one can entirely escape from you," Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. Henry Chadwick (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 32.

the logic of the anthropological argument which, I argue, the doctrine of the *imago Dei* enhances. In the parlance of abductive reasoning, the doctrine of the *imago Dei* is the explanation whereby surprising features of human behavior are rendered unsurprising, or expected.[3] Thus, as argued in chapter 5, in light of the doctrine of the *imago Dei*, we are not surprised that humans behave in ways that are creatively destructive or egoistically "altruistic."[4] Moreover, we do not find it unusual that different religions hold conflicting conceptions of deity, or that people are mystified about their own identity. The more we encounter instances of greatness and wretchedness, the more we incline to accept the doctrine of the *imago Dei* as a plausible explanation for humans' paradoxical beliefs and behavior.

The doctrine of the *imago Dei*, however, leads us to expect another set of beliefs and behavior—those belonging to redeemed people. The redeemed, as noted in chapter 4, are being transformed to manifest proper expressions of imagedness.[5] Because this transformation means likeness to Christ—the only human who perfectly expressed his imagedness, and who is, in fact the divine image of God—the term *Christiformity* denotes the outcome of this transformation.[6] If, then, some people manifest

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[3]Charles Sanders Peirce, "Pragmatism as the Logic of Abduction," in *The Essential Peirce*, vol. 2 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), 231.

[4]Christopher Boehm, *Moral Origins: The Evolution of Virtue, Altruism, and Shame* (New York: Perseus, 2012), 10.

[5]Calvin writes, "We now see how Christ is the most perfect image of God, into which we are so renewed as to bear the image of God in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness," John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. Henry Beveridge (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2008), 108.

[6]For use of the term "Christiformity," see Philip Hughes, *The True Image: The Origin and Destiny of Man in Christ* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), ix. In theological literature, the term "sanctification" often designates this process of Christiformic transformation. Anthony Hoekema defines sanctification as "that gracious operation of the Holy Spirit, involving our responsible participation, by which he delivers us from the pollution of sin, renews our entire nature according to the image of God, and enables us to live lives that are pleasing to him," Anthony A. Hoekema, *Saved by Grace* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 288. He further links sanctification to the doctrine of the *imago Dei* affirming that sanctification is concerned with "the third phase of the history of the image of God, namely, with the renewal of the image. Sanctification means that we are being renewed in accordance with the image of God—that, in other words, we are becoming more like God, or more like Christ, who is the perfect image of God," Ibid., 296. Herman Bavinck refers to sanctification as "the renewal in us of the image of Christ,"

Christiformity, their lives heighten the plausibility that Christian anthropology explains the human condition; for, in light of the doctrine of the *imago Dei*, we expect to find such people. Therefore, if Christiformic lives exist, the doctrine of the *imago Dei* strengthens the anthropological argument.

This chapter investigates what such behavior might look like, whether it exists, and how it strengthens the anthropological argument. First, we must understand Scripture's portrait of humans who are being conformed to the image of Christ. To that end I exegete key Scripture passages which, taken together, form a portrait of Christiformity. Second, we must discover whether there is evidence that some people match this portrait. I have chosen to look for this evidence in the autobiographical writings of three Christian authors—Augustine, C. S. Lewis, and Jonathan Edwards—to see whether their beliefs and behavior match the Scriptural portrait of Christiformity. Third, we must ask how the lives of such people reinforce the anthropological argument. The answer is straightforward: the coherence of the behavior of certain humans with Scripture's portrait of Christiformic image-bearers counts as evidence that Christian anthropology is a plausible explanation for the human condition. Whatever counts as evidence that Christian anthropology is plausible strengthens the anthropological argument. Therefore, as I will show, the lives of Christiformic image-bearers strengthen

Reformed Dogmatics, ed. John Bolt, trans. John Vriend, vol. 3, *Sin and Salvation in Christ* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 570–71, 594. Similarly, Grudem defines sanctification as "a progressive work of God and man that makes us more and more free from sin and like Christ in our actual lives," *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 746. Erickson connects sanctification with the doctrine of the *imago Dei*, explaining that "sanctification is the continuing work of God in the life of the believer, making him or her actually holy. By 'holy' here is meant 'bearing an actual likeness to God,'" Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 980. In like fashion, G. C. Berkouwer writes that "sanctification reveals itself, both in the adoption and in the growing awareness of sonship, as the renewal after the image of God," and that "the imitation of Christ is not merely a form of sanctification, one among several, but a description of its essence," G. C. Berkouwer, *Faith and Sanctification* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1952), 110, 135. Murray speaks of sanctification as a corollary of the doctrine of the *imago Dei*, as God "renews [the redeemed] after his own image. He begins to do this in regeneration and he carries it on in the work of sanctification," John Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1955), 157. For a concise explanation of the line from the *imago Dei* of Genesis 1 and believers' ultimate Christiformity, see Robert Haldane, *Exposition of the Epistle to the Romans*, 5th ed. (New York: Robert Carter, 1847), 407–8. (Contrary to the view argued in chap. 4, however, Haldane takes the view that humanity "lost" the original image in the fall.)

the anthropological argument.[7] They are, so to speak, the *embodied* anthropological argument.[8]

Scripture's Portrait of Christiformic Image-Bearers

How does Scripture portray those who are being conformed to the image of Christ? I answer this in three steps. First, I explain the concepts "Christiformity" and "Christiformic image-bearers." Second, I exegete key passages regarding Christiformity. Third, from this exegesis I distill four themes about the beliefs and behavior of redeemed people—themes which constitute a "portrait" of Christiformic image-bearers.

Explaining the Concepts: Christiformity and Christiformic Image-Bearers

First, Christiformity springs from God's creating (or begetting) each believer as a "new self" in Christ.[9] In his writings, Paul teaches that God creates a sinful human to become a "new self" (or "new creation") and it is this new self that can become Christiformic.[10] For example, in Colossians 3:9-10, Paul describes the "new self"

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[7]I treat the phrase "the lives of Christiformic image-bearers" as synonymous with "the coherence of the behavior of certain humans with Scripture's portrait of Christiformic image-bearers."

[8]In a similar vein, K. J. Vanhoozer maintains that "every Christian represents a crucial premise, and together these premises comprise a socially embodied argument, which is the body of Christ," Kevin J. Vanhoozer, "Theology and Apologetics," in *The New Dictionary of Christian Apologetics* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2006), 43. Similarly, Douglas Blount commends a vision of apologetics that "understands the apologist's task not as providing compelling arguments and convincing evidence but rather as painting a compelling portrait of the faith lived out," Douglas Keith Blount, "Good (and Beautiful) News for Postmodern Apologists," *Caesura* 2.2 (2015): 4.

[9]Berkouwer, *Faith and Sanctification*, 104; Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*, 211.

[10]Hoekema, *Saved by Grace*, 313. Some hold a view of sanctification such that the "new self" and "old self" remain as cobelligerents within a redeemed person. With Hoekema and Murray, I hold that the "person in Christ is no longer an old man or old self, but is a now a new self," Ibid., 315; John Murray, *Principles of Conduct* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957), 211–12. In support of this view, Richard Melick argues that "the old self and new self are never described as coexisting in anyone. One replaces the other. . . . [T]he old self is never a proper description of a believer. A believer is a totally new person," Richard R. Melick, *Philippians, Colossians, Philemon*, The New American Commentary 32 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1999), 295. On the other hand, however, believers do have remnants of their fallenness variously termed "indwelling sin," "flesh," or a "law" whereby their pursuit of Christlikeness is impeded by temptations to sin. Accordingly, Paul exhorts believers, "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to

(ἄνθρωπον) as "being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator."[11] Similarly, in 2 Corinthians 5:17, Paul declares that "if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation." The status of a believer as a "new creation" becomes the grounds upon which Paul urges his readers to behave like Christ. For, after reminding his readers that they were taught to "put on the *new self*, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness" (Eph 4:24), Paul urges them "therefore" to speak truthfully, labor honestly, and behave kindly (Eph 5:25-32). Such Christlike behavior springs from believers' status as "new creatures" in Christ, "new selves" created in God's image.

John uses a more intimate metaphor to convey the same concept: the *new birth*. Those who once were "children of the devil" may be "born again" as sons and daughters of God (1 John 3:10, John 3:7). "But to all who did receive him," John writes, "who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:12-13; see also John 3:5-8, Jas 1:18, 1 John 3:3).[12] As in Paul's writings, a believer's status as God's new creation enables and motivates Christiformic behavior, so in John's writings, the new birth engenders transformed behavior: "No one born of God," John declares, "makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him; and he cannot keep on sinning,

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make you obey its passions" (Rom 12:12), and, "Put to death therefore what is earthly in you" (Col 3:5). In the words of John Owen, "Sin doth so remain, so act and work in the best of believers, whilst they live in this world, that the constant daily mortification of it is all their days incumbent on them," John Owen, *On Temptation and the Mortification of Sin in Believers* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1890), 162–63.

[11]In support of this point, James Dunn explains that when Paul speaks of the "new self," "not simply individual virtues and graces are in view, but . . . a whole new personality and social world and way of life," James D. G. Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*, The New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 221.

[12]If one objects that reference to the new birth carries us far from the doctrine of the *imago Dei*, the connection actually stands quite close at hand: as we saw in chapter 4, the same words ("image" and "likeness") that describe the relationship between humanity and God may also describe the relationship between a son and his father (Gen 5:1-3). Indeed, to be "born of God" carries many of the same implications as being "created in his image." See Mathews, *Genesis 1-11:26*, 1A:169.

because he has been born of God" (1 John 3:9).[13]

Peter likewise uses the language of new birth. "God," he writes, "has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (1 Peter 1:3). Peter sees this new birth as the basis for ethical transformation: "Love one another earnestly from a pure heart," he urges his readers, "since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God" (1 Peter 1:22-23). Whether from Paul, John, or Peter, the message is the same: Christiformity is a quality of a redeemed person's new "self" which God creates, or begets.

Second, Christiformity is inceptive. It begins, so to speak, as an embryo. While believers are *new* creations (2 Cor 5:17), they are "*being* renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator" (Col 3:10).[14] Paul teaches that "we are being transformed into the same image from *one degree of glory to another*" (2 Cor 3:18, emphasis added). Likewise, in Romans 8, Paul views Christiformity as a *future* privilege, for being "conformed to the image of his Son" (8:29) stands parallel to "the revealing of the sons of God," the climactic event for which "the creation waits with eager longing" (Rom 8:19). Similarly, John writes that, though "we are God's children now . . . what we will be has not yet appeared" (1 John 3:2). He goes on to declare that "when [Christ] appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is" (1 John 3:2). To some degree, then, believers are *presently* like him, for they are "God's children now." Yet in another sense,

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[13]This easily misunderstood statement may be clarified as follows. "It is not that he is sinless," Murray explains. Rather, "what John is stressing is surely the fact that the regenerate person cannot commit the sin that is unto death (1 John 5:16), he cannot deny that Jesus is the Son of God and has come in the flesh (1 John 4:1-4), he cannot abandon himself again to iniquity, he keeps himself and the evil one does not touch him. Greater is he who is in the believer than he who is in the world (1 John 4:4)," Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*, 184.

[14]Berkouwer, *Faith and Sanctification*, 93. Regarding the gradual progress of Christiformity, Horton observes that the New Testament "speaks of this setting apart as an ongoing work within believers that renews them inwardly and conforms them gradually to the image of God in Christ," Michael Horton, *The Christian Faith: A Systematic Theology for Pilgrims on the Way* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 1193.

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they are *un*like him because they have not seen him "as he is." Clearly, then, Christiformity, while a present trait of a new creation, is incomplete in this life. It has been conceived, but not delivered.[15]

Third, Christiformity coexists with fallenness. The creation of a "new self" does not eliminate every vestige of sin. Believers are both "fallen" and becoming Christiformic at the same time. Paul confesses that "we have this treasure in earthen vessels;" that is, the transformative power of beholding "the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" takes place in humans who are still weak and vulnerable (2 Cor 4:7, 6). In fact, as Paul indicates in Ephesians 4 and Colossians 3, Christlike actions come as commands, which believers often disobey. The New Testament writers acknowledge that those in whom the image of God is being restored still succumb—consciously and volitionally—to the lures of sin (e.g., 1 Cor 5:1-8).[16]

Tying together these three observations about Christiformity, I suggest this definition of Christiformic image-bearers: they are redeemed people whose newly-created "selves" may become like Christ, but whose Christlikeness is inceptive, and (in

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[15]Some hold the view that believers can achieve a level of perfection or "entire sanctification" in this life. This view, or some variation of it, is commonly associated with followers of the Arminian, Wesleyan or "holiness" traditions. (For an argument that John Wesley did *not* hold this position, see C. T. Winchester, *The Life of John Wesley* [New York: Macmillan, 1906], 191–92). The ardent pursuit of holiness among some adherents of this view (Hudson Taylor, Amy Carmichael, and George Müller, for example) is admirable. On the whole, however, I believe this view fails to accurately reflect the New Testament's teaching on sanctification. For articulations of this view, see Robert Southey, *The Life of Wesley and the Rise and Progress of Methodism*, vol. 2 (New York: Evert Duyckinck, 1820), 80–81; Melvin E. Dieter, "The Wesleyan Perspective," in *Five Views on Sanctification*, ed. Stanley N. Gundry, Counterpoints (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 7–72; J. Robertson McQuilkin, "The Keswick Perspective," in *Five Views on Sanctification*, ed. Stanley N. Gundry, Counterpoints (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 190–251. For negative appraisals of this view, see Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield, *Studies in Perfectionism*, The B.B. Warfield Collection (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1958).Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 748–53; Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 183–86; Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 3, *Sin and Salvation in Christ*, 538–40; Andrew David Naselli, *No Quick Fix: Where Higher Life Theology Came From, What It Is, and Why It's Harmful* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2017); Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*, 186.

[16]To this point, Horton writes, "In spite of the fact that the Corinthian church had become filled with immorality, strife, division, and immaturity, Paul begins both letters to this body by addressing them as 'saints' (holy ones) and reintroduces the wonder of the gospel. Precisely because their status was defined by the gospel's indicatives, the apostle could recall them to repentance as the only legitimate response," Horton, *The Christian Faith*, 1193.

this life) coexists with their fallenness. With this definition in mind, we may view these people as occupying the overlap of two domains: they are both Christiformic image-bearers and fallen image-bearers, new creations yet still possessing the "old self." While I refer to them as "Christiformic image-bearers," it should be kept in mind that they are still *fallen* as well as inceptively Christiformic.

Exegeting the Passages

Having described Christiformity in general terms, it remains for us to investigate how Christiformic people believe and behave. In this section, then, I explain how four passages contribute to the meaning of Christiformity. In the next section, I distill these contributions into four themes that form a portrait of Christiformic image-bearers.

2 Corinthians 3-5. In the context of 2 Corinthians 3, Paul explains why the "ministry of the Spirit" is more glorious than "the ministry of condemnation" under Moses. Although glorious, this Old Covenant was "being brought to an end," pale as a candle before the sun of the New Covenant.[17] For under the New Covenant, "we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another" (2 Cor 3:18).[18] As a result of "beholding the glory of the Lord," believers may be "transformed into the same image." This image refers to

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[17]David E. Garland, *2 Corinthians*, The New American Commentary 29 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1999), 177–78.

[18]Commenting on Paul's mirror imagery, Murray Harris acknowledges that "all 'mirrored' knowledge is of necessity indirect knowledge," but helpfully clarifies that "indirect knowledge is not necessarily imprecise or inaccurate knowledge; a 'mirror image' is indirect but may be perfectly clear. . . The vision of God's glory accorded Christians is indirect, for it is mediated through the gospel, but it is clear, for the Christ who is proclaimed through the gospel is the exact representation (εἰκὼν) of God," Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, The New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 315.

Christ (4:4), whose "face," Paul explains, radiates "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God" (4:6).[19]

Positively, then, Christiformic image-bearers believe and behave differently. They not only hold the belief that God reveals himself in Christ, but also perceive him this way, as the eye perceives light: "God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (4:6). This certainty shapes their outlook: "We do not lose heart," Paul repeatedly affirms (4:1, 15). With respect to their behavior, moreover, they abandon "disgraceful, underhanded ways," and "refuse to practice cunning or to tamper with God's word" (4:2).[20] Instead, they, "by the open statement of the truth, . . . commend [them]selves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God" (4:2). Christiformic image-bearers manifest "the life of Jesus" in concrete, bodily ways (4:10). Further, these transformed beliefs and behavior are continually being renewed: "our inner self," writes Paul, "is being renewed day by day" (4:16).[21]

But tension protrudes into this transformation. As glorious as it is to "behold the glory of the Lord" (2 Cor 3:18), Paul admits that "we have this treasure [i.e., the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ] in jars of clay" (4:7).[22] In other words, their brittle frame is incommensurate with the brilliant glory believers possess in

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[19]Christiformity does not remove the paradoxes of the human condition but invites a new kind of paradox into the believers' life. "In beholding the true glory of the Lord," explains David Garland, "our minds become transformed (Rom 12:2) so that we are not conformed to this world and its perceptions and values but conformed to Christ and the paradoxical pattern of his suffering and resurrection," Garland, *2 Corinthians*, 200–201.

[20]Ibid., 204–5.

[21]Harris explains that, for Paul, "'the outer person,' the whole person as a mortal creature, is being worn down (4:16b), not transformed." However, "when Christians are transformed, the change is essentially inward, the renewing of the mind (Rom. 12:2), and becomes visible only in their Christ-like behavior," Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 316.

[22]While Paul could have meant "treasure" to refer to his apostolic ministry, it is more likely, as Garland argues, that by "treasure" Paul refers to "the light revealed by the gospel," Garland, *2 Corinthians*, 220.

Christ, resulting in the paradoxical experiences Paul goes on to describe: "afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies" (4:8-10).[23] Even the "day by day" renewal of the "inner self" stands in contrast to the reality that "our outer self is wasting away" (4:16).[24]

On balance, however, Christiformic image-bearers make progress in joy and confidence, not despair and doubt.[25] While sometimes perplexed and suffering, they perceive "this momentary light affliction" as incomparable to "an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison (2 Cor 4:17).

In summary, 2 Corinthians 3-5 teaches that Christiformic image-bearers make gradual but glorious progress in Christlikeness (3:18). They perceive God as revealed in Christ and embrace new ethical standards (4:1-6). Yet they still feel the sting of life's cruelties. In some ways, they feel it more acutely (4:7-12), for they "groan" until "what is mortal may be swallowed up by life" (5:4). Still, Christiformic image bearers rejoice more than they despair, for they see that incomparable glory awaits them.

Romans 8. Whereas 2 Corinthians 3-5 presents the believer's transformation into the image of Christ as a fact of their experience, Romans 8 portrays Christiformity in its ultimate, future sense, as the final fulfillment of God's decree for believers. "For those

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[23]Lenski's exclamation regarding this statement is apt: "Such poor vessels holding so vast a treasure! Such superlative power using such fragile vessels!" R. C. H. Lenski, *Interpretation of I and II Corinthians* (Columbus, OH: Wartburg, 1946), 976.

[24]Barnett notes that Paul "does not minimize the dark realities of the present life. Those who are still 'in the body' are not yet 'at home with the Lord,'" Paul Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 45.

[25]This is the tenor of Paul's mindset: "we are very bold" (3:12), "there is freedom" (3:17), "we do not lose heart" (4:1) "we have this treasure" (4:7), "we have the same spirit of faith" (4:13), "so we do not lose heart" (4:16), "so we are always of good courage" (5:6), "yes, we are of good courage" (5:8). See Lenski, *Interpretation of I and II Corinthians*, 1010.

whom he foreknew," Paul writes, "he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers" (Rom 8:29).[26] As a future, climactic event, believers' ultimate Christiformity is described in several ways: "the revealing of the sons of God" (8:19), their "adoption as sons," "the redemption of our bodies" (8:23), and their conformity "to the image of his son" (8:29).[27]

Moreover, Paul discloses God's purpose for Christiformity: "that [Christ] might be the firstborn among many brethren" (8:29). This is not to put believers on par with Christ, as siblings of equal rank.[28] As God, Christ is ontologically distinct from mere human beings (Col 1:15-17, Heb 1:6, Rev 1:5). Rather, Paul designates Christ as the "firstborn among many brothers" to emphasize the final triumph of his redemptive work. Since humans had rebelled against God, corrupting themselves and thus their ability to function as God's sons and daughters, image-bearers, and vice-regents, Christ came to make vicarious atonement for their sin and provide them with his righteousness—i.e., his flawless keeping of God's requirements which every other human had failed to do.[29] Although Christ's role in redemption is now complete, the Spirit's work of sanctification is still ongoing, for saints are still sinners. When, however, God accomplishes his final decree for believers, and they stand not only justified but also sanctified and glorified, then their moral kinship to Christ, their "common mark of brotherhood," will be displayed: a vast throng of "many" brothers and sisters, who, like Jesus, "always do the things that are pleasing to [God]" (John 8:29).[30]

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[26]See Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 453.

[27]Berkouwer, *Faith and Sanctification*, 110.

[28]John Calvin, Calvin's New Testament Commentaries, ed. David W. Torrance and Thomas F. Torrance, trans. Ross Mackenzie, vol. 8, *The Epistles of Paul to the Romans and Thessalonians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1973), 181.

[29]John Gill, *An Exposition of the Epistle of Paul to the Romans*, The Newport Commentary Series (Springfield, MO: Particular Baptist Press, 2002), 288–90.

[30]Calvin, Calvin's New Testament Commentaries, 8, *The Epistles of Paul to the Romans and*

But that event is yet to come. How, then, can Christiformic image-bearers find the confidence *now* that their Christiformity will be complete? The Holy Spirit, Paul teaches, works to assure believers of their *present* status as children of God and, by inference, of their *ultimate* conformity to the image of Christ: "You have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry 'Abba! Father!' The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs" (Rom 8:15-17).[31]

Yet this promise of the Spirit echoes into the hearts of saints who are also sinners inhabiting a fallen world. Therefore, the tension we observed in 2 Corinthians 3-5 imposes itself here as well. While believers can enjoy the assurance of the Holy Spirit, which is sufficient to "help us in our weakness," this assurance does not eliminate their need to "hope for what we do not see," and "wait for it with patience" (Rom 8:25). It does not exempt them from "the sufferings of this present time" (8:18). In fact, in view of their future "adoption as sons," both believers and the personified cosmos wait "with eager longing" (8:19), "groan inwardly," and "wait eagerly" (8:23).[32] This "inward groaning" arises from two opposing sources: their Spirit-induced longing for complete

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Thessalonians, 181. Consonant with this description of glorification, Murray describes it as "the complete and final redemption of the whole person when in the integrity of body and spirit the people of God will be conformed to the image of the risen, exalted, and glorified Redeemer, when the very body of their humiliation will be conformed to the body of Christ's glory," Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*, 226. See also John Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans*, vol. 1, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968), 319.

[31]For a discussions of the Spirit's role in assuring believers, see Thomas R. Schreiner, *The King in His Beauty: A Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 556–57; F. F. Bruce, *Romans: An Introduction and Commentary*, 2nd ed., Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985), 156–58.

[32]Intersecting with the theme of fallen humans' failure to exercise proper dominion over the cosmos, F. F. Bruce writes, "Even now man, who by selfish exploitation can turn the good earth into a dust bowl, can by responsible stewardship make the dessert blossom like the rose; what then will be the effect of a completely redeemed humanity on the creation entrusted to its care?" Bruce, *Romans*, 160–61. For Calvin, the "groaning" of the creation highlights the value of the believers' intended state: "There is no element and no part of the world," he writes, "which, touched with the knowledge of its present misery, is not intent on the hope of the resurrection. . . . From this too we see how immense is the price of eternal glory, which can excite and draw all things to desire it," Calvin, *The Epistles of Paul to the Romans and Thessalonians*,172.

Christiformity, and the fact that it is yet to come. This tension unbelievers do not feel. They hear no witness of the Spirit telling them they are sons and daughters of God. Therefore, they feel no yearning for complete Christiformity. The "groaning" for Christlikeness pours only from the lips of believers—tenants of the overlapping domain between fallenness and complete Christiformity.

On the whole, however, this aching desire does not overshadow believers' confident assurance. They "always struggle and yet emerge."[33] The Spirit remains as an ever-present witness to their glorious destiny (8:23).[34] Therefore, they can be confident that life's discordant notes will resolve into the anthem of God's loving purposes (8:28).[35] Further, God has etched the Christiformity of every believer in the granite of his foreknowledge: "For those whom he foreknew," Paul writes, "he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son" (8:29). The close of this chapter, in fact, swells with Paul's confidence that the bond of God's love for his children can never be broken: "I am sure," Paul declares, "that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (8:38-39).

Ephesians 4 and Colossians 3. While 2 Corinthians 3-5 presents Christiformity as the progressive experience of believers, and Romans 8 as the *telos* of God's decree, Ephesians 4 and Colossians 3 depict Christiformity as believers' ethical

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[33]Calvin, Calvin's New Testament Commentaries, 8, *The Epistles of Paul to the Romans and Thessalonians*, 188.

[34]Bruce, *Romans*, 161–62.

[35]"Why does the believer," Murray asks, "entertain the thought of God's determinant counsel with such joy? Why can he have patience in the perplexities and adversities of the present? Why can he have confident assurance with reference to the future and rejoice in hope of the glory of God? It is because he cannot think of past, present, or future apart from union with Christ," Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*, 213.

responsibility—beliefs and behavior they must adopt.[36] In both epistles, the topic of Christiformity appears in the hortatory section, the part of the letter in which Paul urges his readers to live out the implications of the doctrine expounded earlier.[37]

In Ephesians 4, Paul highlights Christiformity against the gloom of their "former manner of life" (4:22) which is characterized by futile thinking, darkened understanding, alienation from the life of God, ignorance, hardness of heart, moral callousness, abandonment to sensuality, and greed for impure practices. The contrast comes in 4:20: "But that is not the way you learned Christ!" Paul exclaims,

> assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness." (Eph 4:20-24)

As a result of their "new selves," believers strive for a radically new ethical standard—a standard which involves different beliefs (the noetic/epistemic aspect) and behavior.[38] In their "former" lives, they had walked "in the futility of their minds*"* (4:17), wallowed in "deceitful desires" (4:24), and were "alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart" (4:18). Now, however, they have a new capacity for grasping truth. Believers have "*learned* Christ," and been

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[36] Gerald Bray passes over Eph 4 in his entry on the doctrine of the *imago Dei*, stating that "only one" occurrence of the word "image" (1 Cor 11:7) "is undoubtedly connected with the Genesis doctrine," in "Image of God," ed. T. Desmond Alexander and Brian S. Rosner, *The New Dictionary of Biblical Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000), 576. The evidence, however, suggests otherwise. Paul is evidently linking "the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness" with Genesis 1:26-27, which teaches that humanity was created in God's image and likeness. Although the translators have supplied the word "likeness" in Eph 4:24, this addition is entirely appropriate in the context, especially in light of its sister passage, Col 3:10: "the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image [εἰκόνα] of its creator." Thus, Herald Hoehner agrees with those who "have translated the present prepositional phrase 'after the likeness of God' or something similar" in *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), 611.

[37] Francis Foulkes, *Ephesians*, 2nd ed., Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 136.

[38] Frank Thielman explains the admonitions of 4:25-32 as "practical applications of what it means to live as a new creature, made in God's image, and no longer under the sway of the old human being," Frank Thielman, *Ephesians*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010), 309.

taught in him as the *truth* is in Jesus (4:20, emphasis added). So, Paul urges, they must be "renewed in the spirit of [their] *minds*" (4:23, emphasis added), put "away *falsehood*," and "speak the *truth* with" each other (4:25, emphasis added). Indeed, the very existence of the "new self" as created "in righteousness and holiness" springs from *truth*. By rendering τῆς ἀληθείας as a simple modifier of "righteousness and holiness," some translations fail to make this evident. Hoehner, however, rightly brings out the force of "truth" by rendering this phrase "in righteousness and holiness that comes from truth," and this makes sense in the context.[39] "The new person," Hoehner explains, "has been identified as one who is characterized by a righteousness that has its source in truth. The new person is directly opposite of the old person whose desires and lifestyle have their source in deception."[40] These noetic implications of Christiformity are borne out in Colossians as well, for Paul identifies the "new self" as "being renewed in *knowledge* after the image of its creator" (Col 3:10, emphasis added).[41] Further, in Colossians, this "new self" stands in contrast with "the old self" and "its practices" one of which is the habit of deceit (Col 3:9).

Clearly, then, the "old self" is marked by noetic and epistemic dysfunction, while the "new self" is characterized by noetic and epistemic renewal. The nature of epistemic dysfunction of the "old self" is evidently in its failure to know God, for, as Paul writes, unbelievers are "alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them" (4:18). By implication, then, unbelievers are also deceived about themselves, for (as argued earlier) no one can know oneself who does not know God. These epistemic

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[39]Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 611.

[40]Ibid., 613.

[41]Commenting on Col 3:10, James Dunn highlights the importance of the noetic aspect of renewal. "Knowledge," he writes, "was at the heart of humanity's primal failure (Gen. 2:17; 3:5, 7), and humankind's failure to act in accordance with their knowledge of God by acknowledging him in worship was the central element of Paul's earlier analysis of the human plight, of 'the old self' (Rom. 1:21). Renewal in knowledge of God, of the relation implied by that knowledge . . . was therefore of first importance for Paul," Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 222.

and cognitive implications of Christiformity in this passage cohere with what Paul teaches in 2 Corinthians 4 and Romans 1. Whereas the "minds" of fallen image-bearers have been "blinded," and form beliefs about God and themselves based on their self-deception (Rom 1:21-23), Christiformic image-bearers hold *true* beliefs about God and themselves because they behold God in Christ. Duplicity must be replaced by a new grasp of truth, for believers have a restored epistemic capacity.

This new ethical standard means not only transformed beliefs, but also transformed behavior. The specific behaviors may be organized under the heads of "righteousness" and "holiness," respectively, for these two qualities characterize the "new self." This is evident in that the commands pertain to believers' right relationships with each other ("righteousness") and with God ("holiness"). As "new selves," possessing "righteousness" believers must "speak the truth" (Eph 4:25), "be angry and . . . not sin" (4:26), "no longer steal" (4:28), speak "only such as is good for building up" (4:29), and "be kind to one another" (4:32). As "new selves" possessing "holiness," they are to "grieve not the Holy Spirit of God" (4:30), "be imitators of God" (5:1), "walk as children of light" (5:8), and "take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness" (5:11).

Colossians and Ephesians thus contribute to our portrait of Christiformic believers by emphasizing the ethical implications of Christiformity. In contrast to the unregenerate, whose blinded minds and hardened wills bar them from knowing and obeying God, redeemed people grasp the truth about God (and, by inference, about themselves), and thus are expected to fulfill the ethical implications of their "new selves." Yet these exhortations imply that Christiformic image-bearers may, at times, fail to think and behave in Christlike ways.[42] They might believe or report falsehoods, or choose to

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[42]Another way to put this is that "renewal in the image of God . . . is not just an indicative; it is also an imperative" (Hoekema, *Saved by Grace*, 298), or that "the indicative (definitive sanctification) leads to the imperatives (progressive sanctification)," Horton, *The Christian Faith*, 1195.

act unethically. In other words, for fallen, redeemed image-bearers, Christiformity depends on the exercise of their wills, and thus is not guaranteed to be consistent.

Summary. Each of these three passages contributes to an understanding of redeemed persons with respect to their Christiformity. 2 Corinthians 4 stresses the progressive experience of believers' conformity to Christ and contrasts the glory of Christiformity with the degeneration of all things fallen—including Satanically-blinded unbelievers, the suffering of this present life, and even the fragility and finitude of believers' bodies. In Romans 8, Christiformity is viewed as the *telos* of God's decree, but it does not ignore the "here and now." Even while the Spirit assures believers that they are God's children, they still "groan" as they await the ultimate consummation of their Christiformity. Finally, Ephesians and Colossians stress the ethical implications of Christiformity. The "new self" of a believer is created "in righteousness and holiness that comes from truth," and ethical behavior must follow.[43] The hortatory mood, however, tells that this behavior depends on the obedient response of the individual believer.

Unveiling the Portrait

From the preceding exegeses, I suggest four common themes that form a portrait of Christiformic image-bearers. First, these passages shed light on their *beliefs*.[44] Whereas prior to regeneration, they were deluded about God and themselves, now in Christ they see God and themselves without resorting to self-deception (2 Cor 4:3-6).[45] Instead of denying God's existence or holding other false beliefs about God, they

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[43]Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary*, 611.

[44]As Phil 2:5-11 suggests, believers' noetic transformation to Christiformity involves more than just reforming their beliefs; it is, in a fuller sense, a change in attitude or mindset. "Paul teaches the imitation of Christ," Hoekema explains, "in the well-known 'mind of Christ' passage" in which he "urges his readers to 'have this mind among yourselves, which you have in Christ Jesus (v. 5, RSV). He goes on to describe this mind of Christ as an attitude of humble service like that exemplified by Jesus when he was on earth," Hoekema, *Saved by Grace*, 299.

[45]Garland, *2 Corinthians*, 212.

recognize that God is holy and righteous, that he calls them to account for their actions (Eph 5:1). While they appropriately fear him, they respond to holiness and righteousness with delight, not disgust (2 Cor 4:6). Further, they accurately see their pre-conversion selves as they were: deluded, rebellious, and hopeless (Eph 4:17-22); at the same time, they humbly regard themselves as they truly are now: children of God whose destiny it is to enjoy the glory of Christlikeness (Rom 8:17-39). The Holy Spirit is the divine agent of this assurance, testifying to them that they are truly children of God (Rom 8:14-17).

Second, these passages illuminate their *behavior*. As a result of their transformed beliefs, Christiformic image-bearers behave in ways that cohere with the truth about God and themselves (Eph 4:21). They rightly loathe the behavior of their fallen past and want to avoid it.[46] They abandon "underhanded ways" (2 Cor 4:2). Their words and attitude now radiate a spirit of truth and openness instead of deceit and guile (Eph 4:25, Col 3:9-10). The "life of Jesus is manifest in [their] mortal flesh" (2 Cor 4:11). In other words, their behavior is characterized by "righteousness and holiness that comes from truth" (Eph 4:24).[47] Their transformed behavior springs from their love for God and others (Eph 5:1-2).

The third and fourth themes qualify these first two. Third, these passages suggest that Christiformic image-bearers feel the tension between their fallenness and Christiformity, and this tension appears in both their beliefs and their behavior.[48] With

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[46]Hoekema, *Saved by Grace*, 312.

[47]Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary*, 611.

[48]Hoekema, *Saved by Grace*, 310. I have argued that human fallenness and imagedness conspire to render our condition paradoxical. But these paradoxes do not resolve themselves automatically for believers. In fact, the Christian life invites a new set of paradoxes. As Michael Horton explains, "Paradoxically, it is this very liberation that issues in constant struggle, since on the one hand we belong to the new creation—'the age to come'—with Christ as our firstfruits and the Spirit as the pledge, yet on the other we still live in 'this present evil age,'" Horton, *The Christian Faith*, 1197. From an eschatological perspective, this tension may be seen as arising from the "already/not-yet" nature of sanctification. "An underrealized eschatology loses the agonizing paradox of the *simul iustus* (just) as well as *peccator* (sinner)," Ibid., 1202.

respect to their beliefs, they know God as he truly is, but they are susceptible to doubt and self-deceit.[49] They progress in Christlikeness, but this does not mean that they will never believe a lie about God, be self-deceived about themselves, or wonder whether they are truly loved as God's children. With respect to their behavior, they are being transformed into the glorious image of Christ, but this transformation is taking place in "jars of clay" (2 Cor 4:7). Their Christlikeness is genuine, but it is only inceptive (2 Cor 3:18; 4:16). Their trajectory toward complete Christiformity is not necessarily a straight line; in fact, it almost certainly will not be.[50] For their Christiformity does not, in this life, exclude their fallenness.[51] A Christiformic image-bearer might even engage in "unfruitful works of darkness," steal, lie, hold grudges, and commit other deeds that conflict with his or her true identity as a "new self" created in the likeness of God. At the same time, their sinful actions or wavering faith vex Christiformic image-bearers in a way unbelievers cannot feel (Rom 8:23; 2 Cor 4:3-6).[52] In the words of Murray, "if there is still sin to any degree in one who is indwelt by the Holy Spirit, then there is tension, yes, contradiction, within the heart of that person. Indeed, the more sanctified the person is, the more conformed he is to the image of his Savior, the more he must recoil against every lack of

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[49]"It is true," writes Robert Haldane, "that all Christians have not alike clear and firm apprehension of their happy and true state, and scarce any of them are alike at all times; yet they have all and always the same right to this state, and to the comfort of it; and where they stand in a right light to view it, they do see it so, and rejoice in it," Haldane, *Romans*, 443.

[50]Grudem depicts "the progress of sanctification as a jagged line" to indicate that "the growth in sanctification is not always one-directional in this life, but that progress in sanctification occurs at some times, while at other times we realize that we are regressing somewhat," Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 750.

[51]"The believer," writes John Murray, "is not yet so conformed to the image of Christ that he is holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners," Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*, 143.

[52]Robert Haldane describes this as "a holy sadness for having offended God," Haldane, *Romans*, 440.

conformity to the holiness of God."[53] Having begun to be transformed into the image of Christ, then, believers are troubled by their lack of Christlikeness.

Fourth, although the trajectory from regeneration to consummated Christiformity may not be a straight line, on the whole, the *tenor* of believers' lives is marked by increasing certainty and virtue, not doubt and vice (Rom 8:31-39; 2 Cor 4:16-18).

Evidence for Christiformic Image-Bearers: The Embodied Anthropological Argument

Having observed a portrait of Christiformic image-bearers, we turn to the second line of inquiry: is there evidence for such persons? Are there people who speak of a radically new epistemic capacity whereby they not only see but delight in God? Does this new knowledge of God prompt a new understanding of themselves? Do they chart a new ethical course? As image-bearers who are still fallen, however, do they lapse into doubt and sin? Does their sin, however, vex them ever more severely because of their new knowledge of God? On the whole, moreover, are their lives marked by a progress toward Christlikeness and a longing for the completion of their Christiformity?

Augustine

Our portrait of Christiformic image-bearers included an epistemic aspect: Christiformic image-bearers have come to know God (and, by implication, themselves) in a completely new way. Therefore, we are not surprised to encounter Augustine's record of a new awareness of God: "When I first came to know you, you raised me up to make me see that what I saw is Being, and that I who saw am not yet Being. And you gave a shock to the weakness of my sight by the strong radiance of your rays, and I trembled with love and awe."[54]

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[53]Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*, 187.

[54]Augustine, *Confessions*, 123.

To highlight the "newness" of this knowledge of God, it is helpful to contrast it with what he writes about his preconversion thoughts about God and himself: Augustine admits that he was culpably self-deceived about God's true nature. This too is what we expect, for earlier (as I argue) the deceitful sinfulness of fallen image-bearers guarantees that they will hold false beliefs about God and themselves. In general, he recalls that his mind was "so long in ignorance," and that he "loved vanity and sought after a lie."[55] In vain, he struggled to resist the notion that God had a body: "My heart," he admits, "vehemently protested against all the physical images in my mind, and by this single blow I attempted to expel from my mind's eye the swarm of unpurified notions flying about there. Hardly had they been dispersed when in the flash of an eye . . . they had regrouped and were back again."[56] Before his conversion, he imagined God occupying space like sunlight, but after his conversion, he realizes that this was false, "for," he writes, "I was incapable of thinking otherwise; but it was false. . . . You had not yet 'lightened my darkness.'"[57]

Augustine's wrong beliefs about God did not arise from innocent lack of information, but culpable ignorance springing from pride: "My swelling conceit," he admits, "separated me from you, and the gross swelling on my face closed my eyes."[58] Even when Augustine's beliefs about God were propositionally true, his affections rebelled. The honey was, so to speak, bitter. Instead of charming him, God's holiness and righteous demands were revolting, for he could not accept God as more valuable than his sexual delights. "Now I had discovered the good pearl," Augustine recalls. Yet—"to buy

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[55]Augustine, *Confessions*, 161.

[56]Ibid., 111.

[57]Ibid., 112.

[58]Ibid., 120.

it I had to sell all that I had; and I hesitated."[59] As argued earlier, knowledge of self and

knowledge of God go hand-in-hand. It is unsurprising, therefore, to discover Augustine's

admitting that his preconversion beliefs about himself were also false. "My heart had

become gross," he laments, "and I had no clear vision even of my own self."[60] Looking

back on his self-beliefs prior to conversion, Augustine was able to recognize that his

duplicity sprang from his "lust for self-justification."[61]

In contrast with the duplicity of his pre-conversion beliefs about God and

himself, Augustine's beliefs about God after his conversion are marked by truth and

certainty. As Paul declares that "God has shone in our hearts to give the light of the

knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor 4:6) so Augustine came

to know God with the certainty we expect in a Christiformic image-bearer. "At once,"

Augustine writes, describing the moment of his conversion, "with the last words of this

sentence [Rom 13:13-14], it was as if a light of relief from all anxiety flooded into my

heart. All the shadows of doubt were dispelled."[62] The content of Augustine's beliefs

about God diffuse the atmosphere of the Confessions, evident from the beginning by his

quotations from two psalms: "You are great, Lord, and highly to be praised," and "great

is your power and your wisdom is immeasurable."[63] Later, his confession of God's nature

rings with truth and certainty:

> Who then are you, my God? What, I ask, but God who is Lord? . . . Most high,
> utterly good, utterly powerful, most omnipotent, most merciful and most just,
> deeply hidden yet most intimately present, perfection of both beauty and strength,
> stable and incomprehensible, immutable and yet changing all things, never new,
> never old, making everything new and 'leading' the proud 'to be old without their
> knowledge' . . . always supporting and filling and protecting, creating and nurturing

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[59]Augustine, *Confessions*, 134.

[60]Ibid., 112.

[61]Ibid., 213.

[62]Ibid., 153.

[63]Ibid., 3.

and bringing to maturity, searching even though to you nothing is lacking: you love without burning, you are jealous in a way that is free of anxiety, you 'repent' (Gen. 6:6) without pain of regret, you are wrathful and remain tranquil.[64]

Thus, as Christiformic image-bearers see God only "in the face of Jesus Christ," (2 Cor 4:6), so Augustine evinces this same grasp of God. He insists that this knowledge did not spring from himself, for "my faith," he declares, "is your gift to me. You breathed it into me by the humanity of your Son."[65]

Whereas Augustine's preconversion sinful passions produced dysfunction of mind—to be repulsed by God's holiness instead of embracing it—now Augustine records that "what I once feared to lose was now a delight to dismiss. You turned them out and entered to take their place, pleasanter than any pleasure."[66] Therefore, he was now able to declare, "My love for you, Lord, is not an uncertain feeling but a matter of conscious certainty. With your word you pierced my heart, and I loved you."[67] Indeed, it is difficult to untangle Augustine's knowledge of God from his affections for God: "I listened, Lord, my God; I sucked a drop of sweetness from your truth, and I understood."[68] This is, in fact, what we would expect from a Christiformic image-bearer. For a proper knowledge of God is not merely a matter of holding the right propositions, for one might still hold these, but be unmoved, or repulsed. As we learned, nothing less than a "new self" is necessary to be "renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator" (Col 3:10).

A Christiformic image-bearer knows God with a certainty comparable to visual sight. Therefore, we are not surprised that, for Augustine, knowing God occupies the full range of sensations, "Late have I loved you, beauty so old and so new. . . . You called and cried out loud and shattered my deafness. You were radiant and resplendent, you put to

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[64]Augustine, *Confessions*, 5.

[65]Ibid., 3.

[66]Ibid., 155.

[67]Ibid., 183.

[68]Ibid., 300.

flight my blindness. You were fragrant, and I drew in my breath and now pant after you. I tasted you, and I feel but hunger and thirst for you."[69] Still more sensory imagery is evident when he writes,

> Yet there is a light I love, and a food, and a kind of embrace of my inner man, where my soul is floodlit by light which space cannot contain, where there is sound that time cannot seize, where there is a perfume which no breeze disperses, where there is a taste for food no amount of eating can lessen, and where there is a bond of union that no satiety can part. That is what I love when I love my God."[70]

Knowledge of God and knowledge of self go hand-in-hand. Naturally, then, having gained a true understanding of God, Augustine's beliefs about himself began to be restored as well. "What I know of myself," Augustine writes, "I know because you grant me light, and what I do not know of myself, I do not know until such time as my darkness becomes 'like noonday' before your face."[71] In light of this knowledge of God he does not seek to hide his feelings of shame: "You are radiant and give delight," he exults, "and are so an object of love and longing that I am ashamed of myself and reject myself."[72] Further, he regards himself with the humility appropriate to one who truly knows God: "Although in your sight I despise myself and estimate myself to be dust and ashes."[73] When reading the psalms, he exclaims that he "cried . . . utterances of devotion which allow no pride of spirit to enter in."[74]

Although Augustine's new-found knowledge of God results in rejecting and being "ashamed" of himself, his attitude is not one of despair, but of "delight."[75] Reverence for God was mingled with joy in God: "I trembled with fear and at the same

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[69]Augustine, *Confessions*, 201.

[70]Ibid., 183.

[71]Ibid.

[72]Ibid., 179.

[73]Ibid., 182.

[74]Ibid., 160.

[75]Ibid., 179.

time burned with hope and exultation at your mercy, Father."[76] This renewed self-knowledge, insists Augustine, comes only through Christ. For, although before his conversion he "prattled on [about God] as if I were expert," he came to realize that "unless I had sought your way in Christ our Saviour (Titus 1:4), I would have been not expert but expunged."[77]

Augustine not only holds renewed beliefs but also exhibits renewed behavior. "The effect of converting me to yourself," he writes, "was that I did not now seek a wife and had no ambition for success in this world."[78] Worldly pride and sexual fulfillment had long been Augustine's shackles; now, contrary to his fallen nature, he felt these chains slip away and took immediate action. Convinced that he, as a teacher of rhetoric, was supplying his students with "weapons for their madness," he resigned after the term was completed.[79]

But Christiformity comes neither quickly nor, in this life, completely. Accordingly, although Augustine's conversion marked a change in his behavior, he still succumbed to various sins. He candidly admits that "occasionally gluttony creeps up on your servant"[80] and that "I struggle every day against uncontrolled desire in eating and drinking."[81] The pendulum would swing the opposite direction, and he would become excessively scrupulous: "Sometimes, however, by taking excessive safeguards against being led astray, I err on the side of too much severity."[82] He also struggled with a feeling

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[76]Augustine, *Confessions*, 160.

[77]Ibid., 130.

[78]Ibid., 153–54.

[79]Ibid., 156.

[80]Ibid., 205.

[81]Ibid., 207.

[82]Ibid., 208.

of superiority that appeared both "in the love of praise," and in the contempt of it.[83] "This [feeling of superiority] is a temptation to me even," Augustine explains, "when I reject it, because of the very fact that I am rejecting it. Often the contempt of vainglory becomes a source of even more vainglory. For it is not being scorned when the contempt is something one is proud of."[84] Moreover, Augustine confessed his ongoing struggle with erotic desire. Referring to sexual lust, Augustine writes, "I have now declared to my good Lord," he acknowledges, "what is still my present condition in respect of this kind of evil."[85]

Overall, however, the tenor of Augustine's life is toward Christiformity. Reflecting on the early stages of his Christian growth, he writes, "I was but a beginner in authentic love of you."[86] Even in his failures to consistently demonstrate Christlikeness, he was certain that "You never abandon what you have begun," and prayed, "Make perfect my imperfections."[87] Moreover, Augustine's confession that "my groaning is witness that I am displeased with myself" may be seen as the "groaning" a Christiformic image-bearer who, in chorus with the cosmos, "groan[s] inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons," i.e., complete Christiformity (Rom 8:23).

In summary, we see in Augustine's experience what we expect to see in a Christiformic image-bearer—a person who gains a new and certain grasp of God through Christ, and who begins the process of ethical transformation. His knowledge of God bursts into his consciousness with certainty comparable to seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, and tasting. The sense of taste, in fact, aptly parallels his delight in God's

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[83]Augustine, *Confessions*, 217.

[84]Ibid., 217.

[85]Ibid., 204.

[86]Ibid., 160.

[87]Ibid., 181.

holiness, which prior to his conversion he had found distasteful. His former self-deception was replaced by a humble and joyful response to God's holy and righteous character. Moreover, his behavior was transformed. He not only abandoned his preoccupation with sexual pleasures, but also resigned his teaching post, which he believed was leading to unethical behavior. At the same time, however, we expect that this transformation is only inceptive and not necessarily consistent. Accordingly, Augustine admits to post-conversion lapses into gluttony, excessive scrupulosity, pride, and lust. Although he does not mention lapses in belief, this absence does not undermine the overall coherence of his post-conversion experience with the portrait of Christiformity. It is even possible to see such epistemic lapses as embedded in his behavioral lapses—succumbing to lust, for example, because he temporarily failed to believe that God is better than sexual pleasure. If, then, we accept the *Confessions* as accurately reporting his thoughts and behavior, Augustine's life instantiates Scripture's portrait of a Christiformic image-bearer.

C. S. Lewis

In the life of C. S. Lewis as well, we see the features of a Christiformic image-bearer. Lewis records how, prior to conversion, his Christian worldview was disintegrated with the help of "Miss C.," the matron of the preparatory school he attended when he was thirteen: "Little by little, unconsciously, unintentionally," Lewis writes, "she loosened the whole framework, blunted all the sharp edges, of my belief."[88] In reading about the pagan religions, Lewis developed the suspicion that "religion in general" was "a kind of endemic nonsense into which humanity tended to blunder."[89] He was moreover impressed by Lucretius' argument for atheism, that "had God designed the

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[88]C. S. Lewis, *Surprised by Joy* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1955), 57.

[89]Ibid., 60.

world, it would not be / A world so frail and faulty as we see."[90] He would argue that the universe does not disclose a deity of the kind that Christianity describes. "If you ask me to believe that this is the work of a benevolent and omnipotent spirit," he recalls, "I reply that all the evidence points in the opposite direction."[91] His first published work, *Spirits of Bondage*, advances the theme "that nature is malevolent and that any God that exists is outside the cosmic system."[92] For Lewis, belief in God belonged in the same package with other absurd ideas ("'Why—damn it—it's *medieval*,' I exclaimed").[93] Yet Lewis was no mere victim in the disintegration of his faith. Like Augustine, he came to realize that he was complicit. "I was already desperately anxious to get rid of my religion," Lewis remembers.[94] Moreover, regarding his unbelief during his later Oxford years, he writes, "I suspect there was some sort of willful blindness."[95]

In retrospect, however, Lewis sees that he was living "in a whirl of contradictions."[96] Although he "maintained that God did not exist," he "was also very angry with God for not existing."[97] At the heart of this disbelief, Lewis recognizes, was rebellion. "What mattered most of all," he recalls, "was my deep-seated hatred of authority, my monstrous individualism, my lawlessness. No word in my vocabulary expressed deeper hatred than the word *Interference*. But Christianity placed at the center what then seemed to me a transcendental Interferer."[98] In a personal letter, his biographer

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[90]Lewis, *Surprised by Joy*, 62.

[91]Lewis, "The Problem of Pain," 552.

[92]George Sayer, *Jack: A Life of C. S. Lewis* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1988), 156.

[93]Lewis, *Surprised by Joy*, 200.

[94]Ibid., 58.

[95]Ibid., 203.

[96]Ibid., 111.

[97]Ibid.

[98]Ibid., 166.

tells us, Lewis "gave a clear account of his philosophy of life. He did not believe in any God, least of all one that would punish him 'for the lusts of the flesh.'"[99] At the same time, in his preconversion days, Lewis could not rid himself of that childhood "Sehnsucht"—the longing for something he mistakenly assumed was to be found in "aesthetic experience."[100] In "The Weight of Glory" Lewis would later describe this longing "the secret we cannot hide and cannot tell, though we desire to do both."[101] "Our commonest expedient," he observes, "is to call it beauty and behave as if that had settled the matter."[102]

During his Oxford days, he was attracted to the *emotions* of religious talk about "the Absolute." It was, perhaps, in Pauline terms, "exchanging the truth about God for a lie," basking in the fantasy of a detached and non-interfering god. "The emotion that went with all this was certainly religious," Lewis writes.[103] "But this was a religion that cost us nothing. We could talk religiously about the Absolute: but there was no danger of Its doing anything about us. It was 'there'; safely and immovably 'there.' It would never come 'here,' never (to be blunt) make a nuisance of Itself."[104] Lewis recognized later that he was merely fashioning an idol: "These things—the beauty, the memory of our own past—are good images of what we really desire; but if they are mistaken for the thing itself they turn into dumb idols, breaking the hearts of their worshipers."[105]

Unlike Augustine's, Lewis's conversion was undramatic. From a theological

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[99]Sayer, *Jack*, 156.

[100]Lewis, *Surprised by Joy*, 199.

[101]Lewis, "The Weight of Glory," in *The Weight of Glory and Other Addresses* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 2001), 30.

[102]Ibid.

[103]Lewis, *Surprised by Joy*, 203.

[104]Ibid., 203–4.

[105]Lewis, "The Weight of Glory," 32.

perspective, of course, a person is either regenerate or unregenerate—there is no middle ground. Biographically, however, it may be said of Lewis that his conversion "occurred over a period of several years."[106] He was, Sayer explains, "very much a beginner in the Christian faith, and it was his recovery from spiritual sickness that made him a mature Christian."[107]

Lewis' own description of the moment of his conversion to "Theism, pure and simple," might be, on first blush, disappointingly slender.[108] "In the Trinity Term of 1929," he writes, "I gave in, and admitted that God was God."[109] But the process leading up to this reveals that this admission was radical. For years Lewis had resisted the very notion that God exists. Now he admitted it. This basic step toward Christianity accords with the above portrait of Christiformic image-bearers. They, (at least) have abandoned their idolatrous, culpably duplicitous notions of God. "The God whom I had at last acknowledged," Lewis writes, "was one, and was righteous."[110]

Of course, Lewis went beyond mere theism. At the outset of one lackluster road trip, he "did not believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God," and upon arrival, he did.[111] Yet its importance can hardly be overestimated. This had been the step to which Lewis "felt a resistance almost as strong as [his] previous resistance to Theism."[112] In Christ, Lewis had found "not 'a religion'" nor "a philosophy," but "the summing up and actuality of them all."[113]

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[106]Sayer, *Jack*, 233.

[107]Sayer, *Jack*, 233.

[108]Lewis, *Surprised by Joy*, 222.

[109]Ibid., 221.

[110]Ibid., 222.

[111]Ibid., 229.

[112]Ibid.

[113]Ibid., 228.

Although Lewis knew God with a new certainty, he still found himself chased by doubt. Shortly after conversion, he struggled to accept some areas of the Christian faith: "He still had doubts," writes his biographer, "and still found the Gospels and most church services unappealing."[114] Demons of doubt hounded Lewis especially after the death of his wife. "Not that I am (I think) in much danger of ceasing to believe in God," he clarifies, "The conclusion I dread is not 'So there's no God after all,' but 'So this is what God's really like. Deceive yourself no longer.'"[115] He found himself questioning God's nearness. "Meanwhile," Lewis asks,

> where is God? This is one of the most disquieting symptoms. . . . Go to him when your need is desperate, when all other help is vain, and what do you find? A door slammed in your face, and a sound of bolting and double bolting on the inside. After that, silence. . . . What can this mean? Why is He so present a commander in our time of prosperity and so very absent a help in time of trouble?[116]

Not only did Lewis wonder whether God was near, but he also doubted whether God was good. "What reason have we, except our own desperate wishes," he asks, "to believe that God is, by any standard we can conceive, 'good'? Doesn't all the *prima facie* evidence suggest exactly the opposite?"[117] "The terrible thing," he worried, "is that a perfectly good God is in this matter hardly less formidable than a Cosmic Sadist."[118]

In the introduction to *A Grief Observed*, Lewis's stepson comments on his lapse into doubt. "C. S. Lewis," he says, "the writer of so much that is so clear, and so right, the thinker whose acuity of mind and clarity of expression enabled us to understand so much, this strong and determined Christian, he too fell headlong into the vortex of

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[114]Sayer, *Jack*, 244.

[115]Lewis, "A Grief Observed," in *The Complete C. S. Lewis Signature Classics* (New York: Harper Collins, 2002), 658.

[116]Ibid.

[117]Ibid., 668.

[118]Ibid., 674.

whirling thoughts and feelings and dizzily groped for support and guidance deep in the dark chasm of grief."[119] To someone with a shallow understanding of the Christian life, Lewis's doubt might come as a disappointing surprise. But in view of Scripture's portrait of Christiformic image-bearers, it is no surprise at all. Even though believers see the light of God's countenance in the face of Christ, they are still fallen. They hold their "treasure in jars of clay" (2 Cor 4:7) and "see in a mirror dimly" (1 Cor 13:12).

But Christiformity means more than dimness. For Christiformic image-bearers, minor chords of doubt may play a part, but trust is the major key. Lewis begins to realize that God is at work, even in his grief. "I have gradually been coming to feel," he writes, "that the door is no longer shut and bolted,"[120] Moreover, he admits, "my idea of God is not a divine idea. It has to be shattered from time to time. He shatters it Himself. He is the great iconoclast. Could we not almost say that this shattering is one of the marks of His presence?"[121]

Not only does Lewis show evidence of new *beliefs* (though punctuated by doubt), he also displays transformed behavior. His biographer reflects on the change following his conversion: "Jack's conversion to Christianity," writes Sayers, "made him a different person. . . . He devoted himself to developing and strengthening his belief, and almost from the year of his conversion, he wanted to become an evangelist for the Christian faith."[122] One significant change in Lewis's behavior was his attending church services, which, considering his characteristic "dislike" for them, "was a strange thing to do."[123] But Lewis's transformation was neither complete nor consistent. "It took him two

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[119]Douglas H. Gresham, introduction to "A Grief Observed," in *The Complete C. S. Lewis Signature Classics* (New York: Harper Collins, 2002), 656.

[120]Lewis, "A Grief Observed," 676.

[121]Ibid., 684.

[122]Sayer, *Jack*, 249.

[123]Ibid., 240.

years," his biographer writes, "from this time to become a full, practicing member of the church of England."[124]

On the whole, however, Lewis's life shows evidence of progress toward Christlikeness. At the outbreak of World War II Lewis wanted to volunteer his services to the war cause. Someone suggested he take a job that "would involve creating propaganda and telling lies."[125] Lewis opted for a different way to help, for his sense of integrity forbad him to engage in dishonesty. In fact, he found "little pleasure" in writing *The Screwtape Letters*, despite its enormous popularity. "He thought it was bad," writes his biographer, "for his character to imagine himself a devil, thinking about how to tempt and pervert those around him."[126] Yet Lewis was unconcerned about mere politeness, for his passion to "become an evangelist for the Christian faith" offended some of his Oxford colleagues.[127] They felt that Lewis, in contending for Christianity, had "transgressed an unwritten code."[128] They "especially could not forgive the fact that [Lewis] was serious in wanting to convert others."[129]

In summary, Lewis's life matches the portrait of a Christiformic image-bearer. Although his conversion lacked the drama of Augustine's, it produced the same radical newness in belief and behavior. Though at times his faith was dogged by doubts, he learned to see the light of God's goodness even through the fog of grief. Indeed, the overall tenor of his life shows a steady march toward Christlikeness.

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[124]Sayer, *Jack*, 240–41.

[125]Ibid., 287.

[126]Ibid., 295.

[127]Ibid., 249.

[128]Ibid., 307.

[129]Ibid.

Jonathan Edwards

In Jonathan Edwards, we see similar evidence of Christiformic beliefs and behavior. Granted, his beliefs about God were technically correct before his conversion. He believed that God was sovereign. But God's sovereignty was no source of delight for Edwards. "From my childhood up," he remembers, "my mind had been full of objections against the doctrine of God's sovereignty, in choosing whom he would to eternal life; and rejecting whom he pleased; leaving them eternally to perish, and be everlastingly tormented in hell. It used to appear like a horrible doctrine to me."[130] Besides admitting his revulsion to God's character, Edwards recalls that he held false beliefs about his own character. Before his conversion, he recalls, "I seemed to be in my element when I engaged in religious duties"[131] In reality, as he later realized, his delight in religion was "much self-righteous pleasure."[132] Indeed, the pious young Edwards committed what the later Edwards recognized as a common error: to take "such a kind of delight as I then had in religion, and mistake it for grace."[133]

After his conversion, however, Edwards' diary and other personal writings are drenched with language of knowing and delighting in God. His recollection of conversion coheres with Scripture's portrait of a Christiformic image-bearer, and in the words of his biographer Iain Murray, "is the most important statement he ever wrote about himself."[134]

> The first instance that I remember, of that sort of inward, sweet delight in God and divine things, that I have lived much in since, was on reading those words, 1 Tim. i.17. *Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory, for ever and ever. Amen.* As I read the words, there came into my soul, and was as it were diffused through it, a sense of the glory of the Divine Being; a new sense, quite different from any thing I ever experienced before. Never any

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[130]Jonathan Edwards, *Works of Jonathan Edwards* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2004), 1:liv.

[131]Ibid.

[132]Ibid., 1:lvi.

[133]Ibid., 1:liv.

[134]Iain H. Murray, *Jonathan Edwards: A New Biography* (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1987), 35.

words of Scripture seemed to me as these words did. I thought with myself, how excellent a Being that was, and how happy I should be, if I might enjoy that God, and be rapt up to him in heaven; and be as it were swallowed up in him for ever! I kept saying, and as it were singing, over these words of Scripture to myself; and went to pray to God that I might enjoy him; and prayed in a manner quite different from what I used to do, with a new sort of affection. . . . From about that time I began to have a new kind of apprehensions and ideas of Christ, and the word of redemption, and the glorious way of salvation by him.[135]

Before his conversion Edwards had been repulsed by God's holiness. Now he writes that "God has appeared to me a glorious and lovely Being, chiefly on account of his holiness. The holiness of God has always appeared to me the most lovely of all his attributes."[136] Further, he realized that "there has been a wonderful alteration in my mind, with respect to the doctrine of God's sovereignty. . . . Absolute sovereignty is what I love to ascribe to God. But my first conviction was not so."[137]

Edwards' perception of himself changed as well. Before conversion, he had mistaken his delight in religion for grace. Moreover, he had "much self-righteous pleasure" in his religious pursuits.[138] Now, his newfound affection for God, particularly, God's holiness, resulted in that same mixture of humility and delight we saw in Augustine.

> I have a much greater sense of my universal, exceeding dependence on God's grace and strength, and mere good pleasure, of late, than I used formerly to have; and have experienced more of an abhorrence of my own righteousness. The very thought of and joy arising in me, on any consideration of my own amiableness, performances, or experiences, or any goodness of heart or life, is nauseous and detestable to me. And yet, I am greatly afflicted with a proud and self-righteous spirit, much more sensibly than I used to be formerly. I see that serpent rising and putting forth its head continually, every where, all around me.[139]

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[135]Edwards, *Works of Jonathan Edwards*, 1:lv.

[136]Ibid., 1:lxxxviii.

[137]Ibid., 1:liv–lv.

[138]Ibid., 1:liv.

[139]Ibid., 1:xc.

Moreover, Edwards confesses that "When I look into my heart, and take a view of my wickedness, it looks like an abyss, infinitely deeper than hell."[140]

The certainty of Edwards' beliefs about God could fill volumes, but samples will suffice. As God's character is manifest "in the face of Jesus Christ" with a certainty comparable to physical sight, so Edwards describes his knowledge of God and the things of religion. "I know not how to express [this] otherwise," he admits, "than by a calm, sweet abstraction of soul from all the concerns of this world; and sometimes a kind of vision, or fixed ideas and imaginations. . . . The sense I had of divine things, would often of a sudden kindle up, as it were, a sweet burning in my heart, an ardour of soul, that I know not how to express."[141]

Edwards' diary shows that he was progressing in Christlikeness. He writes that he "felt a burning desire to be, in every thing, a complete Christian; and conformed to the blessed image of Christ."[142] Moreover, he writes that "it was my continual strife, day and night, and constant inquiry, how I should *be* more holy, and *live* more holily, and more becoming a child of God, and a disciple of Christ."[143]

Of course, Edwards' progress toward Christiformity was far from flawless. Because Edwards adopted the Puritan practice of keeping a spiritual diary, we have access to his dozens of admissions to failure. "I find my heart so deceitful," Edwards laments, "that I am almost discouraged from making any more resolutions."[144] The next day he made a similar confession. "It seems to me," he confides in his diary, "that I am fallen from my former sense of the pleasantness of religion."[145] Later he writes, "This

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[140]Edwards, *Works of Jonathan Edwards*, 1:xc.

[141]Ibid., 1:lv.

[142]Ibid., 1:lvi.

[143]Ibid.

[144]Ibid., 1:lxviii.

[145]Ibid.

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week, have been unhappily low in the weekly account; and what are the reasons of it? abundance of listlessness and sloth; and, if this should continue much longer, I perceive that other sins will begin to discover themselves."[146] There are many other such confessions: "guilty of negligence;"[147] "exceedingly dull, dry, and dead."[148] Besides these sins of omission, Edward admits to gossip, envy, "a complaining temper," a high "self-opinion," "laugh[ing] at the faults, follies, and infirmities of others," "self confidence," and "melancholy."[149]

The general tenor of Edwards' life, however, progressed toward Christiformity. True to the portrait of a Christiformic image-bearer, Edwards pours out his yearning for Christlikeness: Christ's "blood and atonement," he writes, "have appeared sweet, and his righteousness sweet; which was always accompanied with ardency of spirit; and inward strugglings and breathings, and groanings that cannot be uttered, to be emptied of myself, and swallowed up in Christ."[150]

Conclusion

"You cannot order anyone to laugh," observes Viktor Frankl. "If you want him to laugh, you must tell him a joke. But isn't it, in a way, the same with religion? If you want people to have faith and belief in God," he reasons, "you must act credibly yourself."[151] Frankl was no Christian apologist, but his observation is astute. Without people who "act credibly," people whose Christian claim matches their Christlike character, the case for Christian anthropology rings hollow. Yet, as I have sought to

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[146]Edwards, *Works of Jonathan Edwards*, 1:lxviii.

[147]Ibid., 1:lxvi.

[148]Ibid.

[149]Ibid., 1:lcviii, lxx.

[150]Ibid., 1:lxxxix.

[151]Viktor E. Frankl, *Man's Search for Ultimate Meaning* (New York: MJF Books, 2000), 18.

demonstrate in this chapter, there *is* evidence for Christiformic living. The radically new beliefs and behavior of redeemed persons cohere with the Scriptural portrait of Christiformic image-bearers. Therefore, their lives bolster the anthropological argument for the Christian faith. Yet in another sense they themselves *are* an argument—an embodied anthropological argument. They have "new selves" in Christ, and their increasingly Christlike character argues that the perversion of the human condition as we know it is not what God meant it to be. Self-deceit can give way to humble confession. Sinful deeds can be ousted by acts of righteousness. Denials and doubts of God and his character must flee from "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor 4:6).

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION: AN EXPANDED VISION
FOR APOLOGETICS

Blaise Pascal was a Christian apologist, but he found some apologetic arguments unconvincing. "The metaphysical proofs for the existence of God," he writes, "are so remote from human reasoning and so involved that they make little impact, and, even if they did help some people, it would only be for the moment during which they watched the demonstration, because an hour later they would be afraid they had made a mistake" (L190/S222). Granted, Pascal recognized the limited usefulness of such "proofs" for God's existence, but he believed that the most persuasive case for Christianity is one speaks directly to a person's heart.[1] For "the heart," he insists, "has its reasons of which reason knows nothing" (L423/ S680). But how can a person speak to directly to one's heart? By replying to the heart's most basic cry: the longing for infinite happiness. "This infinite abyss," Pascal answers, "can be filled only with an infinite and immutable object; in other words by God himself. God alone is man's true good" (L148/S181).

If people find themselves moved by this approach, they will be moved even more when it is joined to the doctrine of the *imago Dei*. For this doctrine, I have argued, enhances the anthropological argument by supplying more explanatory detail and encompassing more instances of our paradoxical condition. We pursue happiness but

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[1]Pascal apparently planned to compose a "letter to show the usefulness of proofs" (L41/S75). But he also qualified the usefulness of these metaphysical arguments. Apologists should not expect unbelievers always to find such arguments convincing, but rather to "bring [religion] into contempt in their eyes" (L781/S644). This is because "God is a hidden God," and "since nature was corrupted he has left men to their blindness, from which they can escape only through Jesus Christ, without whom all communication with God is broken off" (L781/S644). For Pascal, apologists who depend on these proofs as the heart of their method fail to take proper account of the noetic effects of the fall.

cannot find it because we look for it apart from the One in whose image we are created. We feel disoriented within the cosmos because we have abdicated our office as stewards under his reign. Moreover, the resources God gave us to exercise this stewardship—relationality, creativity, and intelligence, for example—we have perverted for self-serving ends. We demonstrate egoistic "altruism," twist scientific achievements into tools of destruction, and contrive conflicting accounts of the divine—all because we are sinners created in the image of God.

Further Areas of Research

The doctrine of the *imago Dei* applies primarily to one of the three stages of the anthropological argument. But the other two stages—the data stage and eliminative stage—are also ripe for further research. The data stage could be supplemented by the work of Christian social scientists, especially cultural anthropologists. By observing other features of the human condition, they may draw out even more data for humans' duality of fallenness and imagedness. The field of cognitive anthropology abounds with examples of human creativity, as well as the noetic effects of the fall. Ethnomusicologists might examine the evidence for the duality of greatness and wretchedness in humans' musical achievements. The same evidence might be investigated in the areas of economic and political anthropology.

The need for work in the third stage is, perhaps, more urgent. As long as fallen humans continue to invent religions and worldviews, Christian apologists, especially those trained in the field of comparative religion, have the opportunity demonstrate how the Christian faith alone is able to explain the predicament and point to the solution. This field of opportunities requires one to be thoroughly familiar not only with Christian anthropology, but also with the anthropology of another religion or worldview. Transhumanism, pantheism, mysticism, Hinduism, Islam—and their myriad variations all claim a particular view of the human condition. Christian apologists may compare these

accounts of the human condition with the Christian account, to demonstrate that only Christian anthropology compellingly explains and answers the full scope of the human plight.

Biblical Theology and Apologetics: Powerful Allies

Yet I have aimed to do more than argue that an apologetic argument can be strengthened. First, by correlating themes within two disciplines—apologetics and biblical theology—I aim to exemplify how these disciplines can be fruitfully allied in the service of the church. As Peter Adam argues, when preachers use biblical theology, they are employing an "effective apologetic."[2] "It is not possible," he maintains,

> 'to take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ' without teaching a biblical world view, and we cannot do this without biblical theology. We cannot help people to address the pervasive worldviews of humanism, postmodernity, secularism, materialism, and pantheism by providing them with a few helpful texts or pious ideas. They must begin to 'think God's thoughts after him,' and they do this by learning the shape of God's self-revelation in history and in the Bible. This biblical theology is the best corrective for false worldviews.[3]

Just as biblical theologians should realize the apologetic import of biblical theology, so apologists should draw upon the resources of biblical theology as part of their apologetic program. Of course, biblical theology does not offer arguments for the existence of God or reasoned responses to the problem of evil. It does, however, beckon its readers into a narrative in which they are compelled to find their place, and through which they can make sense of the world—the drama of God's speaking a good universe into existence, his commissioning humans as his viceregents, the invasion of evil, humans' mutiny and need for a Savior, the coming of that Savior, the call to believe in him, and the final consummation of all things under his eternal dominion. In its genesis, this narrative challenged the polytheistic worldview of the ancient Sumerian, Akkadian,

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[2]Peter J. H. Adam, "Preaching and Biblical Theology," in *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, ed. T. Desmond Alexander et al. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000), 111.

[3]Ibid.

Egyptian, or Greek; it continues to confront the contemporary worldview of the modern Muslim, secularist, materialist, or transhumanist. The Christian apologist, therefore, finds a powerful ally in biblical theology.

The Christian Faith: Compelling Beauty

Second, through this dissertation I hope to contribute to a broader vision of apologetics that showcases the full-orbed splendor of the Christian faith. Even masters of the formal and natural sciences—disciplines we assume depend on rigid methods—recognize that they rely in part on their sense of beauty when deciding among hypotheses. "Some decisions," writes Brian Greene, "made by theoretical physicists are founded upon an aesthetic sense—a sense of which theories have an elegance and beauty of structure on par with the world we experience."[4] For example, "general relativity, in Einstein's view, was almost too beautiful to be wrong."[5] The same, I believe, is true of the doctrine of the *imago Dei*. It evinces a symmetry with the human condition, and resonates beyond the rational level, especially when "embodied" in Christiformic image-bearers. This expanded conception of apologetics, as Douglas Blount argues, "understands the apologist's task not as providing compelling arguments and convincing evidence but rather as painting a compelling portrait of the faith lived out."[6] In a postmodern context, the effectiveness of Christian apologetics may very much depend on apologists' "embracing a broader, more comprehensive vision of their task" that is "committed to commending the faith not only of rationality, but also of beauty and

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[4]Brian Greene, *The Elegant Universe: Superstrings, Hidden Dimensions, and the Quest for Ultimate Theory* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2003), 167.

[5]Ibid., 166. Pascal also understood the connection between belief and beauty: "Every man is almost always led to believe not through proof, but through that which is attractive," Blaise Pascal, "The Art of Persuasion," in *Pensées and Other Writings*, ed. Anthony Levi, trans. Honor Levi (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 193.

[6]Douglas Keith Blount, "Good (and Beautiful) News for Postmodern Apologists," *Caesura* 2.2 (2015): 4.

goodness."[7] Thus, with the psalmist, Christian apologists may invite others to "taste and see that the Lord is good" (Ps 34:8).

[7]Blount, "Good (and Beautiful) News for Postmodern Apologists," 14.

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ABSTRACT

THE *IMAGO DEI* AND PASCAL'S ABDUCTIVE
ANTHROPOLOGICAL ARGUMENT

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Endeavoring to invigorate a Pascalian approach to Christian persuasion, this dissertation asks: how might the doctrine of the *imago Dei* strengthen Pascal's abductive anthropological argument? The thesis answers that the doctrine of the *imago Dei* supplies greater detail to the explanation stage of the anthropological argument and accounts for more instances of humans' paradoxical condition.

Chapter 1 demonstrates the need for this study. Even though Pascal's method appears to be a formidable tool for Christian apologists in a postmodern culture, it has received surprisingly little attention and clarity in apologetic literature. Moreover, no efforts have been made to strengthen his anthropological argument by correlating it with insights from the doctrine of the *imago Dei*.

Chapter 2 reveals that the anthropological theme within Pascal's *Pensées* may be properly understood as a three-stage abductive argument consisting of *data* (instances of humans' paradoxical behavior), *explanation* (Christian anthropology), and *elimination* (other religions or worldviews fail to explain the human condition).

Chapter 3 surveys the history of interpretation of the doctrine of the *imago Dei*. Despite their many differences, interpreters generally agree that (1) imagedness means that humans are ontologically constituted for a relationship with God, but that (2) human

sin conflicts with their God-oriented constitution.

Chapter 4 presents six propositions about imagedness. These propositions support the observation that imagedness and sinfulness conspire to render the human condition paradoxical: humans are self-opposing.

Chapter 5 applies this understanding of the *imago Dei* to the explanatory stage of Pascal's anthropological argument, showing that the doctrine of the *imago Dei* provides a finer level of detail and explains more instances of humans' paradoxical condition.

Chapter 6 shows that the Christiformic journeys of Augustine, C. S. Lewis, and Jonathan Edwards represent flesh-and-blood instances of Scripture's portrait of Christiformic image-bearers. These instances supply evidence that the doctrine of the *imago Dei* plausibly explains the human condition. Thus, they also strengthen Pascal's anthropological argument.

Chapter 7 explains two larger aims of this dissertation: to contribute toward a broader vision of Christian persuasion and to exemplify how the disciplines of apologetics and biblical theology can be powerful allies.

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