CHRISTIAN SELF-KNOWLEDGE: A CHRISTOLOGICAL

FRAMEWORK FOR UNDERMINING DISSOCIATION

THROUGH RECONCILIATION

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Jonathan Paul Badgett

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APPROVAL SHEET

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Read and Approved by:

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Eric L. Johnson (Chair)

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Jeremy P. Pierre

_____
Michael A. G. Haykin

Date_____

For Alison, whose beauty reflects to me Christ's own

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PREFACE

The question of self-knowledge has occupied secular philosophy and Christian theology for millennia. Such a vast and rich literature awaits the eager student of the self; with the advance of history, perspectives have only multiplied. For the Christian, it must be said, there is only one looking glass from which to see ourselves. Among the most precious gifts the triune God has bestowed on me I count that beautifully awe-full "mirror" with which he showed me myself. With Augustine, I have grieved the years I spent trapped in willful self-blindness and pride. If there is any bliss to be had in self-ignorance, I certainly never managed to find it. Yet, in Christ I have found not only the treasury of all wisdom and (self-)knowledge (Col 2:3), but also the grace to surrender the façade with which I had shielded my gaze from that in me which most terrified me. Whether, in the end, his pruning shears, still hard at work, have yielded any harvest of fruitful kingdom ministry, the Lord knows. I hope, by God's grace, to have taken steps in the right direction.

In addition to my wife, Alison, to whom I dedicate this work, I must thank our four children, Madison, Benjamin, Laurelen, and Jon Robert, whose patience with this seemingly interminable process—at least from the perspective of youth—has been such a blessing. After my family, I wish to thank my supervisor, Prof. Eric Johnson, whose influence on me, both personally and professionally, is immeasurable. I had initially thought to approach the question of self-knowledge through a Trinitarian theanthropology; his suggestion: "first give Christology a look." At the risk of sounding grandiose, I can now bear witness that this crucial turning point in the project has made all the difference. Truly, Christ is the key to unlocking the mysteries of the knowledge of God and of self. I further thank Dr. Johnson for spurring me on to this intellectual world I

had previously visited but never fully explored. With his expert guidance, along with the unseen hand of the Spirit, I can now say I know my way around, even if so much of its terra firma remains to be explored. His corrections and caveats over the course of this project have sharpened my thinking, warned me off cliffs of speculation, and guided me out of brambles of confusion. To be sure, faults herein remain; these are wholly mine.

Jonathan Badgett

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CHAPTER 1

BIBLICAL AND HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR
CHRISTIAN SELF-KNOWLEDGE

Introduction

John Calvin, at the opening of a work (2008) otherwise devoted to expounding the sovereignty and transcendence of the God of the Bible, famously wrote of not one but two great epistemological poles, which together comprise what he termed "the sum of true wisdom" (p. 4)—namely, the knowledge of God and the knowledge of oneself. Notably, Calvin in his *Institutes* eschewed any willingness to resolve this tension in favor of one or the other pole. As human beings come to know themselves more fully, he believed, they discover a need within themselves to know God more fully; yet to know themselves, they may see truly only when illuminated by the revelation of his goodness and glory. "The knowledge of God and the knowledge of ourselves," he avers, "are bound together by a mutual tie" (p. 6). Neither, in other words, is dispensable.[1] Moreover, self-knowledge, according to Calvin, makes possible our knowledge of God:

> [T]he infinitude of good which resides in God becomes more apparent from our poverty. In particular, the miserable ruin into which the revolt of the first man has plunged us, compels us to turn our eyes upward. . . . [E]very man, being stung by the consciousness [*conscientia*] of his own unhappiness, in this way necessarily

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[1]Calvin's epistemology and his soteriology are inseparable. So, knowledge of God-as-holy and self-as-sinful, for example, are necessary epistemic prerequisites for salvation (see Hos 6:6; Luke 5:8; 1 Cor 15:34). This is not to say, however, that knowledge of self in any way *effects* salvation. Calvin held to a strict view of salvation by the electing will of a gracious God. Yet, according to Calvin, self-knowledge is indispensable for salvation precisely because of the mutuality of the knowledge God and of self—what throughout Christian history has been called the "double" knowledge that leads to true wisdom (Houston, 2000). From the standpoint of human experience, salvation comes to those who have first recognized their need for God's grace and have thrown themselves upon his mercy. Epistemically, this recognition of human sinfulness is made possible by divine revelation. It should be further noted that Calvin's approach defends the Creator-creature distinction against the modernist error of objectivism, wherein God and self become discrete objects of inquiry. Calvin rejects the notion that God can be known if self is wholly unknown. Before we can know God, we must know that *we* are *not*. This is, arguably, the first epistemic gain to be had from the mutual "double" knowledge of God and self!

obtains at least some knowledge of God. . . . [I]ndeed, we cannot aspire to him in earnest until we have begun to be displeased with ourselves. For what man is not disposed to rest in himself? Who, in fact, does not thus rest, so long as he is unknown to himself; that is, so long as he is contented with his own endowments, and unconscious [*inscius*] or unmindful of his misery? Every person, therefore, on coming to the knowledge of himself, is not only urged to seek God, but is also led as by the hand to find him. (p. 4)

For Calvin, awareness (*conscientia*) of self impels human beings on a quest for a greater knowledge of the divine. As we come to the truth about ourselves—though what we find be little more than spiritual poverty and misery—the more sensible of the benevolence and mercy of God we may become. Whereas, when we are ignorant (*inscius*) of our condition, our appropriation of the knowledge of God is impeded, our epistemic capacity having been constrained, as it were, by lack of self-knowledge (see Hoekema, 1994). According to Calvin, knowledge of God can only be sought "in earnest" as we become aware of ourselves.

Nevertheless, Calvin also believed that we are fundamentally incapable of overcoming our hereditary and congenital self-blindness without divine assistance—that is, through God's disclosure of himself to us. Though he argues that human beings have some innate sense of their creaturely contingency within the cosmos, sin causes us to mistrust that sense. This inescapable impression of God's existence and our answerability to him, Calvin (2008) holds, God himself "has endued" in every one of us "to prevent [us] from pretending ignorance" (p. 9). Whereas, to forswear pursuit of the knowledge of God, directing anything less than "the whole thoughts and actions of [our] lives to this end," is to "fail to fulfill the law" written in our very being (p. 11). Yet, somehow, the truth of this law manages to elude us. Due to our fallen condition, we inevitably place our confidence in an erroneous and sinful autonomy instead, until and unless the Spirit of God reveal himself to us in his word and, ultimately, in the person of Christ. Though Calvin never considered the psychological means—i.e., dissociation[2]—by which we

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[2]As a descriptor of psychological phenomena, dissociation is notoriously resistant to definition (see Carlson, Yates, & Sroufe, 2009; Howell, 2005; van der Hart, Nijenhuis, & Steele, 2006). I will employ the term at this early stage in a non-technical sense to refer generally to the means by which individuals

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conceal from ourselves this innate sense of God, he nevertheless held that such was the case.[3] Human beings, so it seems, are capable of dissociating from their God-given sense of his existence and deceiving themselves in regard to his glorious nature and his gracious disposition toward them, in spite of their sin. Whatever the means, Calvin held the result of this tendency to be tantamount to denying ourselves inasmuch as we have been created according to his image and likeness (see Gen 1:26–27). Finally, notwithstanding the ontological and axiological disparity between these two objects of knowledge—God and self[4]—Calvin considered that they function epistemically for human beings as inseparable, complementary, mutually-entailing, dialectically-conjoined poles.

Calvin is hardly the first within the Christian tradition to propose a dipolar self-knowledge that mutually entails the knowledge of the triune God. Discussions of Christian self-knowledge begin in earnest with Augustine's appropriation and reformulation of Socratic self-knowledge in the fourth century (Warfield, 1956; see, e.g., Augustine, 2002, Books 9–11). Nevertheless, it was Calvin (2008), drawing in large measure on Augustine, who bequeathed to Reformed theological anthropology the notion

distance themselves from awareness (Lat. *dissociare*; to separate) of some aspect of self- or other/Other-knowledge. Thus, dissociation is descriptive of a primarily cognitive process (or processes) by which the human subject avoids conscious mentation concerning that which might trigger unpleasant feelings or associations. Dissociation is neither necessarily pathological nor morally problematic. The child who dissociates from awareness of abuse can hardly be sinning. His ability to do so is a God-given mercy in the face of the evil he is suffering (Gingrich, 2013; Langberg, 2015). Dissociation becomes morally problematic when it occurs in a mature agent with the result that the individual persists in a state of self-deception (cf. Matt 7:3; Gal 6:3). As the individual dissociates from what is evident yet unpleasant, it becomes possible to concoct a comforting yet false view of the way things are, including the nature and moral quality of self, God, and others.

[3]"[The elements of Calvin's thought] include the postulation of an innate knowledge of God in man," notes Warfield (1956), "quickened and developed by a very rich manifestation of God in nature and providence, which, however, fails of its proper effect because of man's corruption in sin" (p. 31).

[4]If convention is any indication, *self*, as an object of epistemic concern, should be accompanied by the definite article: "*the* self" (see, e.g., Baumeister, 1998; Grenz, 2001; Harter, 2015; Strauss & Goethals, 1991; Vitz & Felch, 2006). To some degree I have resisted what I believe to be a post/modernist impulse out of concern that selfhood not be abstracted or objectified as a segment, attribute, or form somehow distinct from personhood. So, throughout, "self" may be understood as a close semantic cognate with person, but with a suggestion of individuation, particularity, or personal identity. In other words, "self" is *me*—*my*self—though I hope the reader will apprehend and assert the same.

that self-knowledge, along with the knowledge of God, is critical to the human pursuit of

wisdom. Referencing the pre-Christian admonition, "Know thyself," he remarks,

> It was not without reason that the ancient proverb so strongly recommended to man the knowledge of himself. For if it is deemed disgraceful to be ignorant of things pertaining to the business of life, much more disgraceful is self-ignorance in consequence of which we miserably deceive ourselves in matters of the highest moment, and so walk blindfold. (p. 147)

In contrast to pagan philosophy, Calvin insists, along with Augustine before him, on the

dialectical contingency of human self-knowledge. Self cannot see itself properly without

an Other—a "mirror," as it were.[5] For Calvin the only mirror that reflects not only us-as-

we-are, but also us-as-we-ought-to-be, is God. Without a proper view of ourselves as

created in the image of God—response-able to and dependent on his divine power and

love even for our very existence—we will fail the crucial test of self-knowledge. If we do

not know God, we cannot know self truly. If we are ignorant of self, God will remain

unknown. Wisdom demands that we know both (cf. Prov 4:7). And neither, according to

Calvin, is possible without the other.

An Ancient Quest

As early as the fifth century B.C., the Delphic maxim, "Know thyself,"

captured the impulse in human beings to engage in epistemic reflexivity for the sake of

characterological growth (Wilkins, 1979; see Baumeister, 1999). The Greeks held self-

improvement through self-knowledge, enacted through virtuous activity, to be the

ultimate aim of philosophy (Renz, 2016). For ancient philosophy the path of self-

knowledge led to wisdom, and wisdom was the gateway to a blessed and virtuous life (cf.

Job 22:2b; Prov 8:32–36). They defined this pursuit of "perfection" in terms of the quest

for wisdom through self-understanding. In language redolent of Christ's parable of the

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[5]More properly, Calvin holds that humanity, indeed all of creation, serves as a mirror in which God beholds his own divine glory (see Torrance, 1957). Thus, human beings come to know themselves truly as they actively participate in reflecting the glory of God.

narrow gate and narrow road (Matt 7:14), Epictetus would write in the first century, "The beginning of philosophy to him at least who enters on it in the right way and by the door, is a consciousness of his own weakness and inability about necessary things. . . . [I]f they possessed this, . . . what would hinder them from being perfect?" (*Discourses*, II.11.i). For the ancient Greeks, the twin poles of wisdom were self-knowledge and virtue. Knowledge of self and of a virtuous "ideal" would serve to impel self to perfection. Presumably, autonomous self-reflection would disclose the degree to which one's character conformed to an ideal virtue permitting the "wise" to respond accordingly. Yet, in contrast to Calvin's "double" knowledge of self, Hellenist ideals were discoverable by human effort alone, not through divine self-disclosure. Moreover, the appropriation of wisdom, they held, obtains through self-reflection and self-awareness. Although different traditions propounded alternate visions of the blessed life,[6] all allowed that self-knowledge is the beginning of wisdom (cf. Prov 9:10). Allowing for various intramural distinctions, they generally agreed that the entire process was an intrinsically anthropocentric enterprise.

Despite broad agreement on the necessity of self-knowledge for self-improvement, one notable point of distinction did arise as to the means of self-knowledge. Modern scholars have observed a subtle disparity, for instance, in Plato's and Aristotle's respective approaches. The difference between the two, broadly speaking, amounts to whether self-knowledge may be attained in a strictly reflexive manner—i.e., individually, autonomously—or reflectively by means of a mirroring other. The reflexive search for self-knowledge is primarily objective and autonomous: the self contemplates itself, making judgments and determinations in light of what it finds. This approach to

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[6]For the Stoics the axiological *telos* of wisdom was ethical perfection (Wilkins, 1979). In contrast to this, Plotinus, the founder of Neoplatonism suggests that wisdom leads to more than mere "happiness" (contra Wilkins, p. 66); rather, perfect self-knowledge would result in "god-likeness" (Remes, 2007, p. 125; see Long, 2001).

self-knowledge is evinced in much of Plato's writings (Kamtekar, 2016). His answer to how an individual might be improved is, in the words of Socrates, "by attending, caring for, and being guided by the part of the soul in which wisdom, which makes the soul good, comes to be" (*Alcibiades I* 133b). Self can be known and improved without the aid of an other as the individual autonomously pursues its virtuous ideal. If true, Socratic self-knowledge grants self considerable epistemic sovereignty. The degree of autonomy implied by Plato's formulation has led some modern readers to observe that it makes self "the ultimate reality"; indeed, the Socratic/Platonic self "turns out to be God" given its ability to autonomously self-perceive and self-improve (Annas, 1985, p. 133). Socratic self-knowledge presumes an unrestricted sufficiency for the self's pursuit of wisdom. Whether this sanguine view of human ability is justified seems to have been the concern of later Greek thought, at least as evidenced in Aristotle's discussions of self-knowledge.[7]

In contrast to the reflexive pursuit of self-knowledge in Plato, Aristotle would argue, albeit inconsistently, against the possibility of strictly autonomous self-knowledge (Shields, 2016). Drawing on the Platonist tradition that preceded him, Aristotle views "happiness"—*eudaimonia*—as the aim of self-knowledge. Like Plato, Aristotle holds the self to be capable of attaining eudaimonist self-knowledge apart from divine self-disclosure. Thus, he maintains the Platonist dogma of the "self-sufficiency" of individual human beings. Yet, Aristotle would nuance his understanding of self-sufficiency to allow for the contingency of relationship and dialogue. In doing so he amends the Platonist understanding in accordance with his observation that human beings all too often perceive the faults of others while remaining ignorant of their own moral failings. Aristotle clarifies regarding this nuanced view of autonomy,

> But the self-sufficiency about which we are conducting our inquiry is not that of god but of humans, the question being whether the self-sufficient human will require

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[7]Philosophical skepticism regarding the self's ability to reflexively attain self-knowledge has flowered in the modern age (see Ryle, 1949).

friendship or not. If, then, when one looked upon a friend one could see the nature and attributes of the friend, . . . such as to be a second self. . . . [A]s we are, we are not able to see what we are from ourselves (and that we cannot do so is plain from the way in which we blame others without being aware that we do the same things ourselves). (*Magna Moralia* 2.15)

In other words, there are evidently times when we appear to believe the best about ourselves despite evidence to the contrary. Consequently, Aristotle recognizes that the fundamentally individual quest of self-knowledge can be benefited by the insights of others, especially friends.[8] Self-knowledge, then, will be attained reflexively when the self manages to see past its own self-placating and self-aggrandizing tendencies. In some cases, however, the individual requires the assistance of a mirroring other to foster this process.[9] For Aristotle, humans come to know themselves contingently, though the pursuit of eudaimonist self-knowledge remained for him a strictly horizontal, anthropocentric affair. To a greater degree certainly than Plato, Aristotle emends the Socratic pursuit of *eudaimonia* with the proviso that knowledge of self attains more reliably in the context of relationship.[10] Furthermore, it would seem that, because the other is a "friend" or cherished other, Aristotle implies that the pursuit of individual, contingent self-knowledge will redound in mutual benefit. Along these lines Shields (2016) concludes that Aristotle "envisages subjects knowing themselves, mirroring one another in a shared subjectivity presupposing the kind of self-knowledge reflected in mutual knowledge and perception" (p. 59).[11] Aristotle's emendation of Plato entails the feasibility of both reflexive *and* reflective self-perception. Nevertheless, according to

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[8]In allowing that individuals may not always be able to reflexively self-perceive, Aristotle qualifies "self-sufficient" to entail the contingency of relationship (Shields, 2016). In order to attain veridical self-knowledge, individuals *may* require the presence of a mirroring other.

[9]The parallel between Aristotle's proposal for contingent self-knowledge and Jesus' parable of the plank and the speck (Matt 7:3–5) is, perhaps, noteworthy.

[10]Nevertheless, Plato did value the dialogical role of the philosopher and the *polis* as well.

[11]Despite Shield's optimism, Aristotle's trenchant eudaimonism—the *individual* pursuit of happiness—nevertheless runs the risk of objectifying the mirroring other by essentially co-opting him or her into the service of individual wellbeing. Christian philosopher Nicolas Wolterstorff (2015) has noted the inherent individualism of the ancient paradigm and offered a counterproposal that elevates love, rather than happiness/wellbeing, as humanity's primary ethical aim (see esp. Chapter 1).

Aristotle, a truer, fuller self-knowledge is more reliably obtainable when it is contingent on relationship to others. Aristotle defends his view of contingent self-knowledge by pointing out the tendency in human persons toward unjustifiably favorable self-appraisal, though he never postulates the internal, subjective means by which this happens.

A Modern Pursuit

With the advent of the modern age, secular philosophies of self-knowledge essentially picked up where the ancient Greeks left off,[12] though the questions and considerations have shifted markedly (see Goethals & Strauss, 1991).[13] One casualty of modern philosophical inquiry has been the connection between self-knowledge and self-improvement implicit in both ancient Greek philosophy and premodern Christianity (Renz, 2016). From the time of the ancient Greeks until the advent of the modern era, self-knowledge was regarded as instrumental for wisdom and virtue (Houston, 2000). In other words, never an end in itself, classical Western thought held self-knowledge to be a crucial means of self-improvement—knowing oneself, it was believed, is essential to fulfilling humanity's axiological *telos*. Calvin and Augustine may have differed with the Greeks over the role of divine discourse for true wisdom and virtue, yet they largely accepted the latter's essentially eudaimonistic framework for self-knowledge. One's growth in self-understanding, they maintained, would result in greater wellbeing. Modern

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[12]This is clearly the case in Gertler (2011) whose historical background on self-knowledge begins with the ancient Greeks. Unfortunately, she omits any reference to the premodern, Christian theories of Augustine and Calvin, and instead leaps 1,600 years to Descartes, Locke, and Kant. In what may be seen as a providential gain of postmodernity, Renz (2016) includes brief chapters on self-knowledge in Augustine and Kierkegaard, the latter making clear reference to the Danish philosopher's essentially Calvinist paradigm.

[13]Recent philosophical explorations of self-knowledge have followed an essentially Cartesian epistemology being occupied in the main with the nature of human subjectivity. Of particular interest seems to be the question of whether and how humans have privileged access to their own mental states (see Cassam, 1994; Gertler, 2011; Moran, 2001; O'Brien, 2010). In light of this, and perhaps ironically, the ancients assumed what contemporary philosophy now holds in doubt.

philosophical perspectives on self-knowledge have, for the most part, lost this telic aspect.[14] Along these lines, Renz (2016) confesses,

> One might regret that [the] moral or wisdom-related aspect of self-knowledge, which was quite important for the history of the concept, is largely absent in contemporary discussion. One reason for this shift in emphasis is obviously that philosophy has become an academic discipline hosted at research institutions. In antiquity, in contrast, philosophy was practiced at schools that conceived of it as a way of life. And it was as a way of life that philosophy was also regarded in the monastic culture of the early Middle Ages, where self-knowledge was often discussed in connection with the question of our distinction from and relation to God. (p. 3)

The ancient Socratic pursuit of wisdom as the means of achieving *eudaimonia* was largely abandoned as philosophical inquiry became increasingly analytical and abstracted from everyday life. Self-knowledge, as with so much else in the modern age, has been reduced from a *how* to a mere *what* (Renz, 2016).

In contrast with its ancient antecedents, with few exceptions modern philosophy has not concerned itself with the benefits of self-knowledge. This is not to say, however, that the pursuit of self-improvement through self-knowledge has been entirely discarded in the modern era. To the contrary, the ancient quest for "blessedness" through self-improvement has become a paradigmatic pursuit of Western culture and morality (see C. Taylor, 1989). Notions of self-improvement and the pursuit of individual wellbeing pervade Western society at large, yet the principal disciplinary framework and "scientific" system within which self-knowledge has found its foundational role is no longer philosophy, but modern psychology and psychotherapy (Brennan, 2014). As Anglo-American philosophical inquiry became an abstract enterprise, increasingly rationalistic and displaced from the world of human experience, early psychological theory amounted to something of a disciplinary "revolt" (Allport, 1968, p. 104).

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[14]One exception to the rationalist mainstream can be found in Cassam (2014), who argues for "substantial" self-knowledge, or what he calls the "low road" approach. He endeavors to shift the conversation toward the benefits of knowing oneself and away from modern philosophy's preoccupation with what he calls "trivial" self-knowledge (p. 29). He includes among his examples of substantial self-knowledge: knowing one's character, values, abilities, aptitudes, emotions, etc.

Concerned with the improvement of the human condition through "scientific" means, secular psychologists occupied themselves with explaining the internal workings of the human psyche in order to "provide concepts and technologies for the ordering of the interior life" (Browning & Cooper, 2004, p. 2). This is not to say that the knowledge of self has served as a crucial aspect of all modern psychotherapeutic models. Within the larger discipline of modern psychology and psychotherapy, approaches that promise individual wellbeing through self-knowledge trace their theoretical provenance to the work of Sigmund Freud and psychoanalytic psychotherapy (Prochaska & Norcross, 2014).[15]

Whereas all psychotherapeutic models concern themselves, by definition, with the mental health and wellbeing of the individual, not all approaches prioritize growth in self-knowledge as foundational to this enterprise. The fundamental psychotherapeutic basis for classical psychoanalysis, on the other hand, might be summarized as wellbeing through self-knowledge—or perhaps, through overcoming resistance to self-knowledge.[16] Freud (1940) holds, though more strongly to be sure than Aristotle, that human persons persist in self-ignorance and self-deception, and, due to internal conflict, are often incapable of reflexive self-perception. At the base of human motivation, according to Freud, there are primal drives and organismic impulses impelling us to pursue "pleasure"

[15]Chronologically, Pierre Janet's "psychological analysis" precedes Freudian psychoanalysis and appears to have provided Freud with a substantial conceptual basis for his more historically prominent contribution (Ellenberger, 1981).

[16]Psychoanalysis, like other modern psychotherapeutic systems, competes both implicitly and explicitly with the Christian worldview generally, and with the gospel of Jesus Christ in particular. In unambiguous terms Bucci (1997) holds that "[p]sychoanalysis offers its patients a way to transform themselves and to gain a second life" (p. ix) apart from divine revelation and the grace of God in Christ. In spite of this, Christians need not deny the possibility of gaining valid anthropological insight from an admittedly fallen system of thought like psychoanalysis. In considering the potential gains of a Christian psychodynamic psychotherapy, Jones and Butman (2011) conclude, "In order to make sense of a person's current behavioral patterns, it is necessary to understand the behavior's roots in largely unconscious conflicts and motives. . . . Only through greater self-knowledge and self-regulation can mature adults increase their capacity to love and work effectively" (p. 95). Edwards and Davis (2013) offer numerous helpful distinctions for the appropriation of psychodynamic therapeutic processes within a Christian edification framework.

and "avoid unpleasure" (p. 16). Moreover, Freud identifies a robust tendency in the human mind to mount defenses against primal thoughts and associations which, if acknowledged, would trigger "unpleasure." Such subconscious activity leads to mental distress often resulting in anxiety and depression. These mental operations, or "defense mechanisms," are initiated, he argues, outside the conscious awareness and control of the individual (see A. Freud, 1977).[17]

In order to progress beyond a "repressed" state and be cured from her "neurosis," an individual would need the help of a reflective other—a psychoanalyst, to be specific—to bring to light "truth"[18] that has become dislocated within her psyche (S. Freud, 1940; see Howell & Itzkowitz, 2016). In classical psychoanalysis, it is by means of the slow, painstaking work of the analyst that mental defenses previously deployed to ameliorate psychic distress can be deactivated, leading over time to what Freud described as "favorable modification of the ego," or the conscious self (S. Freud, 1940, p. 74). Ellenberger (1981) summarizes efficacious psychoanalytic treatment as "a journey through the unconscious" mind from which the individual eventually "emerges with a modified personality" (p. 524).

Many of Freud's theoretical contributions have been challenged and critiqued on both philosophical (see, e.g., Ricoeur, 1977) and empirical grounds (Fisher & Greenberg, 1996) over the last century. The field of psychoanalytical psychology has also evolved considerably in that time. Contemporary psychoanalysis has mostly abandoned his mechanistic model of the personality, along with other notions (such as infantile sexual drives), in favor of more scientifically robust, empirically grounded framework

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[17]In examining the possible roots of Freud's atheism, Vitz (1993) argues with no small irony that Freud's belief in the non-existence of God amounted to a unconscious rejection of his own father.

[18]Fromm (1980) argues that Freud's "greatest achievement" was his expansion of "the concept of truth" "beyond that which an individual believes to be the truth" (pp. x–xi). Still, Freud (like Fromm) was a secular humanist so, as with the ancient Greeks, his quest for "truth" was a strictly empirical and intrasubjective affair. To wit, he held belief in God to be delusional—a "universal obsessional neurosis" (S. Freud, 1927, p. 117).

(Bucci, 1997; Eagle, 2010; Mitchell & Black, 2016; Safran, 2012; cf. Jones & Butman, 2011; Tan, 2011). Nevertheless, the modern, secular pursuit of wellbeing through self-knowledge has flowered in no small measure due to his pioneering work.

From a certain angle, psychoanalysis and its theoretical descendants, broadly known as depth or "dynamic" psychologies, can be viewed as modern psychotherapeutic attempts to scientifically systematize the ancient doctrine of anthropocentric self-knowledge. Clearly, the two are distinct in manifold ways. Hellenistic approaches emphasized the sufficiency of human persons to pursue self-knowledge for wisdom and virtue; the *telos* of that ancient quest was "blessedness," *eudaimonia*. Freud, on the other hand, never explicitly propounded *eudaimonia* as a putative aim of psychoanalysis, but rather the resolution of intrapsychic conflict through insight. Nevertheless, both approaches esteem self-knowledge as a means to an axiological end. In the case of classical psychoanalysis, personal insight is key to the psychotherapeutic process. For both, the regnant doctrine of humanity's "self-sufficiency" would come to be questioned, if to varying degrees and with disparate results. In both systems, allowance was made that a strictly reflexive or intrasubjective self-knowledge can only take us so far.[19] Some aspect of human nature, both would agree, constrains our ability to readily and accurately self-perceive. For Aristotle, it was enough to have friends to foster reflective self-discovery. In the modern age, the "friend" would become an expert professional offering access to the deepest reaches of the psyche. Either way, within both ancient Greek eudaimonistic and modern psychoanalytic frameworks, self-knowledge is central to the project of self-improvement with human wellbeing, broadly construed, as its axiological aim—its ultimate benefit.

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[19]The muted emphasis on relationality in psychoanalysis in early Freudian theory has been replaced with a much stronger accent in latter-day iterations. In reflecting on the "relational turn" that has occurred in contemporary psychoanalysis, Mitchell (2000) observes the degree to "which mind has increasingly been understood most fundamentally and directly in terms of self-other configurations, intrapsychically and interpersonally, present and past, in actuality and in fantasy" (p. xiii).

Contrasting Perspectives

In light of the preceding discussion, the incompatibility of secular and Christian frameworks for self-knowledge should, by now, be evident. According to both the ancient Greeks and modern psychoanalytical theory, knowledge of self is a wholly anthropocentric enterprise. What Calvin holds to be the means and end of self-knowledge—the knowledge of God—is absent in Aristotle and Freud. For ancient Greek philosophy as well as classical psychoanalysis, human beings are basically self-sufficient. They do not need God, even if at times they are prone to overly favorable self-evaluation or even self-deceptive tendencies. They possess a capacity for reflexive and reflective self-perception along an exclusively horizontal axis. Others, such as a friend or psychotherapist perhaps, *may* be instrumental in helping to identify thoughts, associations, and dispositions by which we obfuscate the true nature of self or defensively evade a less sanguine self-understanding. When it comes to influencing self-blindness (i.e., overcoming pathological or sinful forms of resistance such as dissociation and self-deception), the mirroring other may foster the discovery of these tendencies allowing them to be recognized and resolved. Plainly, however, the basis for secular self-knowledge is autonomous human ability. The knowledge of God, as revealed in the Scriptures and in the person and work of Christ, has no bearing on this project. Moreover, eudaimonist "blessedness" or psychotherapeutic wellbeing, the respective benefits of secular self-knowledge, stand within reach for any individual who pursues wisdom and virtue or, alternately, fosters the resolution of intrapsychic conflict.

In contrast to secular perspectives, Calvin holds self-knowledge to be contingent on the knowledge of God, and vice versa. Self-knowledge, as Calvin understood it, is a dipolar or "double" knowledge (Houston, 2000). Since humans are created in the image of God, Calvin believed, in order to truly know self we must know ourselves as we are before God. Moreover, Calvin holds self-knowledge and the knowledge of God to be dialectically conjoined epistemic poles. To remove one or the

other from the equation is to remain finally ignorant of both. For Calvin, therefore, the pursuit of self-knowledge without the knowledge of God is an exercise in futility. Secular paradigms that purport to grant self-discovery divorced from any knowledge of God would be, according to Calvin, perpetuating self-deception at a basal level. Any benefit that may obtain from reflexive or reflective self-discovery while self remains ignorant of its standing before God will ultimately prove inconsequential next to the gain to be had as self begins to perceive itself in the light of divine self-disclosure. Calvin suggests that this pursuit, when devoid of the true wisdom gained only through coextensive knowledge of God *and* self, amounts to the psychospiritual equivalent of resuming construction on the Tower of Babel—a vain exercise in self-defeating autonomy. For Calvin, self-knowledge is necessary for wisdom, but any approach to wisdom—whether ancient or modern— built on a faulty foundation will offer only pyrrhic gains. Apart from a divine perspective and bereft of the light of divine revelation, self remains, in the end, fundamentally self-blind and self-deceived.

In his clear rejection of any secular framework for anthropocentric self-knowledge, Calvin's perspective shares a common emphasis with Augustine on the vertical correspondence of the believer with God (Warfield, 1956). For Calvin, self-knowledge contributes to wisdom when it is related to and contingent on the knowledge of God (Niesel, 1956). Nevertheless, the result of this classical approach to Christian self-knowledge, however, is that it downplays the role of others as instrumental means of self-knowing (Grenz, 2001). Even less clear are the questions of whether and how others may benefit from an individual's growth in self-understanding. The horizontal or "social" dimension of self-knowledge, including the ethical entailments of self–other interactions, plays a less significant role in both Augustine and Calvin. When the means of self-knowledge is limited to its vertical dimension, the ethics of self-knowledge becomes similarly constrained. This is not to say that Calvin was entirely credulous toward Augustine's early appropriation of Hellenism's philosophical eudaimonism (see

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Wolterstorff, 2015).[20] While Augustine differed from the ancient program of self-knowledge divorced from divine revelation, he wrestled over what to make of its axiological emphasis (see Rist, 1996). The ancients believed that wisdom would redound to the individual's wellbeing—a theme clearly enunciated in the Scriptures (e.g., Prov 8:35; Jas 1:4–5). A just and equitable society might well be possible if every individual were to pursue both their own *eudaimonia* with an equal concern for that of others (see Annas, 1993). This emphasis on human *individuals* as both the prime means and beneficiaries of secular self-knowledge would continue to influence ecclesial formulations at least until the Enlightenment. Not until a so-called "relational turn" articulated in the theological anthropologies of Barth, Bonhoeffer, and others would Christian perspectives on the means and end(s) of self-knowledge come to be articulated with a clear social emphasis (Grenz, 2001; see Shults, 2003).

What is the *telos* of secular self-knowledge? For the ancient Greeks it was *eudaimonia* or "the well-lived life" (Wolterstorff, 2010, p. 149; see Annas, 1993).[21] By contrast, as philosophical historian Charles Taylor (1989) observes, the ultimate aim of the contemporary Western self and its knowledge is self-realization: "[S]ubjectivist expressivism has won its way into contemporary culture. . . . The goals are self-expression, self-realization, self-fulfilment, discovering authenticity" (pp. 506–507). With little qualification, Grenz (2001) finds modern, secular psychological theory and psychotherapeutic practice complicit in this inimitably anthropocentric paradigm. But what of *Christian* self-knowledge? How might a Christian pursuit differ, not just in

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[20]Wolterstorff (2008) argues that Augustine appears to have broken with eudaimonism in his later writings (see Chapter 8). Clearly, Augustine's eudaimonist formulations differ from ancient philosophical eudaimonism at least in being their theocentric and, for the most part, eschatological; to wit, "It is characteristic of all men to will to be happy [*beati*], but yet the faith, by which the heart is purified and arrives at happiness, is not characteristic of all. And thus it comes about that one must strive through faith, which all do not will for the happiness which no one cannot but will" (Augustine, 2002, XIII.xx.25; p. 133).

[21]Another term for *eudaimonia* that also reflects contemporary efforts to link ancient and modern ethics is "flourishing" (Cooper, 1986; see Pennington, 2017).

means, but in axiological end? Following Calvin (2008), the highest aim and ultimate *telos* of all things is the glory of God (see also J. Edwards, 1998). As we come to know ourselves in relation to God and contingent on our knowledge of God in Christ, we better behold his glory and bear out the reality of his beauty and worth. Clearly, the New Testament also speaks of an eschatological "blessedness" promised to every individual who pursues their wholeness in Christ (see Pennington, 2017; Matt 24:46; Luke 6:21; 14:14; John 13:17; Gal 3:9; Jas 1:12; 1 Pet 3:14; Rev 14:13; 22:14). Whether in this life or the next, God has promised to reward those who faithfully seek him. Yet, as evidenced in the person and work of Christ, the promise of individual flourishing is inseparably balanced by a call to love and self-sacrifice (e.g., Matt 20:28; Luke 14:27; Eph 4:2-3; Phil 1:21).

As the life of Christ was bound up in love—above all for the Father, yet also for human beings and especially his own people, the church—so too are believers called to forestall, for Christ's sake, their direct, individual pursuit of "blessedness" out of faith that the God who raised Jesus from the dead will also grant them final joy and peace in the age to come (see Heb 12:2). Consequently, a christological ethics of self-knowledge is one that emphasizes a Christiform love for God and others as its primary aim. This is not to say that Christians should eschew their hope in God's promises of eschatological wellbeing (see Rev 21:4).[22] Yet, the source of this blessed hope is in the God who calls us to lay down our lives in order to find them (Matt 10:39), to "deny" self, to pick up our cross and follow Christ (Luke 9:23), and to embody his cruciform demonstration of love for others (John 15:12). In the end, a eudaimonist ethics, while not wholly incompatible with Christianity, nevertheless demands careful qualification in light of the agapic imperative of self-denying, kenotic concern for others (Phil 2:3ff.). Furthermore,

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[22]Christian eudaimonism is, therefore, best cast in an eschatological light. For a eudaimonist reading of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount that carefully notes the "already/not yet" emphasis of human flourishing for the duration of the present age, see Pennington (2017).

Christians understandably wary of the influence of modernity on notions of the self and self-knowledge would do well to consider the example of the one who, though he eternally possesses exhaustive self-knowledge as the divine Son in triune communion, entered into our finite, noetically constrained existence as the incarnate Son of man in order to reconcile us to the Father.

Toward a More Comprehensive Christian Framework

Calvin rightly recognized the dialogical relationship between the knowledge of God and the knowledge of self. Notwithstanding his general insight that both are crucial for wisdom, Calvin does not develop his conclusion much further. Calvin does not, in other words, extend the purview of his theological anthropology to the development of practical and pastoral implications of Christian self-knowledge. Unlike, for example, Augustine or Bonhoeffer whose respective pastoral concern is more consistently evident, Calvin leaves relatively unaddressed the processes by which self-knowledge effects growth in Christiformity. In fact, a broad survey of the history of Christian self-knowledge demonstrates the relative dearth of contemporary efforts to understand the relation between the knowledge of God and of self (Houston, 2000). Although numerous pastoral writers before and after Calvin have contributed to a Christian understanding of self-knowledge, the task yet remains to be undertaken in a contemporary context—one that considers theological and anthropological advances since the Reformation. This lacuna in Reformed pastoral theology is the object of this inquiry, the aim of which is to articulate a Christian framework for overcoming barriers self-knowledge that is rooted in Scripture, consistent with Reformed theanthropology, and that bears implications for believers' growth in Christiformity.

Several fundamental questions bear significant import for the task of constructing a pastoral theology of Christian self-knowledge. At a basic level we must

ask, What do the Scriptures reveal to us about who and what we are, in particular as we consider the theological and anthropological significance of self-knowledge? And what bearing does the believer's union with Jesus Christ hold for self-knowledge? Moreover, a Christian framework for self-knowledge should also consider its fallen inverse, self-deception. Along these lines, a Christian understanding of self-knowledge ought to explore the psychological means by which we manage to see the "speck" in another's eye while avoiding the "plank" in our own (Matt 7:3). This is certainly the case if we mean to overcome this sinful tendency in ourselves and so influence it in others (7:5). As Jesus suggests in his parable of the plank and speck, in order to grow in self-knowledge, believers must overcome a native disinclination for accurate self-perception. Furthermore, we must eventually come to resist our sinful predispositions toward dissociation and self-deception, both of which flourish in fallen human beings struggling to cope with the sequelae of the fall, if we are to assist others in this vital task.

Any practical, pastoral framework for self-knowledge must include two key aspects: means and ends. The present approach assumes that Christology provides the necessary theanthropological normativity for Christian self-knowledge. The knowledge of God and of self are mediated to us by the word/Word of God—which is to say, both obtain by means of the written revelation of God in the Scriptures and, ultimately, in the person and work of Jesus Christ—the Son who perfectly reveals the Father (Heb 1:3; John 14:7). It is axiomatic for any Christian framework that Christ is the means by which we come to know God (John 14:6) and, consequently, ourselves as well. Additionally, the gospel of God's atoning love in Christ is indispensable for deactivating sinful resistance to self-knowledge and effectuating a release from self-blindness and self-deception. From this perspective, knowledge of self-as-sinful before a holy God is a fundamental prerequisite to the appropriation of his offer of grace and forgiveness unto salvation. In this way personal awareness of one's sinfulness illustrates the dialogical relationship of self-knowledge with the knowledge of God. As God makes his glory known to us, our

inevitable subjective response includes an awareness of our sin and a commensurate fear of God (Rev 1:17; 6:16; cf. Ps 111:10).[23] In this light, awareness of self-as-sinful is one of the first "benefits" of the knowledge of God, allowing for healthy expressions of subjective shame, sorrow, and contrition. Without these, there can be no repentance leading to life (2 Cor 7:10). But while this awareness may be the first and most seminal epistemic gain of Christian self-knowledge, it is hardly the last. To the contrary, the ultimate blessing of the Christian life—no less with Christian self-knowledge—is to know the one true God and the Son whom he has sent (John 17:3; cf. Isa 11:9; Hab 2:14).

According to Jesus, God's *telos* for his people is "eternal life." This entails numerous benefits, among which individual blessedness or wellbeing is certainly one (Matt 11:28; 2 Cor 1:4; Rev 21:4). Yet, the implication of Jesus' teaching is that the knowledge *of* God amounts to fellowship *with* him, and with other believers, in a perichoretic communion that he possesses with the Father (John 1:18; 10:15). Thus, the second crucial aspect of a Christian framework for self-knowledge is God's intention that believers participate actively and corporately in a dynamic of perichoretic love shared between the Father and the Son (John 17:20–23). Again, Christ is the means by which believers enter, albeit in limited fashion,[24] into the dynamic of the mutual self-giving that exists within the divine communion (John 14:6, 11; cf. 1 John 5:20). Moreover, Christ is

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[23]There is a close association in Old Testament wisdom literature between the "fear" of the Lord and the "knowledge" of God (Prov 9:10; see Longman, 2015, pp. 100ff.; Packer, 2000). The sort of fear that redounds in genuine knowledge of God, as Calvin (2008) clarifies, is "the voluntary fear flowing from reverence of the divine majesty" rather than a "forced and servile fear which divine judgment extorts" (pp. 13–14).

[24]Drawing on a Hegelian conception of personhood, Pannenberg (1977) suggests a limited anthropological application of the patristic doctrine of *perichoresis* (pp. 182ff.). I have not attempted here to promulgate a Trinitarian anthropology in which human persons mirror the divine being through their relatedness to God and others (contra Moltmann, 1981; cf. Grenz, 2001; Schwöbel & Gunton, 1991). I do, however, intend to draw on the concept of "nature-perichoresis" to explain Christ's prayer in John 17:20–23 that believers would be united to him, and through him to the Father, in some way analogous to his own Spirit-mediated union with the Father. This is not a type of "person-perichoresis" like that which John of Damascus first suggested characterized intratrinitarian relations in his *De fide orthodoxa* (Crisp, 2007; see Otto, 2001). More will be said in Chapter 2 on the nature of the perichoretic knowledge and love that is possible between God and us, and the implications for human relationality.

also, through the working of God's Spirit, the means by which believers perpetuate this dynamic relationally and analogically within the body of Christ (see Bonhoeffer, 2005; McFadyen, 1990). Clearly, the knowledge of God Jesus speaks of in John 17:3 is existential and deeply personal, not merely cognitive or propositional (R. E. Brown, 1982).[25] More than this, Christ prays that believers, through their union with him, would partake analogically in this interpersonal perichoretic knowing with God and others within the body that he shares with the Father. Thus, the aim of self-knowledge within a Christian framework finds its greatest focus not in individual wellbeing, though this is hardly excluded; rather, the *telos* of Christian self-knowledge is *love*—more precisely, the divine love between Father and Son and the participation of his people through the Spirit in that love by means of our individual and corporate union with Christ.

Thesis

The triune God knows himself—and us—exhaustively; and he desires that we should come to know him *and ourselves* to the end that we may love and glorify him accordingly. According the Scripture, nothing in God's nature or ways is hidden from his awareness, nor is his divine self-knowledge truncated or contingent in any way. Human self-knowledge, on the other hand, is wholly conditional on our coming to know ourselves as we are known—created in the image of God for the glory of God so that we might come to know and love him as he is. The highest gift God offers us is "eternal life," which Christ himself describes as coming to know the Father through the Son.

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[25]Brown (1982) explains, "In the Semitic understanding, knowledge is more than intellectual, for it involves an experience of the whole person—that is why 'knowledge' can be used for sexual intimacy. To know God means to share His life" (p. 279). In one memorable passage in 1 John, the writer clearly distinguishes between the two kinds of knowing—the cognitive/objective and the experiential/subjective—with two different forms of the verb stem, γινώσκ-. In the four instances of "to know" that occur in the following pericope the writer employs the present active to denote propositional knowledge, and the perfect to denote intersubjective knowing: "He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world. And by this *we know* [γινώσκομεν] that *we have come to know* [ἐγνώκαμεν] him, if we keep his commandments. Whoever says '*I know* [ἔγνωκα] him' but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this *we may know* [γινώσκομεν] that we are in him: whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked" (1 John 2:2–6).

From which knowledge, the knowledge of ourselves extends instrumentally and contingently. Certainly, the degree to which we may know God and ourselves will be limited by our finite human capacity; and, as fallen creatures, we also suffer from a congenital inclination to remain estranged from God and, so, self-deceived. Yet, we come into increasing conformity with the true image of God-in-Christ, we participate in a Spirit-mediated agapic and perichoretic relationality with him. This covenantal relationality has historically been described as union with Christ. The effectual means by which God sets aside our sin and works out his redemptive plan for us is by bringing us into close communion with his Son. Through and in Christ, God reveals himself to us as he truly is so that we might see ourselves as we truly are. His aim for us includes reversing the relational consequences of the fall—our estrangement from him and from each other—by bringing us into loving communion with himself. To this end the Spirit of Christ labors within us and instrumentally through others within the body of Christ to help us overcome our subjective barriers of dissociation and self-deception, the universal fallen tendencies by which we evade and obfuscate our knowledge of him and ourselves. Understood christologically, therefore, the knowledge of oneself is a divine gift whereby human beings come to image Christ's own self-knowledge.

The Father's knowledge of and love for the Son and the Son's love for and knowledge of the Father are perfect and unchanging, yet dynamic and perichoretic. God's offer of eternal life amounts to his invitation to human beings to participate in the life of God himself. As God, through the revelation of himself in the word/Word, brings his people into loving communion with himself, we grow in both love for and knowledge of God, but also in contingent knowledge of and love for self and others. In this way God grants us his most precious gift—the gift of himself—by which we overcome our estrangement from him and from others, which in turn enables us to move beyond the dissociation and self-deception that characterized our formerly sinful, fallen lives. God's gift of himself in the person of Jesus Christ stands as the only final standard of truth to

which all veridical knowledge of self relates. Consequently, overcoming dissociation and self-deception should be understood as a crucial means of believers' growth in conformity to the image of Christ.

Background

Some contemporary secular accounts of the history of self-knowledge convey the distinct impression that Christianity has had little to offer to the discussion (see, e.g., Gertler, 2011, Chapter 2). To be sure, over the last 500 years Western philosophy has become increasingly disinterested in theistic frameworks and inclined to distance itself from its own Judeo-Christian heritage. Yet, a more sanguine reading of historical Christian writers yields an entirely different perspective. If self-knowledge is a strictly pagan or modernist pursuit, then Christians might do well to avoid it altogether. If, however, as Calvin suggests, it is a fundamental and indispensable requisite for the Christian life, then we should expect both the Scriptures and the Christian theological tradition to address the matter substantively. That being said, it will be necessary to distinguish between secular self-knowledge on the one hand and Christian self-knowledge on the other, due to the fundamental incompatibility of their epistemological and anthropological frameworks. Calvin's anthropological epistemology is rooted in a dipolar dialectic precisely because the Scriptures and the gospel demand it (see Matt 7:23). The point of departure between secular and Christian frameworks, therefore, is the question of whether divine self-disclosure is the only final means of coming to a true knowledge of ourselves. When this key distinction is considered, the studied silence of modern philosophy on the Christian self-knowledge tradition becomes less surprising.[26]

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[26]Modern philosophy's struggle to explain whether and how the self has privileged access to its own mental states and whether, indeed, the self exists at all are also, ultimately, traceable to its rejection of Christ as the means of defining and comprehending what it means to be truly human.

The brief review that follows examines a number of important biblical and historical contributions for a Christian understanding of self-knowledge. For reasons that should become increasingly clear, the discussion will be organized into three main parts. Every theological and anthropological perspective is contextually situated both historically and philosophically, and, as such, interacts with and is influenced by secular thinking. All human knowledge, it bears noting, is socially construed, which is to say, human beings know discursively and dialogically (Clark & Gaede, 1987). What this means both for self-knowledge and for higher order understandings of the self and the nature of its knowledge is that every Christian perspective, whether historical or contemporary, will reflect some degree of secular influence. This is no less the case with Augustine than with Barth. As will be shown, Augustine and Barth approach their explorations of theological anthropology, including their understandings of the human self and self-knowledge, from discrete vantage points. But both perspectives share a common theocentric basis rooted in a commitment to the epistemological and hermeneutical sovereignty of divine revelation. In many ways, their considerable differences disclose the degree to which all merely human discourse is contextual and dialogical.

The Bible occupies the first section of the subsequent review, followed by two historical sections divided according to the authors' fundamental theanthropological perspective on the self and self-knowledge. The hinge on which this division historical pivots is the basic anthropological consideration—whether individual or social—that frames understandings of human self-knowledge. Grenz's (2001) masterful survey of the *imago dei* and its implications for a Christian understanding of the self supplies the impetus for this historical distinction. In subsequent chapters, further connections between the *imago dei*, Christology, modern philosophy and psychology, and ethics will follow the basic contour of this two-fold understanding of Christian self-knowledge. Finally, for ease of reference and also in order to frame the entire discussion in

axiological terms, the two historical sections will be divided according to the system of ethics most plainly suggested by the two basic approaches, whether eudaimonist or agapist (see Wolterstorff, 2010, 2015).

Scripture and Self-knowledge

God does not reveal himself to us in tidy philosophical or psychological categories. Nevertheless, numerous passages of Scripture provide support for Calvin's theological anthropology, namely, his premise that the knowledge of God and the knowledge of self relate mutually and reciprocally. Others further serve to illustrate this epistemic dialectic. In Isaiah 6, for instance, the prophet recounts his vision of Israel's God. His response demonstrates the dialogical relationship between one's knowledge of God and of self. In relating the account of his experience, he writes, "I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up" (v. 1).[27] In quick succession he describes what he sees and hears: the majestic train filling the temple, angels with faces and feet covered as they proclaim the Lord to be utterly holy and glorious, and the shudder that runs through the temple as they speak. Having paused long enough to take in the scene before him, the prophet in dismay exclaims, "Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!" (v. 5). Tellingly, Isaiah's near-instant response to divine self-disclosure is subjective self-discovery (Oswalt, 1986). Evidently, to behold God as he is awakens the prophet to a dipolar awareness of his position respective to God. His reaction—an acknowledgement of his sinfulness and unworthiness—rhetorically links the revelation of God as holy, glorious, and the secondary, consequent revelation of himself as sinful. Moreover, he is not merely hopelessly sinful in relation to God, but is also

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[27]Unless otherwise noted, biblical citations are taken from the English Standard Version (ESV).

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"lost"[28]—estranged or cut off from God—because of his sin (cf. Gen 3:24). He determines that his fate must be sealed until, on God's behalf, one of the angelic attendants touches Isaiah's lips with a burning coal declaring his guilt "taken away," his sin "atoned for" (v. 7).

Isaiah perceives himself and his sin accurately as he gazes not inward, but outward. This is dipolar or reciprocal, rather than reflexive, self-knowledge paradigmatically illustrated. To look upon the holiness of God is to see oneself clearly. As we see ourselves in light of the divine radiance, our self-perception is irrevocably altered. Unlike Isaiah whom God granted a vision of the heavenly throne room, we instead gaze upon God in the mirror of the word/Word. Similar to Isaiah, our response to seeing ourselves as depicted in the Scriptures is often strongly negative. The Scriptures after all serve as a mirror (Jas 1:23) revealing the truth of who we are and how far we, as sinners, have fallen short of the glory of God (Rom 3:23). For this reason, therefore, it should not surprise us when we find ourselves resistant to its searching gaze. In the garden the man and his wife looked away from God in order to seek wisdom and wellbeing autonomously (Gen 3; Wenham, 2014). Yet, the immediate impulse of the first man and his wife upon having eaten the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was to conceal the whole sordid affair from God and from themselves. They attempted to cover the shame of their nakedness—to distance themselves from the reality of their sinfulness and the guilt of what they had done. Then, though the man had freely eaten of the fruit, he attempted to evade guilt by turning on his wife, shifting the blame for his actions to her.

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[28]Isaiah's exclamation, נִדְמֵיתִי, "I am lost" (ESV), is somewhat ambiguous in Hebrew due to the contextually determined meaning of its verbal root, דמה (see Koehler & Baumgartner, 2002). In its niphal (passive) form it can signify being silenced, a rendering which would yield no small amount of irony considering Isaiah's verbal response. It could also be translated anticipatorily, "I am destroyed, ruined" (most English translations). In numerous other occurrences in prophetic contexts, the verb is employed with this sense in anticipation of God's impending judgment on unrepentant cities or nations (Isa 15:1; Jer 47:5; Hos 4:6; 10:7; Obad 5; Zeph 1:11). Isaiah may, in fact, be anticipating that such judgment will fall upon him due to his sin and, should they remain "a people of unclean lips," upon Israel as well. This certainly seems to be God's intention respective to Israel in the oracle to follow (vv. 9–13) (see Oswalt, 1986).

In this way he demonstrates the universal human inclination toward self-deception observed by Aristotle and Freud alike. It would seem that our first parents' archetypal exhibition of defensive evasiveness has passed to us as well (see Johnson & Burroughs, 2000). Moreover, the very thing Isaiah feared—being cut off, estranged from God—was that very day imposed as judgment upon the man and his wife (v. 23). Evidently, our sin and resultant estrangement from God has led causally to both human interpersonal estrangement and to intrapersonal dissociation and self-deception (cf. Rom 1:28–32). The Scriptures, on the other hand, serve to reveal to us both the holiness and moral purity of God, as well as our own bankruptcy. The Bible also discloses to us the means—Christ—by which we may both know God and be reconciled to him, to each other, as well as to the truth of who we are (John 10:40; 14:9; Rom 5:10; 2 Cor 5:18; Col 1:22).

Congenitally, habitually, human beings have labored to conceal the painful reality about ourselves since the fall. Even more pointedly, a careful reading of Scripture reveals our ability to hide ourselves *even from ourselves*. Of particular note in Jesus' Sermon on the Mount is the strong implication that this tendency toward dissociation and self-deception pervades our lives even after we have been reconciled to God through faith in Christ. Throughout his ministry, Jesus condemned the inclination of the socioreligious elite to fulfill the letter of the law while deceiving themselves as to their own underlying motivations (see Matt 23; Mark 7:6). He further cautioned his own followers that their righteousness would need to go beyond that of this ostensibly righteous religious caste (Matt 5:20). "You must be perfect," he warned them, not like the scribes and Pharisees, but "as your heavenly Father is perfect" (5:48; cf. Lev 19:2; Deut 18:3).[29] Yet, a survey of his moral teaching within the Sermon on the Mount reveals the depth to which moral

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[29]Reflecting on the Sermon on the Mount, Charry (1997) summarizes the "foundation" of Jesus' moral ethic for his followers as "imitation of the perfection of their heavenly Father" (p. 76). Hagner (1993) argues that the kind of perfection (τέλειος) in view here is "ethical perfection" (p. 135). Pennington (2017) rejects this gloss as "problematic" preferring instead to borrow from the Greco-Roman virtue tradition with his gloss, "'whole,' 'complete,' or even 'virtuous,'" reflecting his prioritization of the eudaimonist theme of human flourishing or "wholeness" throughout the Sermon (p. 70).

perfection must penetrate in order to qualify as such. For example, in his application of

Yahweh's command against murder (Exod 20:13), Jesus condemns all forms of

unresolved interpersonal conflict between believers (Matt 5:21–26). In similar fashion, he

teaches that lustful intent qualifies as an adulterous act (5:28; see Willard, 1998), the

penalty for which was death under Mosaic law (see Lev 20:10).

Moreover, perfection meant, according to Jesus, a compassionate and generous

disposition even toward one's enemy. As God demonstrates love in causing the sun to rise

and rain to fall on all people without distinction, so too should Christians show love to

even "those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven"

(Matt 5:44–45; see Stott, 1978). According to Jesus, then, the *telos* of Torah is τέλειος,

perfection—a moral, ethicospiritual conformity to the will of God as revealed in the law

(see Matt 19:21; cf. Rom 10:4[30]). Yet, as Jesus taught, perfection must apply to our

intentions and attitudes, as well as our disposition toward others. The clear implication of

his teaching is that outward behavior might serve as did the fig leaves of Adam and Eve,

concealing who we really are and what we have done. Perfection for the believer requires

the full participation of the heart,[31] our perception of which demands "aggressive self-

scrutiny" (Charry, 1997, p. 76). The function of divine revelation is to foster this type of

ethicospiritual self-examination among believers—a fact that becomes increasingly clear

in Jesus' repeated remonstrances of religious and moral hypocrisy that follow.

In laying out the dangers of self-deception, Jesus highlights the fact that even

specifically religious duties may conceal sinful motives. He specifically teaches that

believers ought to give, fast, or pray out of a sincere desire to honor God and not

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[30]Christ is the perfection that the law demands and which, by faith, we grasp only through our union with him: "For Christ is the end [τέλος] of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes" (Rom 10:4).

[31]In modern English usage, the heart has come to stand metonymically for an individual's emotions or affections (see Elliott, 2006). However, in Scripture "heart" (typically, Heb. לֵב; Gr. καρδία) refers more comprehensively to "the center of a person" (Pierre, 2016, p. 241). Sorg (1979) identifies the heart as the psychospiritual organ responsible for human "feeling, thinking, and willing" (p. 181).

themselves. A crucial test for false motives is, therefore, whether one is willing to practice "righteousness" where others cannot see (Via, 2005). As Carson (1999) notes, public prayer and other apparent acts of devotion to God may tempt believers into sinfully drawing approving attention to themselves (p. 58).[32] Sincere Christian spirituality, on the other hand, is humble and quiet—done, as it were, "in secret" (Matt 6:4, 6, 18). The hypocrite has only the appearance of righteousness—without the full and genuine participation of the heart his faith is a sham. It appears that Jesus holds hypocrisy to be the fruit of moral self-deception—a not so subtle willingness to believe the best about one's motives despite clear evidence to contrary (Spiegel, 1999). "Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye," he pointedly inquires, "but do not notice the log that is in your own eye?" (Matt 7:3). Evidently, awareness of another's transgression may be accompanied by a simultaneous blindness to one's own transgression of the same standard—and to an even greater degree, for a plank is surely worse than a speck. Jesus implies that the hypocrite has somehow managed to distance himself from some pertinent aspect of self-knowledge and, in doing so, become self-deceived (1 John 1:8). Dissociation of this sort, when it serves our resistance to veridical self-knowledge, amounts to a sinful defense against an unpleasant reality. Our hearts may be wicked even though our deeds manage to draw the affirmation of others (Ps 12:2; Isa 29:13; Matt 15:8). Jesus condemns the hypocrite not merely for his self-deception but also his self-righteous condemnation of others. Yet, if believers hope to overcome their psychopathological inclination toward dissociation and self-deception, it will be necessary for God to reveal the content of their hearts.

The biblical *locus classicus* illustrating the phenomenology of moral self-deception is undoubtedly the climax of the narrative in 2 Samuel 12:1–15. There, Nathan

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[32]Truly, the hypocrite desires to "please man" (Yuille, 2012, p. 75; cf. Gal 1:10); but in another sense the "reward" (Matt 6:2, 5, 16) derived from acts of man-pleasing religiosity amounts to an ungrounded bolstering of self and a reinforcing of the false front behind which the hypocrite hides.

the prophet confronts King David over his adulterous affair with Bathsheba and subsequent murder of her husband. By way of a clever parable the prophet manages to awaken the king's indignation toward a fictitious poor man deprived of his precious ewe lamb by a greedy landowner. David's response to the prophet's parable graphically illustrates how hypocrisy—the inevitable ethical fruit of epistemic unipolarity[33]—demonstrates the self's ability to recognize another's sin while remaining blind to one's own. Though himself guilty of adultery and murder, David responds condemningly in response to the rich man's pitiless mistreatment of his less privileged neighbor. "As the Lord lives," he decrees self-righteously, "surely the man who has done this deserves to die. He must make restitution for the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing and had no compassion" (vv. 5b–6). But by now the prophet's rhetorical trap has been set. "You are the man!," he cries (v. 7), before pronouncing the penalty for David's sin: for all that David has done "secretly," God would bring about public judgment in kind upon him and his household (v. 12).[34] Until that moment the king had, presumably, dissociated himself from any experience of guilt or shame to the extent that he could, with no sign of embarrassment or contrition, pass summary judgment on another. He would require Nathan's prophetic peroration to trigger an awareness of himself and his actions. Seeing himself more clearly than he had previously, he acknowledges, "I have sinned against the LORD" (v. 13; cf. Ps 51:3).

Dissociation serves our resistance to self-knowledge by fostering self-deception. If the offending truth about ourselves can be hidden from self, deleted from the record, as it were, we are then free to believe about ourselves what, all things being considered, is patently false. In this epistemically detached state, we believe ourselves to

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[33]Cf. Van Til's (1969) description as "monistic" thinking what I have here referred to as unipolar self-knowledge (p. 52).

[34]David's prophesied comeuppance is found in 2 Samuel 15 through 18 (esp. 16:20–22). Of note, however, is God's gracious commutation of the legal judgment mandated by the law in cases of adultery (see Lev 20:10) in response to David's contrition and humble confession (2 Sam 12:13).

be "perfect," though, at some level just below the horizon of our present awareness, we know better. Resistance to self-knowledge serves the self-deceptive inclination sin arouses within us. Yet, as the story of David demonstrates, God often employs instrumental means of making his people aware of their sin should their internal sense of wrongdoing fail. David saw himself clearly when God revealed through the prophet the truth of David's sin. Thus, the "mirror" in this case was not the Scriptures, per se, but a prophetic emissary operating on God's behalf (not unlike the seraph in Isaiah's vision). Jesus told his followers, we do well to note, that they would be able to assist in speck removal once they have dealt with their own planks (Matt 7:5). Certainly, Nathan offered his king an opportunity to see himself and his sin more clearly. In doing so, the prophet illustrates the need for believers to faithfully embody the mirror of the word/Word for social benefit, particularly as others may persist in a state of sinful dissociation and self-deception (cf. Gal 6:1ff.).

**Self-Knowledge in Christian
Eudaimonist Contexts**

Historical Christian pastoral theology did not suffer, as modern expressions do, from an artificial bifurcation between theology and anthropology (Purves, 2001). Prior to the advent of modernism, the theology of the church related inseparably, albeit propaedeutically, to the practical and ethical concerns of believers (Charry, 1997). Like the ancient Greeks who held the pursuit of wisdom to be instrumental for human flourishing, premodern Christian theology viewed the pursuit of true wisdom—the knowledge of God and of self—to be intimately connected to the attainment of the blessed life.[35] According to Wolterstorff (2010), Hellenist philosophy held "that the

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[35]The dichotomy between theological and anthropological discourse now extant in modern Christianity was influenced by Cartesian dualism. Kant reified Descartes and then proceeded to widen this epistemological and discursive gulf between the theology of the church and the realm of human existence and experience (Grenz, 2001; see Shults, 2003). Prior to the modern shift toward epistemological compartmentalization and atomization, Christian anthropology shared a close relationship with the theological concerns of the church. With the advent of the modern age, "science" came to occupy the place

ultimate and comprehensive goal of each of us is that we live our lives as well as possible, the well-lived life being, by definition, the happy life, the *eudaimōn* life" (Wolterstorff, 2010, p. 150).[36] Christian eudaimonism, as we might expect, differs from its secular counterparts in terms of means. In other words, eudaimonist Christianity maintains that blessedness comes not by autonomous human means but as a result of seeking God above all others things (see Matt 25:34).[37] The eudaimonist pursuit of Christian self-knowledge, then, relates to its ancient antecedents in stressing the *individual* gains of a well-examined, well-lived life—wisdom, blessedness—as its fruit. Furthermore, these Christian approaches to self-knowledge demonstrate some affinity with secular eudaimonist frameworks in stressing the capacity of individuals to pursue self-knowledge solely in the context of one's vertical relationship to God.

Augustine. After coming to Christ, Augustine, who prior to his conversion to Christianity had gleaned heavily in the fields of Platonic idealism, endeavored to establish and defend the faith from its more cultured intellectual despisers. Augustine's pre-conversion training in secular philosophy and rhetoric would serve him well in this

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of primacy formerly afforded to theology (C. Taylor, 1989). Charry (1997) is undoubtedly correct that premodern Christianity's "theological realism" (p. 6) offers a more integrated approach to the Christian life than modernity's segmented, rationalistic, system(s) of truth. To be sure, it is decidedly un-modern to propound a mutual, reciprocal conception of the relationship between the knowledge of God—the concern of theology—and the knowledge of ourselves—the anthropological question.

[36]Wolterstorff (2015) notes several pitfalls, from a Christian perspective, of eudaimonist ethical frameworks. He considers it to be "similar to egoism in that it is too agent-oriented" (p. 5). This is not to say, however, that eudaimonism necessarily leads to an axiological rat race with every human competing for an individual share of wellbeing at the expense of others. The ancients held that "virtue" would provide a healthy check on the excessive, or self-serving pursuit of happiness (Annas, 1993). Nevertheless, the New Testament inverts classical eudaimonism by elevating a "blessedness" that, counterintuitively, comes through suffering and self-sacrifice (see Acts 5:14; Rom 5:3; 8:17; 1 Cor 6:7; 2 Cor 1:6; Eph 3:13; Phil 3:10; 2 Tim 2:3; 4:5; Jas 1:2; 5:10; 1 Pet 3:14; 4:13). The Beatitudes are notable in this regard (Matt 5:3–11).

[37]As previously stated, eudaimonism is not wholly incompatible with Christianity. The distinctions being drawn here are subtle and should not be construed as suggestive of a dichotomy between either (1) eudaimonist and agapist systems of ethics, (2) individual or social anthropologies and psychologies, or (3) the ontological categories of substance and relation. Rather, as I hope to convey in the course of this work, the Bible generally and the Christ event in particular convey a hierarchical prioritization of the latter side of each of these dialectics.

effort (P. Brown, 2000). His writings would greatly benefit the patristic and medieval churches as they contended for apologetic and pedagogic clarity and consistency (González, 2015). Without question, Augustinian epistemology views the secular pursuit of self-knowledge to be a misguided and ill-fated enterprise. Yet, he does not suggest abandoning the quest altogether; rather, he reformulates it in expressly Christian terms (Rist, 1996). In Book Ten of his monumental treatise, *On the Trinity* (2002), Augustine proffers a Christian interpretation of the ancient Delphic maxim:

> Why, then, was it [the mind; Lat. *mens*] commanded to know itself? I believe it was so commanded that it might consider itself and live according to its nature, that is, that it might desire to be ruled according to its nature, namely, under Him to whom it ought to be subject, and above all those things to which it is to be preferred. (X.v.7; p. 49)

Plato and Augustine, it seems, shared a similar perspective on the good of self-knowledge.[38] Nevertheless, Augustine departs from the ancient Greeks when it comes to the question of means, whether human or divine. From a Christian standpoint, the autonomous pursuit of self-knowledge for the sake of obtaining happiness must surely be doomed to failure (Luke 11:28; cf. Matt 7:23). To remain ignorant of God, Augustine suggests, is to remain ignorant of self and amounts to living contrary to one's nature. There is an inherent contradiction, then, in any pursuit of autonomous self-knowledge. The entire enterprise, when accompanied by the simultaneous rejection of the source and means of veridical self-knowledge, is self-defeating. Augustine (2002) clarifies how sin has made it possible for human beings to distance themselves from knowledge of their contingency: "For [the mind] does many things through evil desires, as though it had forgotten itself" (X.v.7; p. 49). We forgot ourselves at precisely the moment we failed to recall what we knew of God.

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[38]Wolterstorff (2010) interprets Augustine with considerable nuance on this point. On the one hand, he argues that Augustinian anthropology depends to a great extent on a Platonist or Neoplatonist framework (p. 191). Yet, he also perceives a shift from Platonic "ascent" in Augustine's earlier works to Christian (eschatological) "anticipation" in his later writings (see pp. 200ff.). I would simply argue that Augustine reinterprets Hellenistic eudaimonism in light of the love-imperative in Scripture. He does not, as Wolterstorff seems to imply, reject a Platonist ethics, but rather, as Rist (1996) argues, he "baptizes" it.

In Books Nine through Fourteen, Augustine contends that human beings are psychological analogues of the Trinity.[39] Among other things, he views the threefold constitutional capacity of the mind for self-awareness (ontology), self-knowledge (epistemology), and self-love (axiology) as an image of the triunity of the divine nature (IX.v.8; p. 30).[40] Human beings, he believed, image the divine nature incompletely, imperfectly, and inconsistently, yet, as they seek to know—and love—self as created in the image of God they may grow in knowledge and love of the One from whom this image derives. By contrast, when we seek to know and love self autonomously, an idolatrous self-love is consummated: "[N]ot that the creature ought not to be loved," he clarifies, "but if that love for him is referred to the Creator, it will no longer be desire [*cupiditas*] but love [*caritas*]. For desire is present when the creature is loved on account of himself" (IX.viii.34; p. 34). Due to the fall, our capacity for self-knowledge is both damaged and limited by the corrupting influence of sin. Instead of seeking to know—and love—oneself as a bearer of God's image, sinful human beings instead craft their own images of self to "know" and love.

The fundamental anthropological sin of the Greeks, Augustine concludes, was their desire to know and love self autonomously, self-reliantly (see Brown, 2000, p. 170). They ignored, moreover, the incapacity of human beings to know truly on account of their sin and congenital self-deception; whereas, paradoxically, true wisdom comes through acknowledging one's self-ignorance—strength, as Jesus suggests, comes through

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[39]Rist (1996) explains, "Augustine's minimal meaning is that our minds are constituted by three activities, only formally distinct, which he eventually prefers to identify as 'self-memory, self-understanding and self-willing.' . . . These activities in God are obviously perfect, for he knows who he is, and knows it all the 'time,' but they are imperfect in us, though we can become more and more godlike" (pp. 145–146). Houston (2000) dismisses Augustine's analogy as a "fancied correspondence between us and God" not supported by Scripture (p. 323).

[40]Charles Taylor (1989) notes the lengths to which Augustine went to link the mind/soul as the center of human subjectivity with the tri-Personhood of God. The latter (Augustine, 2002) employs Trinitarian language to describe the mind's relationship to self-knowledge and self-love: "And so there is a certain image of the Trinity: the mind itself, its knowledge, which is its offspring, and love as a third; these three are one and one substance. The offspring is not less, while the mind knows itself as much as it is; nor is the love less, while the mind loves itself as much as it knows and as much as it is" (IX.xii.18; p. 40).

confessing one's weakness (Luke 18:13–14). If the Greeks had truly sought wisdom, Augustine (2010) determines, "They should cry with the very bone and marrow of their inmost experience: 'I have said, O Lord, have mercy on me: heal my soul; for I have sinned before thee.' In this way, by the sure routes of divine mercy, they would be led into wisdom" (III.ii.5). Healing for the estranged self comes through acknowledging before God one's weakness and incapacity. Christian self-knowledge, according to Augustine, demands the acknowledgement of one's fallen standing before a holy God.

In his *Confessions* (2009), Augustine's rejection of Platonist piety is quite personally portrayed. Brown (2000) notes its distinctiveness respective to the typical autobiographies of Augustine's day: far from an "affirmation of a cured man," the *Confessions* amounts to the "self-portrait of a convalescent" (p. 171).[41] Therein, Augustine outlines a basic psychology of sin and self-knowledge by presenting his own life prior to Christ as a case study of dissociation and self-deception. He reflects in great and intimate detail on the growth in his self-understanding that took place as God intervened in the midst of a surprise visit from a mutual acquaintance. The visitor, Ponticianus, told of having recently encountered one who had "experienced a conversion inwardly" to the Christian faith, and who was now determined to leave his service to worldly ambition in order to pursue Christ:

> This was the story Ponticianus told. But while he was speaking, Lord, you turned my attention back to myself. You took me up from behind my own back where I had placed myself because I did not wish to observe myself, and you set me before my face so that I should see how vile I was, how twisted and filthy, covered in sores and ulcers. And I looked and was appalled, but there was no way of escaping from

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[41]Warfield (1956) also endeavors to show that the *Confessions* of Augustine differs in substance and intent from those "simple autobiographies" that concern themselves with "unveiling, uncovering to the sight of the world what were better perhaps hidden from all eyes but God's" (p. 338). Warfield's concern to distinguish the *Confessions* from its secular, humanist parallels, however, leads him at times into false dichotomy. So, for example, in spite of its title and Augustine's innumerable self-references throughout, Warfield concludes, "His actual subject is not himself, but the goodness of God" (p. 338). But surely Augustine's subject is not *either* himself or God; rather, it is both. Warfield, in electing to focus exclusively on the divine pole, departs rhetorically and conceptually from Augustine's own understanding of self-knowledge, specifically, that it relates mutually and reciprocally to the knowledge of God.

myself. If I tried to avert my gaze from myself, his story continued relentlessly, and you once again placed me in front of myself; you thrust me before my own eyes so that I should discover my iniquity and hate it. I had known it, but deceived myself, refused to admit it, and pushed it out of my mind. (VIII.vii.16; pp. 144–145)

The conviction Augustine felt upon hearing Ponticianus's tale only intensified as he sat alone afterwards. Brought to the limits of his own self-reliance, he considered what he terms "that grand struggle in my inner house" (VIII.viii.19; p. 146). Awakened to an awareness of himself as fallen and helpless, he sought for remedy in Scripture. Therein he would come to adduce from his internal conflict the presence of a "morbid condition of the mind": "I was in conflict with myself and was dissociated from myself [*dissipabar a me ipso*; lit., rent asunder by myself]" (VIII.x.22; p. 148).

Augustine's keenly described experience of coming to self-awareness via divine disclosure exemplifies the conversion from unipolar to dipolar self-knowledge that occurs when the self comes to perceive itself in the light of divine truth. Separated and estranged from God, self cannot perceive or know itself truly, though, as the Greeks remind us, the desire for self-knowledge remains. "[T]he human mind, so blind and languid, shamefully and dishonorably wishes to hide, and yet does not wish anything to be concealed from itself" (X.xxiii.34; p. 200). Augustine's self-blindness and self-deception stemmed from his sinful self-reliance, which, ultimately, served to illustrate his estrangement from the God in whose image he was made. Nevertheless, God, in his mercy, overcame his congenital self-deception[42] by means of his gracious disclosure of Augustine's sinful, shameful state and his offer of Christ as the means of reconciliation. For Augustine, the problem with the pagan pursuit of self-knowledge lay in a failure to pursue self-understanding in the light of God's understanding of us. Augustine holds that true knowledge of God fosters a true understanding of self. As his experience

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[42]Augustine (2012b) defends the orthodoxy of a doctrine of "original" sin against the claims of Pelagianism, a heterodox perspective on human goodness and ability (see Sanlon, 2014). One might argue that Pelagianism effectively demonstrates the sinful tendency, even among ostensible believers, to dissociate from veridical knowledge of ourselves, and specifically from the impotence of our fallen wills apart from God's grace (Ps 51:5; Rom 5:12; Eph 2:8).

demonstrates, the Scriptures are indispensable to this process of dipolar self-discovery. Yet, it is worth noting the instrumental role Ponticianus played in Augustine's conversion experience.[43]

Gregory. By the early Middle Ages, the Christian eudaimonism of Augustine would come to be increasingly influenced by a number of historical developments. Clebsch and Jaekle (1994) note the degree to which two factors in particular determined the pastoral aims of the church: the Romanization of the Germanic tribes and the growth of the monastic orders.[44] As pagan and Christian belief systems came to be syncretized within the culture, the emphasis of Christian teaching shifted by necessity from theology to ethics. The pastoral writers of the day increasingly stressed the need for virtuous behavior as the measure of one's devotion to Christ. They offered inductive guidance for faithful Christian living and casuistic case studies for a variety of pastoral caregiving scenarios. As a result of the church's emphasis on Christian living and promulgation of biblical ethical standards, the *telos* of self-knowledge seems to have flattened considerably. The aim of self-examination for early medieval pastors often amounted to determining whether a parishioner had committed a sinful act, had sheltered a sinful motive, or had failed to perform some ethical duty (see Ps 139:23–24). Driving this inward quest was the assumption inherited from Augustine that the well-examined, virtuous life would redound in wellbeing, *eudaimonia*, whether in this life or in the life to come.

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[43]Endeavoring to defend against a spirituality of "interiority," Houston (2000) offers the following formula based on his understanding of "Augustinian self-knowledge": "True self-knowledge comes only through knowledge of God; knowledge both of self and of God comes only through the Bible" (p. 313). What is less clear in his explication of Augustine is the role human relationality plays in mediating the knowledge of God and of self.

[44]The latter, they imply, may well have been a reaction against the former (see pp. 21–23). As the prevailing culture came to be increasingly characterized by values and practices alien to Christianity, the monastery served as a refuge and retreat from the world, thus, carrying considerable appeal.

Though largely unknown to modern readers, Gregory the Great's (1978) manual for pastors has been called "the most influential book in the history of the pastoral tradition" (Purves, 2001, p. 56), having far outstripped works by other pastoral writers. The success of Gregory's *Pastoral Care* was undoubtedly due to a number of factors (see Oden, 1984), though the nature of its appeal for the present study is the degree to which Gregory's approach assumes the reality of the telic dynamic of self-knowledge, as also with its inimical inverse, self-deception. He offers extensive advice to pastors on assisting individual believers in the task of self-examination. For this reason, in many ways Gregory's approach represents the practical, pastoral outworking of an Augustinian theological anthropology (G. R. Evans, 1986; Houston, 2000).

For Gregory, the *telos* of Christian spirituality and pastoral care was the promotion in the believer of "virtue," albeit as informed by the Scriptures rather than the secular standards of pagan philosophy. As becomes clear from his concept of *consideratio* (consideration), he held that virtuous behavior required the examination of the thoughts and motives of the inner self (2 Cor 13:5; cf. Heb 14:2). Evans (1986) defines Gregory's notion of *consideratio* as "the exercise of an introspection which examines not only the inner man, but also his outward actions," amounting essentially to "a way of self-knowledge" (pp. 19–20). To discern the meaning and value of a particular deed—whether it be virtuous or, perhaps, vice masquerading as virtue—requires careful, humble reflection on both the deed itself and also on one's motives. Furthermore, when accompanied by *contemplatio* (contemplation, that is, of God), *consideratio* allows the believer to come to a "balance" between "the spiritual and the carnal," which correspond respectively to the things of God and of self (Purves, 2001). This notion of "balance" points out the dialectical and dialogical dynamic embedded within Gregory's approach to Christian spirituality and pastoral care. The individual who focuses only on outward appearances may easily become self-deceived.

Taking up Gregory's theme of "balance," Oden (1984) notes his pastoral concern that parishioners not be permitted to shelter hidden motives under a veneer of virtue. He sought, Oden observes, "to nurture in the parishioner an appropriate balance of excellent behaviors without the self-deception that invites vice to parade as virtue" (p. 56). To wit, Gregory (1978) advises the pastor to

> understand that vices commonly masquerade as virtues. Often, for instance, a niggard passes himself off as frugal, while one who is prodigal conceals his character when he calls himself open-handed. Often inordinate laxity is believed to be kindness, and unbridled anger passes as the virtue of spiritual zeal. . . . Wherefore, it is necessary that the ruler of souls [i.e., pastor] discern with care and vigilance virtues from vices. (p. 78)

The duty of the pastor, then, is to bring the individual to an awareness of this inner dichotomy while demonstrating sensitivity to the psychospiritual turmoil such insight may bring in order to promote intrasubjective change reflective of godliness. Gregory assumes self-deception to be "a constant tendency of the fallen will"; but he also advocates "[r]eality based self-knowledge [as] one of the central aims of a healing process" (Oden, 1984, p. 58). Finally, in the last section of his treatise, Gregory enumerates an extensive list of cases in which therapeutic practice in pastoral settings may be undertaken. Gregory's psychological insight and pastoral approach demonstrate his awareness of the necessity of dipolar self-knowledge for Christian edification frameworks.

John Calvin. As will be shown, the discussion of Christian self-knowledge has moved substantially past a premodern, eudaimonistic formulation. Nevertheless, Calvin, situated as he is at the cusp of modernity, largely summarizes the advances in Christian thinking prior to the modern age. As such, he predates the bifurcated epistemology of modernism. Like Augustine and Gregory, who leaned heavily on Hellenist philosophy, Calvin also holds a primarily individualistic perspective on self-knowledge. Calvin's theological anthropology differs from the earlier writers, however, in its degree of sophistication and systemization. His basic outline of Christian self-

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knowledge entails three key parameters. These three parameters can be said to establish the framework of what may be understood historically as a Christian framework for eudaimonist self-knowledge.

According to the first of these, knowledge of God and knowledge of self are related reciprocally, each assuming the other in mutual entailment.[45] For human beings, therefore, the knowledge of God leads to knowledge of self and vice versa. Warfield (1956) summarizes Calvin's thought in terms of humanity's dependence on its Maker:

> The knowledge of God is given in the very same act by which we know self. For when we know self, we must know it as it is: and that means we must know it as dependent, derived, imperfect, and responsible [i.e., respond-able] being. To know self implies, therefore, the co-knowledge with self of that on which it is dependent, from which it derives, by the standard of which its imperfection is revealed, to which it is responsible. Of course, such a knowledge of self postulates a knowledge of God, in contrast with whom alone do we ever truly know self. (p. 31)

So, self cannot be known purely autonomously. In order to apprehend self—which is to say, the form and quality of one's own nature, capacities, and particularities—a contrasting object is necessary as well. Following Aristotle, then, self-knowledge is contingent on a reflective other. In contrast to Aristotle, however, Calvin, like Augustine, held that the proper foil for human self-knowledge is knowledge of the divine. The metaphor he most frequently employs to characterize this reciprocal relationship is that of a mirror (Torrance, 1957).[46] Moreover, Calvin holds that God reveals himself to human beings through both the word of the Scriptures and, supremely, through the Word-made-

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[45]Barth (1995) characterizes Calvin's first parameter as the "synthetic" knowledge of God and self (p. 163). Dowey (1994) terms it the "correlative" aspect, "by which we learn the intimate connection that exists between the knowledge of God and of ourselves" (p. 18).

[46]Along these lines Calvin (2008) observes, "[I]t is evident that man never attains to a true self-knowledge until he have [*sic*] 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. Convinced, however, we are not, if we look to ourselves only, and not to the Lord also—he being the only standard by the application of which this conviction can be produced" (p. 5).

flesh, that is, through Christ (John 1:14; Heb 1:1–3). Only by gazing into the mirror of the word/Word can human persons see and know themselves as they truly are.[47]

Second, Calvin speaks of the knowledge of God and self in relational and interpersonal, rather than propositional, terms (Torrance, 1957). The distinction, which in basic terms amounts to the difference between objective and inter/subjective knowledge, is critical for understanding Calvin's epistemology. Central to his conception of the knowledge of God is its existential character, which Dowey (1994) refers to as "knowledge that determines the existence of the knower" (p. 26). A merely simple, objective knowledge of God involves the intellect, but, as such, may never shed constructive light on the self. As Torrance (1957) explains, "[Humanity] was created an intelligent being capable of response to and communication with God, and created such that his true life depends on the maintenance of that communication" (p. 45). For Calvin, knowledge of God is subjective and interpersonal—a knowledge that arises, in other words, in the context of relationship. This higher order knowledge of God arouses a personal, existential self-knowledge—a *knowing as I am known* (see 1 Cor 13:12)—that transcends a simple, objective—i.e., propositional—knowledge of self. Torrance (1957) concludes from this that, for Calvin, the knowledge of God is "not real" until and unless it stimulates a reciprocal knowledge of self (p. 13). By means of divine self-revelation through his word/Word, God brings human beings to a dipolar knowledge of himself. Modernist objections notwithstanding, the mutual, reciprocal knowledge of God and of self is not only possible but requisite for the third aspect of Calvin's thought.

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[47]Though Calvin's argument follows that of Augustine, whose own formulation amounts to a Christian reinterpretation of Platonic thought, it was Aristotle, Plato's chief interlocutor, who proposed the necessity of a mutual, intersubjective self-perception for growth in self-knowledge (Shields, 2016). In his *Magna Moralia* he argues that the bond of friendship provides the suitable preconditions within which we may come to perceive ourselves truly: "[A]s we are, we are not able to see what we are from ourselves. . . . As, then, when we wish to see our own face, we do so by looking into a mirror, in the same way, when we wish to know ourselves, we can obtain that knowledge by looking at our friend. For the friend is, as we assert, another I" (2.15).

Third and finally, knowledge of God and self, for Calvin, is transformational (Champion, 1988; Charry, 1997). The notion that self-knowledge might increase solely for its own sake is, therefore, foreign to Calvin. To the contrary, by divine design dipolar self-knowledge is indispensable for the renewal of the self. In other words, the individual who does not come to know self *as self is known by God* will never be finally healed or delivered from its deepest and most profound pathology—sin. In this Calvin offers a proleptic admonition to a strictly humanist, self-serving pursuit of "wellbeing" through self-knowledge such as that implicit in modern depth psychologies (see Johnson, 2007). Dipolar self-knowledge entails a growing awareness of one's faults and failings before a holy God. Specifically, as we come to know self in light of who God is, we are revealed to be constitutionally and functionally deficient by contrast (Rom 3:23). This knowledge—that self is less-than—incites a dynamic of self-displeasure that impels a quest for transformation. In fact, for Calvin the aim or *telos* of self-knowledge is transformation (see Champion, 1988). He (2008) concludes,

> When viewing our miserable condition since Adam's fall, all confidence and boasting are overthrown, we blush for shame, and feel truly humble. . . . In this way, we feel dissatisfied with ourselves, and become truly humble, while we are inflamed with new desires to seek after God, in whom each may regain those good qualities of which all are found to be utterly destitute. (p. 147)

In coming to know ourselves as we are known, Calvin says, we find ourselves to be "utterly destitute." But the quest for transformation drives the self back to its Maker who alone is able to redeem and reinstate those "good qualities" lost by humanity at the fall. The pursuit of self-improvement, in other words, is firstly a quest for dipolar self-knowledge. And dissatisfaction that arises in the context of this quest is a symptom of humanity's disconformity to its divine design—the cure for which comes as God reveals more of himself and draws us into deeper fellowship with himself. Charry's (1997) term for this transformational dynamic is "theo-therapy," a process she argues will involve the "destruction of the self in preparation for the reconstruction of a new self" (p. 215; cf. Gal 2:20). This principle, according to Charry, lies at the heart of Calvin's anthropology and

psychology. Human beings are hopelessly estranged from their Maker and, so long as this state of affairs persists, we remain alienated from a knowledge of ourselves as we truly are. As matters stand, our only hope is that God should reveal himself to us, and by means of his gracious choice bring us into a state of mutual knowing and reconciliation. Only in this way did Calvin believe that the self could be transformed from its broken and estranged estate into the renewed image and likeness of through restored fellowship with its Creator (see Eph 4:24).

Richard Baxter

Following their break from the Roman church, the dissenting voices of English Puritanism applied their Reformational approach to theology with particular emphasis on pietistic spirituality and a renewed commitment to principled pastoral care (Deckard, 2010; Kapic & Gleason, 2004; Lewis, 1997; Packer, 2010; Yuille, 2013). Along these lines, Johnson (2007) regards the Puritans as "basically pastoral theologians" noting the emphasis within their writings "to comfort and encourage believers in their soul struggles" (p. 61). On the question of whether human beings might come to veridical self-knowledge apart from the knowledge of God, with Calvin, the Puritans were decidedly skeptical.[48] Perhaps more than any other form of Christian spirituality, English Puritanism endeavored specially to root out and undermine self-deception (Badgett, in press). Motivated by concern for sincerity in the Christian life and growth in personal holiness, the Puritans assiduously—at times, ruthlessly—scoured their hearts for signs of

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[48]In language perhaps shocking and foreign in the context of postmodern Western Christendom's regnant therapeutic deism, the Puritans excoriated the fallen human heart as hopelessly wicked and deceitful—full of "unsavory nastiness, odious ugliness" (Dyke, 2013, p. 14). Indeed, it is nothing less than "the fountain from whence all the streams of corruption flow," "the womb in which all these monsters are conceived," and "the shell in which these cockatrices are hatched" (p. 235; see Isa 59:5). The heart is not to be trusted, as it is "the greatest supplanter, the most crafty and subtle cheat of all . . . than which nothing is more treacherous and false" (Flavel, 2012, pp. 30–31; see Gen 6:5). The Puritans, moreover, sought to undermine confidence in the trustworthiness of one's own heart and to foster a vigilant watchfulness over it: "There is almost nothing *but* deceit in our hearts; and therefore a godly man is watchful over his own heart" (Greenhill, 2010, p. 9, author's emphasis; see Prov 4:23; 7:25)—though they held this task to be among "the first and highest rank of difficulties" for practicers of "true religion" (Flavel, 2012, p. 4; see Jer 17:9).

unacknowledged sin and self-deceit. Packer (2010) observes, "The Puritans ripped up consciences in the pulpit and urged self-trial in the [prayer] closet," in service to the twin tasks of "self-suspicion" and "self-examination" (p. 117).[49] They held as their charter for this practice of self-scrutiny the Bible's teaching on the fallen nature of the human heart and its tendency toward self-blindness and self-deception.

In 1656, Richard Baxter published his importunate call to biblical and holistic pastoral care known today by its abbreviated title, *The Reformed Pastor* (1974). For 350 years it has remained in print and today stands as one of the classics of the Puritan age (Lim, 2004). Baxter's principle agenda within the treatise is to call Puritan ministers to a rigorous and disciplined pastoral ministry that advanced Reformational piety within the church as well as the home[50] (Purves, 2001). Like Gregory before him, Baxter sought to offer inductive guidance to pastors for the sake of their parishioners. Also like Gregory, Baxter's critique of his peers included the admonition that they inquire into the state of their own souls as well. Along these lines, Baxter (1974) laments, "Too many [ministers] do somewhat for other men's souls, while they seem to forget that they have souls of their own to regard" (p. 134). It is all too easy, he notes, to preach on the dangers of self-ignorance and self-deception while remaining personally self-deceived:

> That those ordinances of God should be the occasion of our delusion, which are instituted to be the means of our conviction and salvation! and that while we hold the looking-glass of the gospel to others, to show them the face and aspect of their souls, we should either look on the back part of it ourselves, where we can see nothing, or turn it aside, that it may misrepresent us to ourselves! (p. 55)

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[49]Packer (2010) further notes, "[I]t seems undeniable that the Puritans' passion for spiritual integrity and moral honesty before God, their fear of hypocrisy in themselves as well as in others, and the humble self-distrust that led them constantly to check whether they had not lapsed into religious play-acting before men with hearts that had gone cold towards God, *has no counterpart in the modern-day evangelical ethos*" (p. 217; author's emphasis).

[50]Baxter specifically emphasized the need for catechism and church discipline as means of engendering proper Christian piety within the church. Moreover, he challenged pastors to imitate his example of visiting the homes of his parishioners on a regular basis to inquire into their spiritual state and encourage their growth in holiness by various practical means (Packer, 2012).

The preacher of righteousness, then, runs the risk of employing the Scriptures—God's means or mirror ("looking-glass") of revealing the self as it truly is—as a pious fig leaf behind which he may hide his own sin and shame. This form of hypocrisy is, to be sure, the very sin of which Jesus accused the religious class in his own day (see Matt 23). Baxter sought to influence this tendency by exhorting ministers to "be humble self-accusers" (p. 135): "I beseech every man to exercise a strict jealousy and search of his own heart" (p. 142).

The relationship of self-knowledge and self-ignorance figures even more prominently in Baxter's treatise on 2 Corinthians 13:5[51] entitled, *On the Mischiefs of Self-Ignorance and the Benefits of Self-Acquaintance* (Baxter, 2010). Therein he reiterates the now-familiar eudaimonist perspective on the mutuality between the knowledge of God and of self, "He that is a stranger to himself . . . is a stranger to God, and to all that might denominate him wise or happy" (p. 41). How, in other words, can human beings experience "blessedness" never having come to know themselves in light of the knowledge of God in whose image they are made, yet against whom, as sinners, they stand in stark relief? As Gregory applied the gains of an Augustinian theological anthropology within a medieval pastoral theology, so Baxter expands the Reformational theology of Calvin in practical terms (Houston, 2000). In language similar to that of Calvin, Baxter holds the knowledge of self and of God to be reciprocal and mutually interdependent:

> The knowledge of ourselves as men, doth greatly conduce to our knowledge of God. Here God is known but darkly, and as in a glass, and by his image, and not as face to face. And, except his incarnate and his written Word, what glass revealeth him so clearly as the soul of man? We bear a double image of our Maker: his natural image in the nature of our faculties; and his moral image in their holy qualifications, in the nature of grace, and grace of the new man. By knowing ourselves, it is easy to know that there is a God; and it much assisteth us to know what he is, not only in his attributes and relations, but even in the Trinity itself. (p. 64)

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[51]"Know ye not yourselves" (ASV).

The keys to such knowledge of self and of God will, according to Baxter, be "his incarnate and his written Word"—that is, the self-revelation of God as discovered in the person and work of Christ (John 14:9; Col 1:15; Heb 1:3) and elucidated in the Bible.

In listing the chief "hindrances" to true self-knowledge Baxter cites the sins of pride,[52] "which strongly inclineth men to think well of themselves, and to desire that all others do so too" (p. 362), along with an idolatrous, countertherapeutic form of "self-love" that "so blindeth men that they can see no great evil in themselves" (p. 369). With the advent of these epistemic defeaters, the whole enterprise veers toward the pole of autonomy and away from the fear and love of God, thwarting any progress toward veridical self-knowledge and genuine wellbeing. His chief pastoral concern is to engender the humble pursuit of veridical self-knowledge in the light of God's revealed truth—a task he holds must be undertaken out of love for Christ and the desire to more closely resemble him in every way.

Søren Kierkegaard. Recapitulating a now-familiar theme, Kierkegaard[53] (1967) held that one's "absolute need for God" is foundational for Christian self-knowledge (p. 53). Echoing Augustine and Calvin, the Danish philosopher offered his own answer to the secular philosophy of the ancient Greeks by corroborating humanity's epistemic impotence apart from divine self-disclosure:

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[52]Baxter (1974) holds that the sin of pride all too often leads otherwise godly individuals to think more highly of themselves than they ought (p. 137; see Rom 12:3); but with deep psychological insight he notes, "So far indeed doth pride contradict itself, that, conscious of its own deformity, it often borrows the homely dress of humility" (146).

[53]The philosophical writings of Søren Kierkegaard pose numerous exegetical challenges. His meaning in any given context is so often obscured by the complexity and subtlety of his thought, to say nothing of his syntax, and the difficulty of tracing threads of argument woven throughout an extensive oeuvre. Regrettably, Kierkegaard is sometimes mistaken for a secular humanist because of the radical subjectivity of his anthropological framework, though a fair reading of his less rigorously philosophical writings paints a clearer picture (Lippett, 2016). Johnson (2007) situates Kierkegaard alongside "Augustine and Calvin" arguing that he "recognized further that the construction of the Christian's self was a reflexive *project*, an interactive, developmental process involving both forms of knowledge [of God and of self]" (p. 430; author's emphasis). Johnson further identifies Kierkegaard's defense of the pursuit of Christian self-knowledge—what the latter terms "inwardness"—as "one of the greatest legacies in the Christian tradition" (p. 430).

Paganism required: Know yourself. Christianity declares: No, that is provisional—
know yourself—and then look at yourself in the Mirror of the Word in order to
know yourself properly. No true self-knowledge without God-knowledge or
[without standing] before God. To stand before the Mirror means to stand before
God. (Kierkegaard, 1975, p. 3902)

Simply put, we are unable to see ourselves without divine aid. On the other hand, the
"mirror" of divine perfection encountered supremely in the word/Word of God enlightens
our otherwise darkened self-perceptions (Eph 1:8). It is for this specific reason, in fact,
that Kierkegaard (1991) exhorts Scripture's readers to employ the "mirror," humbly yet
relentlessly affirming, "It is I to whom it [the text] is speaking, it is I about whom it is
speaking" (p. 40).[54] The influence of sin, on the other hand, dulls our epistemic senses to
Scripture's call for self-examination fomenting our inclination toward self-deception. To
approach the mirror with "impersonality and objectivity" is to look no further than the
text—what it says; whereas, when with "devoutness and fear of God" we approach, no
longer distancing ourselves from "personality, the subjective" we may hear what God
says *to us* (p. 39).

For Kierkegaard, following Calvin closely, the individual's relation to God is
fundamental and integral to Christian self-knowledge. Fallen as we are, we tend toward
"impersonality" and "objectivity" when considering the Scriptures. As a result, it
becomes all too easy for self to become dislocated from what can be subjectively
perceived therein. Having suppressed an awareness of self, the individual, thus, is able to
employ the Scriptures in support of speck-detecting in others while assiduously avoiding
plank detection in self. Kierkegaard (1991) further observes that "even" a person like
King David, was readily able to apprehend the transgression of another all the while blind
to his own guilt:

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[54]Kierkegaard's radically subjective hermeneutic should be distinguished from that of modern
existentialism and secular postmodernism (contra Schaeffer, 1998) since it arises within an otherwise
thoroughly Christian epistemology wherein the knowledge of God relates reciprocally with self-knowledge
(see Tietjen, 2016, esp. Chapter 1). Kierkegaard rejects a false, objectivist dichotomy that would set the
Bible up as either "about" God or us. Rather, he is following the implications of his theological
anthropology: what the Scriptures teach us about God must surely bear on those created in his image. To be
sure, if Scripture does not speak to us and reveal us as we are, then it can hardly make demands of us!

[O]therwise so devout and God-fearing, . . . [he] can maintain so much impersonality (objectivity) that he can go on living and pretend as if nothing has happened, that he can listen to the prophet's tale and pretend as if nothing has happened—until the prophet, weary of this impersonality and objectivity, . . . uses his authority and says: Thou art the man. (p. 39)

What Nathan provides for David is the impetus he needs to resist and overcome his dissociation and self-deception. Speaking on God's behalf, Nathan reveals the separation David's sin has brought between himself and God by awakening affections that had somehow been suppressed and ignored. "The man who has so disgusted you with his callous disregard for another," he declares in effect, "is none other than you, David."[55]

Although Kierkegaard never expressly notes it, Nathan's role in the whole affair is to serve as an image of Christ. Christ alone is both the perfect reflection of the Father to humanity and the quintessential human image bearer, simultaneously revealing God-as-he-is and us-as-we-are. Furthermore, only in relationship with Christ are human beings capable of "seeing" the image of God as he is revealed in the Bible. Along these lines, in his *Christian Discourses*, Kierkegaard (1997) queries,

Alas, who does know himself? Is it not exactly this to which the earnest and honest self-examination finally leads as its last and truest, this humble confession: "Who knows his errors? From my hidden faults cleanse thou me" (Psalm 19:12). And when a person examines his relation to Christ, who then is the human being who completely knows his faithlessness, who the human being who would dare to think that in his very self-examination there could not be faithlessness? Therefore you do not find rest this way. So, then, rest; then seek rest for your soul in the blessed comfort that, even if we are faithless, he still is faithful. (p. 287)

The pursuit of self-knowledge, for the Christian, is undertaken in submission and devotion to a person—to Christ (see Evans, 1990). Moreover, the Scriptures teach and Kierkegaard propounds that happiness, wellbeing—"comfort"—come from one's "relation to Christ," not in autonomous self-examination, since we may never otherwise come to know ourselves truly or evade the charge of "faithless" in the end (2 Tim 2:13).

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[55]Kierkegaard's famous dictum, "Truth is subjectivity" (see Kierkegaard, 1992, pp. 189ff.), should not be understood to suggest, as does postmodern subjectivism, that truth is relative. Rather, he is arguing for the need for a subjective—i.e., personal and affective—response to objective truth. It is one thing, in other words, for David to objectively condemn the guilty man for his sin; it is quite another for him to recognize that he *is* the guilty man and repent. This is Kierkegaard's "reveille" by which he sought to awaken Christendom from its modernist, objectivist somnolence (Barth, 2011, p. 98).

As he clarifies in *Judge for Yourself!* (Kierkegaard, 1991), true self-knowledge requires that the individual "come to oneself in self-knowledge and before God as nothing before him, yet infinitely, unconditionally engaged" (p. 104). And elsewhere Kierkegaard (1980) argues that self-knowledge is a vital aspect of becoming a self; whereas, the self without self-knowledge is less than truly human:

> The law for the development of the self with respect to knowing, insofar as it is the case that the self becomes itself, is that the increase of knowledge corresponds to the increase of self-knowledge, that the more the self knows, the more it knows itself. If this does not happen, the more knowledge increases, the more it becomes a kind of inhuman knowledge, in the obtaining of which a person's self is squandered, much the way men were squandered on building pyramids. (p. 31; see Mark 8:36)

The "greatest hazard of all, losing the self" (p. 32), he argues, is the ultimate end for those who have "no self before God," whose pursuit of knowledge—of self or otherwise—amounts to a unipolar "self-seeking" (p. 35). Thus, self-knowledge without a divine frame of reference amounts to little more than speculative philosophy (Lippett, 2016).[56] Furthermore, the sort of knowledge the self may acquire of itself apart from the knowledge of God can never satisfy the universal psychopathology affecting the whole human race—that which Kierkegaard (1980) identifies as the "sickness unto death"—namely, the "despair" of the sinful self (p. 22; see Marsh, 1987). On the other hand, the cure for despair—"faith"—obtains when "in relating itself to itself and in willing to be itself, the self rests transparently in the power that established it" (p. 14). In this way "despair" may have the salutary effect of driving the individual to seek a cure in Christ who alone, as the God–man, offers the wholeness and relational intimacy needed to soothe the pain of estrangement from God.[57]

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[56]Kierkegaard would likely have found supremely ironic the degree to which modern philosophy and psychology have esteemed his writings, while simultaneously evincing a profound blindness to the strident polemic he levels against them (see, e.g., Kilborne, 1999; Mullen, 1988). Regrettably, modern willingness to "hear" him on the matter of his radical subjectivity does not likewise extend to his equally radical Christian theism.

[57]For Kierkegaard, this amounts to "the deepest form of self-knowledge and the most valuable gift of grace" (Lippett, 2016, p. 222).

Kierkegaard's "reflexive" relationality is most explicit in *Sickness Unto Death* (1980), where he defines self in terms of a relatedness to oneself and God (Hannay, 1987). Extending the gains of Calvin's transformational understanding of self-knowledge, Kierkegaard (1980) plots a course for the development of intrasubjective wholeness:

> The self is a relation that relates itself to itself or is the relation's relating itself to itself in the relation; the self is not the relation but is the relation's relating itself to itself. A human being is a synthesis of the infinite and the finite, of the temporal and the eternal, of freedom and necessity, in short, a synthesis. A synthesis is a relation between two. . . . The human self is such a derived, established relation, a relation that relates itself to itself and in relating itself to itself relates itself to another. (pp. 13–14)

Hannay (1987) explains the "reflexive relation" of the relational self in terms of an individual's "conforming itself to . . . [Kierkegaard's] standing assumption—that there is a God and a need to stand before that God" (p. 31). Despair, on the other hand, is the fruit of one's alienation from God and, as it happens, from self. Christ—Kierkegaard's paradoxical "God-man"—stands as the only means of restoring human beings to right relationship to God *and to self*. In his estimation the incarnation stands as God's ultimate act of agapic relationality toward human beings: "No teaching on earth has ever really brought God and man so close together" (1980, p. 117). By coming in the person of Christ, God has effected the restoration of a reflexive relationality lost in the fall. The cross amounts to Christ's "work of love" bringing God and man together through his sacrifice on our behalf (p. 127). Thus, from beginning to end, Kierkegaard situates his discussion of self in terms of its relatedness to God, and reflexively to self, through the person and work of Jesus Christ. In the end, true self-knowledge results from one's active participation, by union with Christ, in vertical relationship to God.[58]

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[58]Kierkegaard enunciates his ethic of agapism in a series of sermons or "discourses" in *Works of Love* (1998); see Wolterstorff (2015), pp. 111ff.

Social Personhood and Christian
Self-Knowledge

The link between Hellenist philosophy and ethics has been well-documented in contemporary literature (Annas, 1993; Cooper, 1986; Wolterstorff, 2010). Whether specific connection can be drawn between ancient metaphysics and ethics is, perhaps, subject to a more substantial burden of proof. Following Plato, classical Greek anthropology viewed human beings as a duality of "substance" and "particulars" (Silverman, 2002). Moreover, Plato considered that the substance of the immaterial human soul held ontological priority over the material body. Growth in self-knowledge, according to Plato, amounted to one's increasing awareness and appreciation of this grand metaphysical reality, and one that, with the proper application of virtuous wisdom would redound in individual and social benefit.[59] Aristotle suggested that self-knowledge is a purely anthropocentric pursuit, one that depends on the assistance of a mirroring other for means, and that leads in the end to the wellbeing of the individual. According to this ancient schema, then, relationality is a more accident of shared ontology than the central means of dialogical self-knowing. According to Aristotle, "[T]he great and the small, and the like, must be relative to something; but the relative is least of all things a real thing or substance, and is posterior to quality and quantity; and the relatives are accidents of quantity" (*Metaphysics*, 1088ª21–25). As evidenced in the philosophical "turn" to relationality, however, to varying degrees modern thinking would question the fundamental premises of Hellenistic ontology and anthropology (Grenz, 2001). For Shults (2003), Aristotle's appropriation of a Platonic metaphysic ultimately led to an unwarranted "orthodoxy in Western philosophy" that considered "the relations of a thing to other things [as] not essential to defining or knowing what that thing is" (p. 15).[60] In

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[59]As typified in Plato's cave allegory.

[60]I will argue, with Shults, that self-knowledge, as with all other kinds of knowledge, requires relationality. But this is a far cry from dismissing the ontological particularity of things, as Shults appears intent on doing. Shults's relational anthropology, regrettably, tips too far in the opposite direction of substance dualism. In his historical outline of the "turn to relationality" drawing on the diverse findings of

other words, the Platonic prioritization of substance and particulars may have contributed to a subsequent emphasis in Christian thinking on the constitutive aspects of human being and doing. The result of this philosophical bent leads to a prioritization of the individual believer as both the agent and beneficiary of Christian self-knowledge. The turn to relationality evidenced in the Christian theanthropologies of Barth and Bonhoeffer, by contrast, contributed to a shift in ethical thinking toward the social means and end(s) of self-knowledge (see Green, 1999).

Relationality stands at the heart of biblical ethics—relationship both to God and with other human beings (Mark 12:33; 1 John 4:20). Furthermore, the benefits of one's relationship to God, when defined by our pursuit of conformity to his image in Christ, are often articulated in expressly eschatological terms. Of note in this regard is Jesus' inverted axiology in the Beatitudes (Matt 5:3–12). There Jesus' description of "blessedness" is immanently eschatological: "You will finally be blessed by God," Jesus preaches in effect, "if, for the present, you 'hunger and thirst' after such blessings." Clearly, Jesus is not suggesting that individual wellbeing is wholly eschatological (see Luke 18:30). Yet, just as evidently, he is opposing any perspective that places present, immediate gain over and against faithfulness to God. The pursuit of Christian self-knowledge, when defined by and enacted through conformity to the image of Christ, will redound to the benefit of the individual; yet, for the present age, an agapic, social approach to self-knowledge and its benefits more closely approximates a Christiform ethics.

Christian eudaimonist approaches to self-knowledge, in contrast to their Greek antecedents, rightly identify the reciprocal mutuality between the knowledge of God and of self. Yet, they evince a incommensurate appreciation of the role relations between

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modern philosophy and psychology, he concludes, "we are 'made' for relational knowing and that the world is 'made' for being known relationally" (p. 58). In the final analysis, however, relationality depends on particularity. Otherwise, to what are relations related?

human persons play in affecting, and effecting, self-perception and self-evaluation (see McFadyen, 1990). Modern psychology and psychotherapy, moreover, have likely contributed to this way of thinking (see Grenz, 2001). Every historical perspective surveyed here holds that veridical self-knowledge is effected in the context of the individual's vertical relationship to God. As the following section makes clear, however, Christian approaches over the last hundred years have broadened to entail relationship between human beings as secondary, instrumental means of "dipolar" self-knowing. When balanced by its individual and social aspects, a Christian approach to self-knowledge will stress the covenantal and relational over and above the constitutive and substantial nature of human existence (see Horton, 2006). Christian agapist ethics, moreover, recognizes that love and blessing relate dialectically yet hierarchically: final, eschatological blessing comes only as we pursue love for God and for others as our primary ethical aim.

Karl Barth. In relation to self-knowledge, Price (2002) observes a close affinity on at least four key points between the theological anthropology of Kierkegaard and that of Karl Barth. First, like the Danish philosopher, Barth would adopt an epistemology that links the propositional with the personal. Knowledge of God, in other words, and knowledge of self are inseparable. "Truth is subjectivity," would mean for both that, ultimately, truth "resides in an existing subject" (Price, 2002, p. 88; cf. Eph 4:21; 1 John 2:4). Second, Barth recapitulates Kierkegaard in appropriating a Calvinist-Augustinian epistemology of encounter. We come to know ourselves—as human beings generally, and, especially, as individuals in need of redemption and reconciliation to God—through divine revelation. The encounter made possible by God's self-disclosure bears immeasurable epistemic implication for human self-knowledge. Third, God's propaedeutic self-revelation in the person and work of Christ is the cardinal means by which he effects human self-knowledge. On this point, Barth (1960) echoes Kierkegaard,

Jesus Christ, as [the] Mediator and Reconciler between God and man, is also the *Revealer* of them both. We do not need to engage in a free-ranging investigation to seek out and construct who and what God truly is, and who and what man truly is, but only to read the truth about both where it resides, namely, in the fullness of their togetherness, their covenant which proclaims itself in Jesus Christ. (p. 47, emphasis in original)

Fourth, both would stress the priority of relationship in their conceptions of human rationality. However, whereas Kierkegaard situates his paradigm for this relationality within the intrapsychic "system" of the self as it relates to itself and to God, "Barth [interprets] human rationality . . . in terms of the capacity to form relations to God and others" (Price, 2002, p. 89). In fact, where Barth's anthropological system expands on Kierkegaard is precisely with respect to the priority of relationality between self and others—that is, with one's fellow human beings.[61] Barth's primary rationale for his social understanding of the self is humanity's status as image bearers of the triune God (see Grenz, 2001; Houston, 2000; Miell, 1989).

Discerning Kierkegaardian existentialist stubble in the brickwork of secular philosophers like Heidegger and Sartre, Barth would eventually come to identify what he perceived to be a blind spot in Kierkegaard's anthropological system. Though Barth (2011) did acknowledge Kierkegaard's influence on his early work,[62] he would in later life decry what he perceived to be the latter's "pronounced holy individualism" (p. 99). In his extension and development of Kierkegaardian self–God relationality, Barth (2010) would come to define human nature expressly in terms of two relational dyads: (1) the paradigmatic I–Thou encounter of the individual and God effectuated in the person and

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[61]Barth's critique of Kierkegaardian anthropology may be somewhat overdrawn. Evans (2002) argues that Kierkegaard is hardly the "arch-individualist" he has been portrayed to be. He goes on to argue that, for Kierkegaard, "God is not the only 'other' to which selves can relate to and thereby become selves, though God remains the crucial 'other' for selfhood in the highest sense" (p. 79). Kierkegaard's (1998) discourses on Christian love set out a more "social" understanding of human relations.

[62]Looking back on his earlier works, especially his *Epistle to the Romans*, Barth (2011) would acknowledge his own participation in the early twentieth-century "Kierkegaard Renaissance": "What attracted us particularly to [Kierkegaard], what we rejoiced in, and what we learned, was the criticism, so unrelenting in its incisiveness, with which he attacked so much: all the speculation that blurred the infinite qualitative difference between God and man, all the aesthetic playing down of the absolute claims of the Gospel and of the necessity to do it justice by personal decision; in short, all the attempts to make the scriptural message innocuous" (p. 98).

work of Christ; and (2) the I–Thou encounter between human beings created in his image, the latter being both constitutive and regulative for human be-ing. Barth regards this horizontal axis of relationality to be analogous with and contingent upon the first (see III/1, p. 185). "God exists in relationship and fellowship," he explains; "God created man in His own image, in correspondence with His own being and essence. . . . God is in relationship, and so too is the man created by Him" (III/2, p. 324). Barth's Christology, again, establishes this point in that Christ's relatedness to God and to humanity serves as the image—"the sign given to humanity"—of what it means to be truly human (III/2, p. 222).

Accordingly, human beings come to know themselves by means of their relatedness to God through their Spirit-mediated union with Christ, and also as they draw on the reflectivity of their shared image-bearing relatedness to other human beings. Self-knowledge for Kierkegaard was effected by the inward deepening of the individual standing in faithful relationship to Christ. For Barth this individualistic model is supplemented and offset by the dynamic of human-to-human relationality. On this point he is unequivocal:

> Every supposed humanity which is not radically and from the very first fellow-humanity is inhumanity. At this point a distinction must be made *a limine*, and humanity must be protected against its decisive and definitive destruction. If we take away fellow-man from the picture of man, and describe the latter as a being which is alien, opposed or casual in relation to him, we have not merely given an inadequate or partially false representation of man, but described a different being altogether. (III/2, p. 228)

Barthian self-knowledge obtains along two epistemic axes—the vertical and the horizontal—the fundamental onto-relational axiom of which can be expressed in the statement, "I am in encounter" (III/2, p. 246). Growth in self-knowledge results not only from one's relatedness to God, but also to other human beings as we grow and learn, our knowing and being known being defined primarily in relation to others. This reciprocal relatedness, he avers, is initiated by "openness" to others:

> [W]here openness obtains, humanity begins to occur. To the extent that we move out of ourselves, not refusing to know others or being afraid to be known by them, our existence is human. . . . The duality into which we enter when we encounter one another directly and not indirectly, revealed and not concealed as man with man; the participation which we grant one another by the very fact that we see and do not see one another, and let ourselves be seen and not unseen by one another, these are the first and indispensable steps in humanity. (III/2, p. 251)

Reciprocal openness to others,[63] according to a Barthian theanthropology, redounds in mutual self-knowledge as self knows that other knows self, and so on, in recursive regress (Miell, 1989). This does not mean that selfhood is ontologically identical to or equivalent with relationship. The coming to and becoming of the self-in-relation occurs in the context of mutual awareness and agapic regard through reflection and exchange (McFadyen, 1990). Yet, this relationality is possible only because of an idiosyncratic particularity conferred by God upon self and other, I and Thou. As in Calvin's mirror of the word/Word, image bearers, though fallen and sinful, possess a contingent, correlative capacity to reflect and, thereby, come to know one another, however finite and flawed their dialogue may be (see Prov 27:19 NRSV).

Dietrich Bonhoeffer. There is ample evidence that Barth's favorable reading of Dietrich Bonhoeffer would shape certain of his theanthropological innovations (Green, 2006, 1999; Greggs, 2016).[64] In particular, Bonhoeffer's christological approach to personhood may have made something of an impact on Barth (see esp. Green, 2006). More so than Barth, however, the younger theologian appears concerned to work out the ethical implications of his Christian theanthropology. Seeing a tendency in continental

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[63]Barth lists four criteria for human encounter, of which openness is the first. The second consists of dialogue—that is, a reciprocal verbal exchange, a giving and receiving of speech (III/2, p. 253). The third criterion requires a willingness to "render mutual assistance in the act of being" (p. 260). In other words, speech should result in action in aid of the other. Fourth and finally, to qualify as an act of basic humanity, encounter between self and other must engage the heart: "We gladly see and are seen; we gladly speak and listen; we gladly receive and offer assistance" (p. 265). This genuine concern for others, for Barth, does not amount to Christian love as specified in the New Testament, but rather to our shared status as image-bearers (see pp. 274ff.).

[64]So, e.g., Bird (1981) cites Bonhoeffer as having first identified the connection between male–female sexuality as a relational analogue of the *imago dei*. Grenz (2001) notes that Barth cites Bonhoeffer favorably on this point (p. 294).

theologians, including Barth, toward rarefied epistemological categories, Bonhoeffer sought instead "to move theology to a world of persons, communities, historical decisions, and ethical relationships" (Green, 1999, p. 28). This inclination is evident in his earliest works where he defines "individual" personhood in terms of an ethical relatedness to "other." By doing so, Bonhoeffer (1998) hoped to move away from post-Kantian metaphysical categories by establishing human personhood ethically with the archetypal personhood of Christ:

> [T]he metaphysical concept of the individual is defined without mediation, whereas the ethical concept of the person is a definition based on ethical-social interaction. From the ethical perspective, human beings do not exist "unmediated" qua spirit in and of themselves, but only in responsibility vis-à-vis an "other." (p. 50, emphasis in original)

Bonhoeffer's ontology of personhood presumes that the "*social ontic-ethical basic-relations of persons*" define what it means to be human (p. 50, emphasis in original). Social basic-relations are what, for Bonhoeffer, finally determines I and You, self and other. As a consequence of this maneuver toward a social understanding of personhood, self-knowledge becomes inescapably entailed with ethics (Elliston, 2016).

In speaking of what he regards as the pretense of secular self-knowledge, Bonhoeffer strikes a strongly polemic tone. Our sin-induced estrangement from God provokes an idolatrous quest for reflexive, autonomous self-understanding and self-actualization: "All knowledge, including particularly γνῶθι σεαυτόν, seeks to establish the ultimate self-justification of human beings" (Bonhoeffer, 1996, p. 138). In observing the modern self's fallen hubris, Bonhoeffer (2005) concludes, "Knowing good and evil in disunion with the origin, human beings become self-reflective. Their life now consists in understanding themselves, just as in the origin it was knowing God. Gaining self-knowledge is the essence and goal of life" (p. 308). According to Zimmermann (2004), Bonhoeffer regards the "human preoccupation with the idea of self-knowledge . . . [to be] a result of the Fall" indicative of "a deep disunity" within the human condition (p. 292). In a clear indictment of secular psychotherapy's final impotence, Bonhoeffer (2005)

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charges, "Seeking self-knowledge is the never-ending attempt of human beings to overcome their disunion with themselves through thought, and through unceasing self-differentiation, to find unity with themselves" (p. 308). True self-understanding, for Bonhoeffer, comes only in relation to God-in-Christ. Christianly understood, human personhood and the knowledge of self can only be had as benefits of our reconciliation to him:

> [O]nly those who have been placed into the truth can understand themselves in truth. Having been placed into the truth, they may now come to understand themselves in that fashion—precisely as a foreshadowing of their re-creation, of their "being known" by God. That is to say, they may now recognize themselves as having been created anew from untruth for truth. (Bonhoeffer, 1996, p. 181)

For Bonhoeffer, more explicitly than in Barth, a "tripolar" Christian self-knowledge will depend on whether human beings participate as dynamic, voluntaristic images of God *by means of* their faith-enacted, Spirit-mediated union with Christ (Green, 1999). Bonhoeffer's theological anthropology, then, more directly implicates ethical responsiveness to the gospel as the means and end of Christian self-knowledge. This crucial point is less evident in Barth (though, cf. Webster, 1995), though it is clearly present in Kierkegaard (1998). Our image-bearing capacity can never be abstracted from the call to follow Christ, to embody his cruciform love towards others, and to pursue deeper fellowship through the indwelling Spirit with God and within the body of Christ (see McFadyen, 1990). Through their participation in Christ, believers mirror along both the vertical and horizontal relational axes the Christocentric dynamic of love in which the Father makes much of the Son, the Son makes much of the Father, and the Spirit celebrates and effectuates their glorious relationship. For human beings, Christian self-knowledge is christological, according to Bonhoeffer, in that Christ is the final means and end of true agapic relationality, as well as the One who, through the Spirit, perichoretically effectuates interpersonal self-knowing in us. Among other things, eternal life amounts to Christ's invitation to human beings to overcome barriers to the knowledge of God, self, and others that have accumulated due to our estrangement from God. As he

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removes plank and speck alike from our eyes, Christ promotes the dispensation of his own agapic relationality toward God and others through our Spirit-mediated union with him.

Methodology

The crucial turn toward relationality evidenced in the theanthropologies of Bonhoeffer, Barth, and others, and to some extent in the modern disciplines of psychology and sociology, supplies the needed impetus for a contemporary reformulation of a Christian understanding of self-knowledge. In light of the recent (re)discovery of relationality inherent in trinitarian and christological dogma, I will argue that Reformed pastoral theology should move well beyond an understanding of self-knowledge rooted in any individualist anthropology and ethics. Since Barth, Christian theological anthropology has moved considerably beyond individualist notions toward a more relational perspective, no longer regarding human personhood strictly in terms of a God–self dyad, but rather through the lens of our relatedness to God and to others. The fundamental theological warrant for this perspective will be shown to derive from two fundamental doctrines: the *imago dei* christologically conceived, and believers' Spirit-mediated union with Christ. A better solution for Christian self-knowledge, and one that accords with the gains of Reformational theology, will explicate a christological framework of self-knowledge for human persons-in-relationship that interacts substantively with these doctrines. I have undertaken that task here.

Relationality, considered christologically, also suggests the interconnectedness of theology and anthropology. Indeed, the mere existence of Jesus, the God–man—who is the unique historical instantiation of the reconciliation between divinity and humanity—commends a careful consideration of the interactions between these two systems of thought and the disparate ontologies to which they point (Tanner, 2010; *pace* Hunsinger, 1995). As demonstrated already, numerous points of connectivity have been made

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throughout Christian history between philosophical-theological and anthropological-psychological discursive systems. When considering the implications for human self-knowledge from a Christian perspective, we should expect the incarnation to suggest, and even demand, such discursive interactions. From Augustine to Calvin, Kierkegaard and Barth, the idea of separating theological and anthropological inquiry would have been unthinkable. Nevertheless, methodological care and attention must be paid in order to avoid the epistemological dangers inherent in such a complex undertaking. One of the caveats that will pertain to this study attends my aim to interact constructively with modern psychological texts.

Toward the task of promulgating a Christian covenantal framework for self-knowledge, I will make two hermeneutical assumptions for my use of secular texts. First, although all veridical knowledge comes from God, every epistemic schema is not equally valid and reliable. In the modern era numerous claims have been made about the nature of human beings that fall far outside of a biblical paradigm grounded in the revealed truth of the Scriptures and in the person and work of Jesus Christ. As such, the findings of modern psychology continue to provide, alternately, both a foil and an interlocutor for a thoroughgoing Christian psychology of the self. In most cases, secular perspectives serve best when set in relief against a biblical understanding of human beings. Nevertheless, as implicated by God's discursive act of self-revelation in the Bible and in the person and work of Christ, mutual understanding comes through dialogue. Especially in matters pertaining to the phenomenological and psychopathological consequences of interpersonal sin, modern psychology may be seen as a rich discursive resource. This is especially the case, as will be shown, in the fields of interpersonal neurobiology, developmental psychology, as well as psychopathology as an indicator of intrasubjective damage. Consequently, Christians may reasonably and gratefully appropriate any findings which obtain as the fruit of what, in the Reformed tradition as it follows

Augustine,[65] we call "common grace" (Van Til, 2015; cf. "creation grace" in Johnson,

2007). Reformed theories of knowledge have historically sought to avoid the artificial

bifurcation of "theology" and "science,"[66] instead regarding all valid truth claims as a

subset of a single rubric—God's knowledge of things as they truly are.[67]

Second, the framework for any ostensibly Christian intellectual enterprise

should necessarily privilege Scripture as the only unassailable authority and final

criterion of validity. In other words, the Bible provides the means of adjudicating the

truth of any and all truth claims. Divine discourse possesses absolute hermeneutical

sovereignty over all other "texts." As Van Til (1969) reminds us,

> [The Christian] should, to be sure, look sympathetically into the efforts of men in
> general when they seek to analyze themselves and their problems. There will be no
> doubt "elements of truth" in such an analysis; even so, ultimately, the idea of a
> standard of truth is involved in any "system of truth." The Bible is the only ultimate
> standard of truth. (p. 43)

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[65]For Augustine, concurrences between secular thought and Christian doctrine were bound to occur and, as such, should not trouble believers. He (2008) argued, "Any statements by those who are called philosophers, . . . which happen to be true and consistent with our faith should not cause alarm, but be claimed for our own use, as it were from owners who have no right to them. . . . These treasures—like the silver and gold, which they did not create but dug, as it were, from the mines of providence, which is everywhere . . . must be removed by Christians . . . and applied to their true function, that of preaching the gospel" (II.xxxix-xl.144–145; pp. 64–65).

[66]Kuyper, for example, in his use of the term, "science," does not mean the study of exclusively natural phenomena within a positivistic epistemological system. He rejects modernism's attempt to claim "science" for a secular world (so, see Pearcey & Thaxton, 1994). Rather, Kuyper (1968) propounds a theological anthropology that allows interaction between theistic and non-theistic ideas and discoveries with Scripture as the final arbiter of any truth claim. He is quick to add, however, "As soon as the thinker of palingenesis [i.e., Christian] has come to that point in the road where the thinker of naturalism parts company with him, the latter's science is no longer anything to the former but 'science falsely so called'" (p. 176). Within this "system," valid insights that arise from secular inquiry might serve as building materials, so to speak, within the scientific enterprise so long as revelation provides its epistemological blueprint. He writes, "From our standpoint we do not assert that the subject of theology is those who have been enlightened, and that the subject of all other science is those of the natural mind (*psychikos*), but we claim that the only subject of *all* science is the consciousness of regenerated or re-created humanity; and that so large a part of scientific study can be furnished equally well by those who stand outside of this, is simply because this building also admits a vast amount of hod-carrier service [i.e., bricklaying] which is entirely different from the higher architecture" (pp. 602–603; author's emphasis).

[67]Along these lines, we may surmise that Adam and Eve, having eaten from "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil" (Gen 2:17), gained some knowledge in the process (see 3:22). And, in fact, they did come to a greater degree of self-awareness though one obviously tainted by their fallen state, as their subsequent actions indicate (3:7). Christian psychology and post/modern psychology share much in common when it comes to their respective understandings of, for instance, the phenomenology of shame and its negative impact on self and identity. Crucial differences exist, however, between the respective etiologies, psychopathologies, evaluations, and psychotherapies of shame in Christian and modern frameworks (see Johnson, 2017).

In other words, there will likely be "elements of truth" and falsehood in any secular pursuit of self-knowledge. A Christian seeking the truth about the self should not necessarily or reflexively approve or discount any secular claim because of its source, but should instead analyze and adjudicate each proposition under the discerning lens of revelation. This task is hardly simple, but it is arguably the hermeneutical standard to which Christians should aspire. As Van Til suggests, the Christian should seek to balance an interpretative stance regarding secular truth claims somewhere between trust and suspicion. Yet, in this dialogical balance the Scriptures hold "primacy" (Johnson, 2007, p. 188).[68] In considering the warrant for a Christian interpretative stance toward the Bible and other texts, Vanhoozer (1998) speaks of a "hermeneutics of humility and conviction" (p. 463). Accordingly, a humble hermeneutics acknowledges, "we will only gain understanding—of God, texts, others, and ourselves—if we are willing to put ourselves second and our interpretive theories to the test" (p. 465). Nevertheless, this humble willingness to question one's (exegetical or theological) conclusions must be balanced with the inferential certainty that God intends us to know some things truly on the basis of his self-revelation in the Bible and, supremely, in Jesus Christ (see p. 466). In light of these principles, I will employ a hermeneutics that privileges divine discourse over other "texts" while acknowledging the problematic dialectic of my own nature—*simul justus et peccator*—as it potentially implicates my fallen hermeneutical judgment.

This is a work of pastoral theology that, it is hoped, will provide the church with sufficient theological warrant to explore the immanently biblical and christological theme of agapic relationality as it pertains to the care and cure of broken lives. In Chapter 1 I considered two secular approaches to self-knowledge—one ancient and one modern—

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[68]Johnson (2007), in outlining a biblical framework for Christian counseling, states, "Primacy conveys that the first principles of Scripture—and not the first principles of alien worldviews (naturalism, humanism or postmodernism)—must contribute the infrastructure of the disciplinary matrix and edification framework of Christian psychology and soul care, orienting our research and theory-building, and setting the church's counseling agenda" (p. 189).

before expressing the need for a more comprehensive Christian framework. This framework, I argued, would need to regard Christ as both the paradigm for and the means of Christian self-knowledge. Self-knowledge that is christological in this sense undermines dissociation and self-deception by bringing human beings into a mutual, interpersonal knowledge of themselves before God through the person and work of Christ. Although the history of Christian thought pertaining to self-knowledge has clearly maintained this mutuality, its valid emphasis on the vertical relational dimension of knowing has contributed to a correlative neglect of the vital role of horizontal instrumentality. Furthermore, a Christian relational anthropology best supports a Christian ethics, as Bonhoeffer maintained, that is agapist rather than eudaimonist. The beneficiary of self-knowledge is not, as Hellenism would have us believe, an autonomous, monadic self, so much as an agapic self-in-relation—a communal, ecclesial self perichoretically united to God-in-Christ alongside all those who make up his Spirit-filled body.

In Chapter 2 the relationship between Christology and anthropology will become increasingly clear. Christ has been called the "key" to understanding the *imago dei* (Tanner, 2010). The relatedness of Christ to God and others through the formal constituents of his human nature will be paradigmatic for the anthropological, psychological, and ethical considerations to follow. Though humanity was created in the image of God, Christ in his humanity is the perfect, archetypal *imago* who alone discloses God and humanity, and through whom we are reconciled to God and to others. His reconciling work in and for human beings, moreover, is the particular means by which our congenital self-blindness may be overcome. We do not know ourselves apart from Christ; but, through the Spirit, Christ brings us to God in order that we may see who we are and what we must become in him. As the Scriptures maintain, our union with Christ is not limited to a wholly vertical dimension; rather, as the Spirit knits us together with Christ, so also we are being knit together with all those within whom his Spirit dwells. A

covenantal approach to Christology, then, emphasizes both the vertical and horizontal dimensions of reconciliation to God. Because of the bond granted by the Spirit of Christ, Christ mediates his reconciling work instrumentally through our relationships to others within his body. Though the fall alienated us from God and from each other, through Christ we stand reconciled to God, to self, and each other.

Having been dislodged from their classical connections with Christian theology, Western anthropologies of modern and postmodern ilk continue to grapple with the fundamental questions of human normativity and teleology. When Kant succeeded in decoupling the modern self from the Augustinian-Cartesian soul, a commensurate collapse of existential certainty attended the demise of this pairing. Whether "the" self exists is no longer the question; according to postmodern perspectives, the concern is what to make of human beings now that the self has been de-substantialized and summarily dismissed. This has certainly not curtailed interest in the human self and its self-knowledge, however, as the rash of self-related literature only confirms. Moreover, the self in post/modern psychology is alive and well, even if it has been fundamentally reconfigured according to postmodern sensitivities as either a rhetorical/narratival contrivance, a construct of human development, or a psychological form. Whether this move supports an understanding of human personhood rooted in the *imago dei*, christologically understood, remains to be seen. With the contributions of Barth, Pannenberg, and Bonhoeffer in view, it may be that the crisis of the self—specifically, the fatal contingency to which it has been subjected by postmodern frameworks—may be overcome. The aim of Chapter 3 is to promote this agenda before turning in the next chapter to the noetic barriers by which veridical knowledge of self eludes our grasp.

Dissociation and self-deception are intrapsychic fruit of the fall, yet, as suggested by a covenantal understanding of human beings, they are contingently related to human intersubjectivity. In other words, interpersonal sin lies beneath these psychological and moral expressions of the fallen human self. So, I will engage in

Chapter 4 with the conceptions in modern psychology that most helpfully illuminate phenomenal barriers to self-knowledge, of which dissociation and self-deception are but two. As will be seen, several recent theoretical and empirical advances in secular understandings of human subjectivity bear out the theanthropological framework conceived in this study. Indeed, a relational revolution of sorts has taken place in modern psychology—a trend that provides correlative evidentiary support for a Christian covenantal understanding of human beings. Either way, in dialogue with Christian psychology, the ethical implications of Christian self-knowledge come into direct contact with the pastoral and psychotherapeutic work of Christian caregivers. The fallen human self is a dissociative self, yet Christ would have us come to the truth of who he is and who we are in him. As will be demonstrated, severe, chronic relational trauma is now understood to be the etiological basis for a kind of "structural" dissociation that can develop in early childhood. What cannot be perceived phenomenologically in the shattered identities of severely dissociated adults is the relational trauma they suffered as children, often at the hands of the very ones appointed by God to provide the kind of agapic relationality that promotes the development of psychologically healthy image bearers. In order to best serve these broken individuals, the church must learn that Christ's offer of reconciliation to God and others relates directly to the fragmented subjectivity that can result from the unspeakable evils of chronic trauma and abuse.

In the final chapter, I outline a number of the pastoral and psychotherapeutic implications of dialogical self-knowledge. Agapic relationality, I will argue, must stand at the ethical heart of all ostensibly Christian caregiving interventions. The primary task of caregivers is to embody Christ's ministry to sinful and broken human beings, offering reconciliation and healing in his name and by his Spirit. Crucial to the remediation of the estranged self is the repair and remediation of brokenness that accumulates in the context of fallen interpersonal relationality. As the work of reconciliation to God-in-Christ proceeds in believers, the self becomes increasingly able to perceive the love of God in

the ethical self of the caregiver. Through the dynamic of agapism, rhetorically encapsulated by the Pauline soteriological formula of *faith working through love*, an individual's formerly dissociated awareness of sin and shame may, over time, come to be resolved within a Christ-centered caregiving context. Damage done to self, specifically when it entails the sequelae of inter/personal sin, can be healed as self comes to self-perceive in a caregiving context that fosters deeper, agapic fellowship with God and others in his body. Self-deception, the ethical corollary of dissociation, can also be overcome as the dynamic of grace directs and informs the healing work. Finally, as the New Testament makes clear, the ecclesial context is vital to the task of working out Christ's purposes from his redeemed, reconciled people.

CHAPTER 2

THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR CHRISTIAN
SELF-KNOWLEDGE: CHRISTOLOGICAL
ANTHROPOLOGY AND THE *IMAGO DEI*

The question of human self-knowledge cannot be abstracted from

cosmological and ontological considerations. Indeed, conceptions of *self*—and even, as it

happens, *knowledge* (see Polanyi, 1974)—will depend in no small degree on one's

metaphysical pre-commitments and preunderstandings, particularly as those

philosophical and theological notions inform one's thinking regarding the meaning and

nature of human being and becoming (Stevenson & Haberman, 2004). As demonstrated

in Chapter 1, ostensibly Christian frameworks for self-knowledge may vary markedly

depending on the relative emphasis placed on any number of exegetical and theological

considerations. How much more so, then, should we expect a theistic framework rooted

in a conviction of the truthfulness of the Bible to diverge from any system that dismisses

the authority and evidentiary import of the Scriptures.[1] So, for example, the Bible speaks

of human persons as created beings, both contingent and dependent on a supremely

sovereign, yet mercifully gracious Creator whose concern and disposition toward

humanity entails certain divinely ordained ends—namely, the reconciliation of sinful

humans to a holy God through the person and work of Christ, their participation in the

doxological agenda of trinitarian mutual self-regard and self-giving, and God's

teleological design for human persons regarding their divinely mediated perpetuation of

that agenda respective to one another. Relative to such a schema, non-theistic frameworks

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[1]Understood on its own terms, the "Bible is the text through which God reveals the knowledge of his creation to the creature that He makes receptive to such understanding" (Simone & Sugarman, 1986, p. 132).

seeking to identify and understand the human self or human knowledge will surely lack more than a passing resemblance in all but the most basic questions. What is a human being? How should we think about the self? What gives meaning and purpose to human existence? What constitutes optimal human functioning in psychosocial terms? How ought we to live respective to the wider created order and to other human beings in particular? A theistic framework situated in an essentially biblical worldview will differ greatly from any strictly secular schema. In the final analysis, we may largely agree on taxonomy[2]; yet, profound disagreement will necessarily characterize the respective ontologies and axiologies of theistic and nontheistic anthropological discourse (see Johnson, 2007; Moreland & Rae, 2000).

The *Imago Dei* in Christological Perspective

The theistic framework of the biblical writers at times led them to reflect on the ontological and cosmological implications of human existence and particularity. In what is surely an instantiation of the dynamic of double knowledge of God and self, in Psalm 8 David alternates between doxological exuberance and anthropological reflection. God has established his glorious name in all the earth—his worth far above everything he has made (v. 1). He stands over all as the sovereign Creator (v. 3) and, thus, as the righteous law-giver (v. 2). Yet, he has ordained that the stewardship of the entire created order should fall to humanity, who, David notes, stands "a little lower than God" (v. 5, ASV). In light of God's exalted position, David marvels at humanity's relatively high standing in relation to him: "What is man [אֱנוֹשׁ; i.e., humanity[3]] that you are mindful of

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[2]Although, increasingly, common ground on *what qualifies as human* is breaking down as the hegemony of cultural and political libertinism takes root in, especially, Western societies. The pursuit of reproductive "rights" as an aspect of a brand of radical feminism still on the rise in the United States has resulted in the blurring of taxonomic lines. An unborn fetus is, thus, only provisionally "human" in pregnancies where the child is wanted. In Europe where birth rates are much lower and mortality rates much higher, this taxonomic slippage reveals itself in societal conventions regarding assisted-suicide and euthanasia of the terminally ill.

[3]The Hebrew for "humanity," אֱנוֹשׁ, employed here and elsewhere throughout the poetry of the Old Testament carries a theological connotation. According to Harris et al. (2003), "[T]he word frequently

him?" (v. 4). Cortez (2008) regards the relational language of David's anthropological

reflection in explicitly covenantal terms:

> At each point, then, the very nature of the question ["What is man?"] points the reader toward humanity's covenantal relationship with its Creator. For [the] biblical authors, humanity is not an undefined term awaiting conceptual clarity. Instead, it refers to a creature clearly defined and delineated by its standing in relation to God. (p. 3)

The reference to the creation account and humanity's stewardship of the earth commends

this covenantal reading of the text (cf. Gen 1:26ff.). More than this, as Barth (2010)

notes, the writer of Hebrews draws a christological inference from this passage: to wit,

the covenant partner of whom David speaks is, in an ultimate sense, Jesus Christ (Heb

2:5ff.; see Barth, 2010, III/2, p. 20).

Notably, David exemplifies humanity's distinctiveness, not merely by posing

the anthropological question—"What is humanity . . . ?"—but specially by doing so

within the context of relatedness to God—" . . . that you are mindful of him?" (Horton,

2006). The ability to explore and examine the nature of one's own existence is both

essential to and distinctive of human beings[4]; but David does not engage in isolated

reflection on human nature "from below," formulating his anthropological ideas by

reasoning "up" from the phenomena of human existence, material or otherwise.[5] To be

sure, the capacity to ask the question, "Who or what am I?," whether or not we possess

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emphasizes man's frailty and humanness" in that it "reminds man of his transience and of his lowly position before the Almighty" (p. 59; see also Job 33:12; Ps 9:19–20; 90:3). This significance is, perhaps, lost in English translation.

[4]I refrain from speculating here on any supposed similarities or distinctions between human nature and that of angels (or demons) since the Scriptures offer scant insight into the matter (*pace* Delitzsch, 1885).

[5]Barth (2010) famously decried any anthropological method that does not begin with the revelatory "Word of God"—that is, from the personhood and nature of the divine Logos: "We have to think of man in the event of real faith as, so to speak, opened up from above. From above, not from below!" (I/1, p. 242). Yet Barth did speak later in life of the possibility of a countermovement "from below" which would necessarily follow the initial, "primordial movement from above to below" (cited in Rumscheidt, 1986, p. 84). Shults (2003) believes Barth's principle concern in arguing for an anthropology "from above" as opposed to "from below" is "to protect the sovereignty of God's revelation" with respect to anthropological method and "to deny any control over it by the human subject" (p. 120).

any ability to answer comprehensively or even satisfactorily, distinguishes us in a fundamental way from rocks and trees, stars and sloths. Furthermore, as our noetic and agentic capacities develop, we may become increasingly capable of inquiring into the inner workings of our nature and existence, the impulse toward self-discovery and self-understanding having somehow been hard-wired into our nature. This tendency of human beings toward reflective introspection and metacognition—that is, thinking about one's thoughts—is undeniable.[6] Nevertheless, what we make of our self-discoveries, how we frame and extrapolate from our notions of self-understanding, and how we view what constitutes a healthy, "whole" self varies widely. Thus, self-knowledge, the unique prerogative of humanity within the created order, must also be highly perspectival and contingent. This is no less the case when undertaking a proposal for Christian self-knowledge. Yet, David's anthropological trajectory does not extend, as nontheistic frameworks do, from the bare facts of human existence and constitution.[7] On the contrary, his terminus a quo appears to be the assumption of God's unique concern and calling for humanity respective to the rest of creation. According to Berkouwer (1962), this perspectival approach to anthropology is the rule rather than the exception in biblical contexts:

> Man is presented in many different ways in Scripture. He is shown in numerous contexts, with many facets; but in all this variation we meet again and again the one central and essential dimension of man, that in which he stands *not* as an isolated entity, but in the light and the presence of God. (p. 33; author's emphasis)

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[6]To say that these capacities exist within human persons is not to argue, at this early stage, for a particular model of the self. I will adumbrate a theological anthropology of the human self in Chapter 3. For now, I note that the *nature* (and existence) of the self, particularly the immaterial mind/soul, is highly controversial and hotly debated, especially among secular scholars (see Gallagher, 2011; Siderits, Thompson, & Zahavi, 2013), while the noetic capacities of human beings are at least assumed. Moreover, any anthropological methodology "from below" is bound to remain unduly focused, as modern anthropology has become, on the structural and formal aspects of human beings *generally*. Biblical anthropology, on the other hand, should proceed, as Barth insisted, "from above"—the nature of humanity being inferred analogically and covenantally from the person and work of Christ.

[7]Indeed, as modern, secular anthropology has done since Descartes' infamous *cogito*.

Constitutive and Covenantal Theological Anthropologies

Christian theological anthropology has historically endeavored to explicate the essence of human being and becoming in terms of the *imago dei*—the biblical-theological dogma that conceives of human nature principally in terms of our ontic and relational correspondence both to God and, on God's behalf, to creation (Berkouwer, 1962; Grenz, 2001; Pannenberg, 1985). Indeed, since the second-century teachings of Irenaeus, the *imago dei* has stood at "the heart of Christian anthropology" (Hoekema, 1994, p. 66). From a biblical perspective human nature and personhood are expressly theological concepts. So, as Gunton (1991) writes, "To be made in the image of God is to be endowed with a particular kind of personal reality. To be a person is to be made in the image of God: that is the heart of the matter" (p. 58). Indeed, according to Bavinck (2004), no facet or nuance of human nature can be abstracted from this theological formulation:

> The whole human being is image and likeness of God, in soul and body, in all human faculties, powers, and gifts. Nothing in humanity is excluded from God's image; it stretches as far as our humanity does and constitutes our humanness. The human is not the divine self but is nevertheless a finite creaturely impression of the divine. All that is in God—his spiritual essence, his virtues and perfections, his immanent self-distinctions, his self-communication and self-revelation in creation—finds its admittedly finite and limited analogy and likeness in humanity. (p. 561)

From a Christian standpoint, therefore, the *imago* demarcates the bounds of anthropological discourse, providing epistemological and theological warrant for those sub-disciplines which fall within its rubric (Grenz, 2001; Johnson, 2007). Yet, despite its historical and theological significance, direct allusions within the text of Scripture are notably few (see Gen 1:26; 9:6; cf. Gen 5:3; 1 Cor 11:7).[8]

As it pertains to the present concern, the most significant reference can be found in the creation account of Genesis 1. In what amounts to the climax of the

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[8]Berkouwer (1962) argues that the concept, if not the express terminology, appears throughout the Old Testament. References to Christ as the consummate image of God appear several times in the Pauline corpus (Rom 8:29; 1 Cor 15:49; 2 Cor 3:18; 4:4; Col 1:15; 3:10).

narrative, the entrance of humanity onto the scene assumes an undeniable place of prominence. Indeed, the writer conveys with startling language the impression that everything preceding this moment has led to this crucial moment in the unfolding of God's creative agenda (Wenham, 1987). In contrast to the divine illocutions that brought forth every variety of plant and animal life—each "according to its kind" (לְמִינוֹ; vv. 11, 12, 21, 24, 25)—God creates human beings according to *his* own divine "image" (vv. 26, 27).[9] This "most striking statement" within the creation narrative serves to establish a firm and unyielding link between theology and anthropology for any ostensibly biblical framework (Westermann, 1992, p. 111). Christian theological anthropology has, for this reason, proceeded with the presumption that humanity must function in some way within the created order as a representation of God—a fact borne out by our divinely appointed mandate to fill the earth and subdue it (v. 28).[10] From the outset of God's covenantal dealings with creation, he establishes as the "sign" of his divine presence and rule human beings whom he has made according to his image (see Johnson, 2007, p. 13).[11] Moreover, the constitutional capacities with which we have been divinely endowed enable the proper functioning of our image-bearing role respective to God and creation (Hoekema, 1994; McMartin, 2013).

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[9]There are two terms, "image" (צֶלֶם) and "likeness" (דְּמוּת), employed by the writer to distinguish humanity's semiological relationship to God. Irenaeus (2012) famously differentiates between these two terms—the *imago dei* and *similitudo dei*—holding the latter to be textual and semantic support for what here and elsewhere has been termed the covenantal, dynamic, or relational image (V.xvi.2; p. 544). Despite widespread agreement that the text does not support such an exegetical distinction (see Hoekema, pp. 33ff.), his larger point—that some aspect of human nature was lost at the Fall *and* something retained—is significant (see Grenz, pp. 146ff.).

[10]Humanity's *dominium*, or lordship over creation, has at times been directly identified with the image of God, rather than as a consequence of, or inference from, the *imago*; contra this perspective, see Berkouwer, 1962, pp. 70ff.; Pannenberg, 1985, pp. 74ff.

[11]In similar fashion the tabernacle and its contrivances can be said to represent on earth—and point to—their heavenly counterparts and archetypes. Of particular note is God's insistence to Moses (and, later, David with the temple) that each be built "according to the plan" God revealed to him on the mountain (Exod 26:30; 1 Chr 28:19; cf. Heb 9:23–24). Taken together these passages may indicate the divine will to apply celestial "templates" to certain terrestrial entities, including humans whose nature is imprinted in some way with God's own. It is thus that creation serves as the "glorious theater" within which the divinely ordained drama unfolds (Calvin, 2008, p. 21; cf. Frame, 2002; Vanhoozer, 2005).

Despite widespread agreement on the fact of humanity's essential nature as image-bearers, historical Christian writers have differed at times in their understanding of the *imago dei* and their respective emphases on its constitutive and covenantal aspects.[12] In his defense of Christian orthodoxy against the encroachment of Gnosticism, Irenaeus sought to bracket his anthropology in both constitutive and covenantal terms. In *Against Heresies*, the bishop of Lyons discusses the perfection of human nature in terms that suggest a creational-eschatological dialectic:

> Now God shall be glorified in His handiwork, fitting it so as to be conformable to, and modelled after, His own Son. For by the hands of the Father, that is, by the Son and the Holy Spirit, man, and not [merely] a part of man, was made in the likeness of God. Now the soul and the spirit are certainly a *part* of the man, but certainly not *the* man; for the perfect man consists in the commingling and union of the soul receiving the spirit of the Father, and the admixture of that fleshly nature which was moulded after the image of God. (Irenaus, 2012, V.vi.1.; p. 531; emphasis in original)

For Irenaeus, the divine Son provides the model or the exemplar from which God conceived of human constitution—its formal and functional capacities. Yet, clearly, Irenaeus holds that human beings must still be conformed to that image through their covenantal union with God through the Spirit.[13] As God's "handiwork," humanity possesses the capacity to image God perfectly, and this potential exists precisely because we have been designed according to the image of God.[14] At creation, then, human nature was perfect, yet perfectible—"modelled after" the true image of God the Son, yet nonetheless "conformable to" that image.[15] So, according to Tanner (2010), Irenaeus'

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[12]Lewis & Demarest (1990) interact substantially with the major historical and theological perspectives on the nature of the *imago dei* (see esp., pp. 160–170).

[13]This is Irenaeus' *similitudo dei*. I have not maintained his distinction between image and likeness, but rather have folded his two terms into one term with two senses—what I call the constitutional and covenantal *imago*, respectively. The notion that Irenaeus promulgated an incipient version of an exclusively constitutional or "structural" *imago* (see Brunner, 2014) disregards his insistence that the *imago* and *similitudo* be regarded inseparably in the person of Christ.

[14]As Hoekema (1994) notes, "image" is both noun and verb (p. 95).

[15]Tanner (2010) explains the apparent contradiction in this formulation by distinguishing between the "weak" and "strong" imaging of God of which human beings are capable (see pp. 23ff.).

"prospective interpretation" of the *imago* supports a christological understanding "in which eventual growth into a better image takes center stage" only with the coming of Christ (p. 20).[16]

Limitations of the Constitutive *Imago*

Medieval Christian thinkers, in conceiving of the *imago dei* in human persons, tended to emphasize humanity's constitutional capacities over and against the proper functioning of those capacities in covenantal relationship with God and creation (Grenz, 2001). From the time of Augustine until the Reformation, the *imago dei* was chiefly held to be something human beings *possess* more so than something we *are* or, on account of our union with Christ, we *become* (Lewis & Demarest, 1990). Augustine (2012d) writes in representative fashion, "God, then, made man in His own image. For He created for him a soul endowed with reason and intelligence, so that he might excel all the creatures of earth, air, and sea, which were not so gifted" (XII.xxiii.23; p. 241). In contrast to Irenaeus, Augustine dismisses any supposed distinction between "image" and "likeness," essentially conflating the two into a single constitutional sense which, he argues, distinguishes human beings from the rest of creation. "We see the face of the earth adorned with earthly creatures," he declares in reflection redolent of Psalm 8, "and humanity, in your image and likeness, put in authority over all irrational animals by your image and likeness, that is by the power of reason and intelligence" (Augustine, 2009, XIII.xxxii; p. 302). Yet, as is clear from his description of the *imago et similitudo* in terms of human "reason and intelligence," Augustine assumes a much narrower anthropological

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[16]Irenaeus holds that, prior to the incarnation, it was impossible for human beings to image God perfectly, for as yet the true image of God-in-Christ had not been revealed: "For in times long past, it was *said* that man was created after the image of God, but it was not [actually] *shown*; for the Word was as yet invisible, after whose image man was created. Wherefore, also he did easily lose the similitude [likeness]. When, however, the Word of God became flesh, he confirmed both these: for He both showed forth the image truly, since He became himself what was His image; and He re-established the similitude after a sure manner, by assimilating man to the invisible Father through means of the visible Word" (Irenaus, 2012, V.xvi.2; p. 544; emphasis in original).

frame than does Irenaeus. Indeed, he essentially identifies the image with the intellectual

powers of persons human and divine.[17]

In fact, Augustine held to a highly intellectualized ideal with respect to the

flourishing of God's image in humanity (TeSelle, 1970). As Grenz (2001) observes, "For

Augustine . . . the seat of the divine image in the human person is the soul in its

intellectual dimension, insofar as the goal of the image is knowledge of God" (p. 155).

Augustine's situating of the image in the mind stems from his triadic conception of

personhood; he held that, like the triune God, every individual human person exists as an

essentially internal "relation" of self, self-understanding, and self-love. So, he concludes

of humanity's likeness to God, "Behold! the mind, therefore, remembers itself,

understands itself, and loves itself; if we perceive this, we perceive a trinity, not yet God

indeed, but now finally an image of God" (Augustine, 2002, XIV.viii.11; pp. 148–149).

This is not to say that Augustine dismissed or ignored the covenantal aspects of the

imago; yet, his stress on the constituting role of the mind/soul is clear—a point drawn out

by the application of Augustinian theological anthropology in later medieval writers.[18]

Yet, as Gunton (1991) notes, a truncated perspective of human relationality arose from

Augustine's determination to locate the image within so narrow a frame:

> Since [for Augustine] relations are qualifications of the inner Trinity, and not
> relations between persons, it becomes difficult to see how the triune relatedness can
> be brought to bear on the central question of human relatedness. God's relatedness is
> construed in terms of self-relatedness, with the result that it is as an individual that

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[17]Augustine likely held a more nuanced view of *imago* than did the medieval writers who followed him. Indeed, numerous modern scholars have observed the vestiges of a relational perspective in the church father that largely appears to have fallen by the wayside for the scholastics until the early reformers "rediscovered" it (see Grenz, 2001; Hefner, 1984; McMartin, 2013).

[18]Grenz (2001) regards Thomas Aquinas as having provided the "final flowering" in the development of an Augustinian constitutive anthropology (p. 161). Moreover, he perceives in Aquinas' *Summa Theologica* an essentially Aristotelian metaphysic filtered through the theological framework of Augustine (see Merriell, 1990; Sullivan, 1963). As noted in Chapter 1, the Hellenistic legacy operating within the anthropologies of Augustine and Aquinas emphasizes the inner life, one's intellectual apprehension of reality, including self and "God," and an individualist, eudaimonist ethical framework. These have all been cited as the metaphysical foundations upon which modern, Western notions of personhood and wellbeing are constructed (C. Taylor, 1989), and against which the Reformers to some extent, and Barth more emphatically, would eventually push back.

the human being is in the image of God, and therefore truly human. The outcome is another, theologically legitimated, version of the tendency to individualism (p. 49).[19]

Though Calvin and the early Reformers operated within an essentially Augustinian theological framework, they nevertheless came to recognize its limitations respective to anthropology and began to shift toward a more covenantal understanding of the *imago dei* (Grenz, 2001). For Luther and Calvin alike, the image of God in humanity entails the willing, "dynamic" response of human beings to their Maker made possible by obedient submission to God. This emphasis represents a significant movement away from an Augustinian paradigm. Pannenberg (1985) remarks on the shift,

> The medieval Catholic and the Reformed conceptions of the image of God differ . . . in that for the Reformers the image of God consists in the *actual relation* to God, while for medieval Latin Scholasticism it is, rather, a presupposition for this actual relation to God and is a formal structural property of human nature. (p. 50; emphasis in original)

In his departure from the constitutive anthropology of Augustine, Calvin employed his metaphor of the mirror to emphasize his functional, covenantal perspective on the *imago* (Torrance, 1957). In his commentary on Ephesians, Calvin describes humanity prior to the fall as being "created in the image of God, so that [we] might reflect, as in a mirror, the righteousness of God"; but that "image, having been wiped out by sin, must now be restored in Christ" (Calvin, 1965, p. 191). Like a mirror, Calvin held the image of God in humanity to be the active reflection, albeit in limited fashion, of the goodness and uprightness of the divine nature (Gerrish, 1981). Following the Fall, then, humanity's capacity to image God, if "not utterly effaced and destroyed," was nonetheless wholly "corrupted," so that we exist now in a state of "fearful deformity" (Calvin, 2008, I.xv. 4; p. 107; see Torrance, 1957).

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[19]Gunton (1991) offers the following additional critique: "From the outset, there is in Augustine a tendency to develop anthropology in terms of neoplatonic categories. For him the human likeness to God must be in the mind or soul, so that other possibilities are excluded from the outset. One implication is that our embodiedness cannot be the place where the image, and hence our true humanity, is found" (p. 49).

According to Niesel (1956), Calvin perceived "[t]he divine similitude . . . not in the fact that man is endowed with reason and will but in the fact that these faculties in original man were directed wholly towards knowledge of and obedience to God" (p. 68).[20] By the fact of our sinful disobedience as covenant members of the race of Adam (see Rom 5:12ff.), the Reformers following Calvin held that human beings have become estranged from him in whose image we were made. By reason of a sin-ruptured relationship, then, humanity lost its likeness to God[21]—the image having depended not as much on creaturely constitution but on covenantal communion with God after the likeness of Christ. Following from this point, they concluded that only by means of the redeeming, reconciling work of God, would the *imago* be restored in us. Accordingly, Calvin (2008) avers,

> 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. (I.xv.4.; p. 108)

For Calvin, the image of God in human beings depends on the mutual self-perception of God and humanity in reflective communion. Whereas, to depart from that relationship is akin to moving away from a mirror: nothing of one's personal likeness may be perceived by looking strictly inward, but only by gazing at oneself in the "looking glass."[22] Self-

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[20]Following Barth, Niesel (1956) adds that, for Calvin and contra Augustine and Aquinas, "There is no neutral psycho-physical constitution of man. The fact that man was originally created in the image of God means rather that his whole psycho-physical existence was thereby moulded. . . . In using traditional [i.e., Augustinian] theological concepts in this connexion Calvin wishes to express clearly that man owed the right orientation of his being wholly to the goodness of his Creator. . . . This special distinction which exalts him above all creatures is thus not to be understood in the sense that man in creation was given something divine as his permanent possession. . . . The divine similitude depends rather on man's relation to his Lord" (pp. 68–69). A more nuanced, less Barthian reading of Calvin has been suggested in Engel (2002, see pp. 37ff.).

[21]Calvin denies "Augustine's speculation" that the human mind/soul is a psychological analogue—"mirror"—of the Trinity, "inasmuch as it comprehends within itself, intellect, will, and memory" (Calvin, 2008, I.xv.4; p. 108). Bavinck (2004), on the other hand, commends Augustine's trinitarian theanthropology yet suggests the exercise of "greatest caution in the psychological exploration of the trinitarian components of man's being" (p. 555).

[22]This is the major argument outlined in Chapter 1.

perception is not a matter of reflecting in Aristotelian fashion on humanity's common constitutive traits or capacities; this results in a truncated anthropology—a two-dimensional image, as it were. Indeed, significant complications respecting humanity's relation to God result from the assumption of a strictly constitutionally construed model for the *imago dei*. As Brunner (2014) observes,

> If . . . the *Imago Dei* is conceived in the formal structural sense as the endowment with reason, as creative freedom, then Man possesses the Image of God *in himself*. *This* view of the *Imago Dei* is the gate by which a pantheistic or an idealistic deification of man can enter. . . . The result of this erroneous conception of the *Imago Dei*—as substance and not as relation—is a mistakenly "spiritualized" view of man and his destiny. (pp. 59–60; emphasis in original)

A constitutional anthropology that is dissociated from a covenantal perspective cannot evade charges of rationalism and humanism, and, ultimately, of idolatry.[23] In like manner, self-knowledge dissociated from the knowledge of God will be limited and erroneous, leading inevitably to sinful and pathological self-deception.

Christocentric Covenantalism

Christian self-knowledge, as outlined in Chapter 1, entails the knowledge of self in light of the knowledge of God. This correlative or mutual knowledge is related reciprocally precisely because creaturely knowledge presumes the knowledge of a Creator. Likewise, to be an image implies the existence of an "original" or antecedent unto which the former serves as a referent or "sign." Since the Reformation conceptions of the *imago dei* in human beings have shifted away from the constitutive emphasis of the Middle Ages toward more covenantal notions, eventually culminating in the modern age in the theological anthropology of Karl Barth (Shults, 2003). In spite of his notable excesses and idiosyncrasies, Barth contributes two indispensable elements which together

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[23]Nor, to be clear, should the constitutive *imago* be severed from its covenantal outworking. Either way we are left with the "false dilemma" of dichotomy (Berkouwer, 1962, p. 101). As Anderson (1982) rightly observes, "To abandon any ontological basis for the imago in favor of an existentialist or sociological function is not only unbiblical but ethically impotent" (p. 76). The aim of Calvin (2008) and, eventually, even Barth (2010) was to prioritize the covenantal over the constitutive image, though this is not always recognized.

provide a theological framework for Christian self-knowledge.[24] The first element of a theanthropology of Christian self-knowledge relates to Barth's conception of personal ontology. For Barth, the formula, "I am in encounter," is paradigmatic for personhood (Barth, 2010, III/2, p. 246). Barth holds that, apart from the existence and imposition of an other, self can maintain no meaningful bearing on its own ontological significance.[25] For us as human beings, to ask the question, Who am I?, requires that consideration be given to our creaturely status and our consequent relations to our Creator and to the rest of creation, respectively. So, Barth rejects the possibility that self can be defined apart from its relations. He avers, "I am as I am in a relation. . . . I cannot posit myself without coming up against the self-positing of the other" (p. 246). Thus, Barthian anthropology extends the logic of the double-knowledge of self found in Augustine and Calvin beyond epistemology, arguing for a relational basis for personal ontology as well. According to Barth, "I" does not exist, at least not in any significant sense, apart from "Thou."[26] "Relations between persons have ontological force," Torrance (1998) argues, following Barth, "and are part of what persons are as persons—they are real, person-constituting relations" (p. 230). Thus, while a phenomenological analysis of human nature may justly arrive at the conclusion that human individuals are constituted by a union of material and immaterial substances—body and soul—the emphasis of Barthian anthropology falls

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[24]Barth's early wholesale rejection of Aquinas' *analogia entis*—the "analogy of being" between God and humanity (see Barth, 2010, I/i, p. xiii)—resulted in an unbalanced theanthropology (Von Balthasar, 1992a). He would come to a more nuanced, dialectical perspective later in his career (Barth, 1960, see pp. 44ff.; cf. Oh, 2006).

[25]Barth's trinitarian theology provides the ground for his ontology of personal encounter, the *analogia relationis* (Oh, 2006).

[26]It should be noted here that Barth's insistence on a relational basis for personal ontology applies to the existence of self and not to one's substance. This is the language of personeity rather than corporeity. Just as the "Father" is Father only in relation to the "Son" and the "Son" is Son only in relation to the "Father," "I" am who I am only in relation to "you/You." Barth writes of human personeity, "[A]s I and Thou are together, their being acquires the character, the human style, of always being I for the self and Thou for the other. As we are in this encounter we are thus distinguished. On both sides . . . the being has its own validity, dignity and self-certainty. Nor is this human being static, but dynamic and active. It is not an *esse* but an *existere*. To say man is to say history" (III/2, p. 248). In support of this premise, Gunton (1991) notes, "The image is not a static possession, but comes to be realised in the various relationships in which human life is set" (p. 60).

instead on the ontology of human personhood—or personeity. According to this analysis, relationality stands not at the perimeter of human being and becoming, but at its very heart. The "nature" of human beings created in the image of God is to be discrete instantiations of personhood whose relatedness to God and others defines them at the most fundamental level. Understood in these terms, no truly autonomous, self-contained self can, in fact, be said to exist (see Zizioulas, 1985).[27]

According to Aristotelian metaphysics, relationality is a mere "accident" of one's phenomenologically conceived "substance." Following Calvin's lead, Barth recognized that any anthropology for which relationality is accidental has the unintended and unbiblical consequence of positing the possibility of the knowledge of self *a se*—in itself (see Barth, 1995, pp. 162ff.).[28] Accordingly, Christian self-knowledge must, therefore, be approached principally in terms of one's particularity—"I am"—within the context of relationality—"in encounter"—that is, by the fact of one's standing before God and others. Along these lines, McFadyen (1990) explains that "[T]he sense of oneself as a subject, a person, is not individually but socially acquired" (p. 70). Zizioulas (1991) concurs adding,

> Both in the case of God and of man the identity of a person is recognized and posited clearly and unequivocally, but this is so only in and through a *relationship*, and not through an objective ontology in which this identity would be *isolated*, pointed at and described in itself. Personal identity is totally lost if isolated, for its ontological condition is relationship. (p. 46; author's emphasis)

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[27]This conclusion would obviously hold true, supremely and archetypally, for the personhood of the triune God, whom Christian orthodoxy holds to be a community of three persons (*hypostases*), though perfectly unified in essence (*ousia*).

[28]So, Barth rejects the Aristotelian dichotomy of "substance" and "accident" that characterizes Aquinas'—and to a lesser extent, Augustine's—metaphysic, writing, "[T]he encounter between I and Thou is not arbitrary or accidental, . . . it is not incidentally but essentially proper to the concept of man" (Barth, 2010, III/2, p. 248). As mentioned in Chapter 1, the theological "turn" to relationality involved a series of shifts away from Hellenistic categories following in the wake of nineteenth-century continental philosophy (see Shults, 2003, pp. 22ff.). Yet, Barth's insistence that human being is indivisible from human relating was anticipated in some ways by Jonathan Edwards who developed his own relational ontology in a "radical departure" from "traditional" Aristotelian metaphysics (Lee, 2000, p. 77). Crisp (2012) rejects certain aspects of Lee's reading of Edwards, yet notes the latter's unique, even idiosyncratic, metaphysical paradigm.

In other words, defining human beings solely in terms of metaphysical "substance" risks effacing the uniqueness of personal identity, replacing the particularity of personal ontology with a derivative, universal humanity, of which "I" am merely representative. Christian *self*-knowledge, on the other hand, posits the existence of a unique person whose identity nevertheless is entailed in a dialectical unity of the essential and the contingent—or, in other words, with its intrinsic and particular aspects inseparably linked with its dynamic and relational aspects. Personhood, according to this framework, exists within a dynamic process of reciprocal personeity.[29] It is within this dialectic framework that humanity, for O'Collins (2009), is best understood:

> Human beings are open-ended projects, called to develop dynamically, discover meaning, follow up insights, actualize potentialities, deepen their self-understanding as well as their relationships with others, and through experience to grow continually from cradle to grave. In a very real sense, we are not yet human; we are always becoming human. (p. 235)

The pursuit of *Christian* self-knowledge is, by definition, relational. According to the Scriptures and as maintained in historical, pastoral theology, there is no *true* knowledge of self apart from the knowledge of God. Barthian theanthropology extends this conclusion regarding the indispensability of divine–human relationality to include human-to-human relations as well. As Grenz (2001) explains, "Humans . . . are created to be the counterpart of God—that is, to stand in an I–Thou relationship to God. But they are also to copy and imitate the divine original by standing in an I–Thou relationship to

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[29]I will have more to say in support of this point below. However, in support of the idea of reciprocal personeity, or what Shults (2003) calls "constitutive relationality" (see pp. 117ff.), the language of correspondence in Gen 2 is, perhaps, instructive. In vv. 18 and 20, the Hebrew term—כְּנֶגְדּוֹ—expresses the divine intention to create a corresponding other for the first man—one who shares his nature (see v. 23). God's pronouncement of "not good" in reference to the fact that the man is "alone" (v. 18) seems odd since God is himself present with the man in the garden (see 3:8). The standard account of God's disapprobation of the man's solitude in the garden posits that it would have been impossible for humankind to fill the earth and rule over it (Gen 1:28) without the ability to reproduce sexually (see Westermann, 1984). The fact is, however, God could have allowed for the possibility of asexual reproduction among humans. If it is "good" enough for certain non-human species—e.g., sponges, aphids, and even some vertebrates—to reproduce asexually, there must be some other factor at work in the divine plan for humanity than the propagation and *dominium* of humanity. It seems clear from this passage that mutual correspondence between persons is a fundamental aspect of God's design for human nature. This would imply, moreover, that human "wholeness" and personhood is somehow contingent on one's relations to both God *and* others. So, Westermann (1984): "God's creature is humankind only in community" (p. 192).

each other" (p. 297). Moreover, as self willingly participates in the mutual self-positing of self and other/Other, relational self-knowledge assumes an expressly covenantal complexion. In other words, *self*-knowledge is never exclusively self-centered; rather, it assumes a dynamic of mutuality and a reciprocity. In short, Christian self-knowledge, following Barthian theanthropology, is inherently covenantal (Barth, 2010, III/2, pp. 203ff.; see Price, 2002).[30] A covenantal formulation of the *imago dei* will define human personhood, as Calvin sought to do, *coram deo*, but with the added Barthian emphasis on its horizontal, self–other aspects as well. According to Calvin, God intended that his image would serve as a mirror within which the divine likeness might be perceived both in relation to himself and to all creation. Christian self-knowledge is indispensably covenantal in at least two dimensions: it arises in the context of relationship to God *and*, on God's behalf, to others.[31]

The second crucial element in Barth's framework is his christological approach to anthropology. For Barth, the psalmist's question, "What is man?" (Ps 8:4), finds its ultimate answer in the person and work of Christ (III/2, p. 218; see Grenz, 2004; Tanner, 2010). Indeed, Barth held Christology to be "the assumption behind all our other assumptions," rejecting any isolated conception of human nature generally, or of the *imago dei* in particular, apart from the consideration of the God-man (III/2, p. 571).[32]

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[30]Regarding the asymmetry of covenant, Barth (1979) concludes, "Through His Word God discloses His work in His *covenant* with man. . . . He discloses Himself as the *primary* partner of the covenant—Himself as *man*'s God. But He also discloses *man* to be His creature. . . . He discloses man as God's man, as God's son and servant who is loved by Him. Man is thus the other, the secondary, partner of the covenant" (pp. 19–20; author's emphasis).

[31]A third dimension of covenantal self-knowledge is also suggested by the relationship between the *imago* and creation.

[32]This trajectory inverts the secular paradigm which moves from the phenomena of human existence and particularity toward general, "scientific" conclusions about the nature of human persons. While medical and psychological science has yielded invaluable insight on any number of aspects of the human condition, its conclusions can never extend to questions of ultimate significance. Why are we here? Where are we headed? What must we become? Empirical science, limited by its own self-imposed disciplinary constraints to a phenomenology of (principally, material) human "substance," can offer no meaningful response to such questions. Yet, answers we must seek if, as the Bible teaches, we have a Creator in whose image we are made. Christ, then, is God's reply to humanity's quest for meaning. As Barth explains, "In our exposition of the doctrine of man we must always look in the first instance at the nature of man as it confronts us in the person of Jesus, and only secondarily—asking and answering from

Cortez (2008) summarizes Barth's anthropological methodology in terms of the personhood of Christ—"not something that can be known as 'a neutral point' but rather must be 'explained' by Jesus as it is manifested in his concrete existence" (p. 22).[33] McCormack (1997) defines Barth's christological approach as the methodological trajectory that initiates "from a centre in God's Self-revelation in Jesus Christ" (p. 454). Accordingly, Barth's anthropological method begins with Christology and then proceeds to draw anthropological inference (Barth, 2010, III/2, p. 54).[34] Following from this approach, Christ alone perfectly answers David's query concerning humanity. Jesus is the one truly human being (Tanner, 2010; Wells, 1984).[35] As Spence (1991) rightly concludes, "We become fully human only as we are conformed to the one whom God put forward as the exemplar of true human existence" (p. 97). In other words, if humanity is, indeed, a "sign" fashioned in some way to image the invisible, ineffable God, Christ is the ultimate fulfilment of that destiny (McMartin, 2013; see Rom 8:29). As such, only by focusing on his person and work can we unlock the "mystery" of humanity and so realize

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this place of light—at the nature of man as that of every man and all other men?" (III/2, p. 46).

[33]Cortez (2008) succinctly enumerates the three elements of Barth's Christology in terms of the election of Christ, his vicarious submission to the Father, and his mediatorial work on the behalf of humanity: "Not only is [Christ] the 'primarily and originally' elected human being, and the one human being who maintained the covenantal faithfulness of his relationship to God and thus secured human nature against the threat of non-being, but he is also the summons by which God encounters human beings and constitutes them as his covenantal co-partners" (p. 28).

[34]Brunner (2014) concurs that any Christian anthropology must "start from the centre, from the revelation of God in Jesus Christ," yet he offers a subtle variance from Barth's approach: "Our Christo-centric method would be misunderstood, however, if we were to deduce from it that the first thing we have to do is to establish a doctrine of the Humanity of Christ. To look at man *in the light* of Jesus Christ is not the same thing as knowing Jesus Christ" (p. 53). The two approaches are, arguably, two sides of a single coin. Whereas, Barth's approach bears on anthropology generally; Brunner's perspective may, in fact, offer a more direct avenue to arriving at idiosyncratic self-knowledge—not through one's apprehension of the person of Christ so much as through direct, personal encounter with Christ himself.

[35]Christ is the archetypal human being, but this is not the same as saying humanity is created in the image of Christ (Bavinck, 2004; contra Delitzsch, 2015; Crisp, 2016). Perhaps, it would be better to say humanity is created *for* the image of Christ in order to emphasize its telic, eschatological bearing. Christ alone fulfills humanity's vocation in his perfect relating to the Father and to the world (McMartin, 2013). In his saving work he has accomplished—as in his person he *is*—the renewal and reorientation of the *imago* in humanity. Through our union with Christ and reconciliation in him to the Father, we, "having been conformed to the image of Christ, are now again becoming like God" (Bavinck, 2004, pp. 554–555; see Rom 8:29; 1 Cor 15:49; Phil 3:21; Eph 4:24; Col 3:10; 1 John 3:2).

our destiny as God's image bearers in the world (Zizioulas, 1975, p. 433). Further still, in addition to being the one from whom we apprehend our vocation as image bearers, he is also the one through whom God restores his image in us to its fullness, and in whom we are coming to be truly and finally conformed to that image.

Within this framework, Christ in his humanity provides the ontological key to understanding human nature—as expressed in its individual and corporate dimensions—as designed and determined by God and as lived out *coram deo*. Moreover, he also serves as the relational "locus" between God and humanity wherein he effects our mutual reconciliation (Rom 5:11; 2 Cor 5:19; Eph 2:16), as well as the progressive renewal of the image in us that had been corrupted at the fall (1 Cor 15:49; 2 Cor 3:18; Col 3:10). In support of a christological framing of the *imago dei*, Crisp (2016) avers,

> Christ is the archetypal human being, who represents God to humanity and humanity to God in his incarnation. He is also the prototypical human being, after whose image all other human beings are fashioned. Humans are able to represent God in the world in virtue of being made in the image of the God-man, the archetypal image-bearer. (p. 65)

Furthermore, McFadyen (1990) helpfully clarifies the implications of this renewal for self–other relationality, "As our relationship with God is reconstituted through Christ, so are our relations with one another" (p. 114). As this dynamic is strengthened through the increasing appropriation of our Spirit-mediated union with Christ, we come to image the perfect human nature he embodies—in all its various capacities and degrees. Along these lines, Tanner (2010) concludes, "In sum, there is only one perfect or express image of God—the second person of the trinity—and that perfect image becomes the creature's own by way of a close relationship with it, the closer the better, a closeness consummated in Christ" (p. 14).

The Christological Grounds for Christian Self-Knowledge

Before turning to the task of outlining a Christocentric theology of human self-knowledge, an additional preliminary discussion of the person and work of Jesus Christ

will prove necessary. To be sure, any thorough investigation into the person of Christ in metaphysical or theological terms would potentially carry the present inquiry far afield as the historical and modern literature on the subject is truly vast and varied. Yet, in defense of the central thesis of this chapter—namely, that Christology supplies the theological and anthropological bases for Christian self-knowledge—it will be necessary to articulate the several ways in which we may rightly and meaningfully regard Jesus Christ as a human being. The ink spilled over the past two millennia makes such an articulation no simple task. Yet, as Grenz (2004) concludes, "Christology informs the doctrine of humankind, for we cannot know what it means to be human without looking to Jesus, who as the *imago dei* embodying the divine purpose for humankind is the true human" (p. 627). Furthermore, Christ's person cannot be abstracted from his salvific work—accomplished in the main at the cross—without seriously undermining its soteriological significance and, by extension, its anthropological import (O'Collins, 2009). Only in the light of Christ's cross is humanity's fallen yet redeemable state most clearly revealed and the gospel call most distinctly heard. Only through our union with the crucified Christ can we access the benefits of his atoning work done for us and for our salvation. Whereas, to apprehend his person without participating vicariously in his death, through active repentance and faith in him, is to yet remain outside the grace of God and cut off from the life he offers. No framework for the knowledge of self can be truly "Christian" where Christ's work is dissociated from his person.

Christ's Humanity and Ours

Due to his status as a human being, Christ is able to perfectly fulfill humanity's creation mandate to image God in and for the world. Yet, what does it mean to say that Christ in his humanity images God? Christian orthodoxy, after all, posits the presence of two natures—one human and one divine—subsisting in the one divine "person" of the

Son.[36] Yet, in any attempt to parse the "human" from the "divine" in the life and work of Christ, difficulties ensue. There is an epistemological gap, as it were, the boundaries of which are difficult to discern by the fact of the co-entailment of Christ's divine and human natures, that obscures our ability to look at Jesus and say, "See? This is what it means to be a truly human being."[37] This epistemological gap between Christology and anthropology has historically proved difficult to bridge, effectively clouding any potential christological warrant for anthropological inference. For this reason, as Cortez (2016) notes, historical theological anthropology has more often intuited rather than defended the existence of sufficient epistemological warrant for this relationship (cf. Davidson, 2001).

The christological "problem" of Christ's person can be formulated from one of two angles, yet for the present discussion it is best stated in this way: How can we posit Jesus' full and true humanity without compromising his divine status?[38] If the history of christological heresies and controversies offers any gauge on the matter, the solution is anything but simple (see Brown, 1988; Runia, 1984). The Scriptures declare that the

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[36]The object to which the term "person" is understood to refer has, with the advent of modernity, shifted away from a classical ontological referent (in patristic and medieval usage) toward a more psychological sense. This shift has greatly problematized the task of relating Christology in its classical formulations to modernist anthropological conceptions (Runia, 1984; Schwöbel & Gunton, 1991). In the interests of maintaining continuity with the orthodoxy of the ancient christological confessions, I have employed the term "person" throughout this subsection in its classical sense. Understood this way, every human being is a person (self) from the moment of conception; yet, according to modern thought, in another real sense we are becoming persons through a dynamic process of reciprocal personeity (Zizioulas, 1991). For the sake of clarity, I will refer to the personhood of Jesus Christ, the eternal, divine Word of God, according to the classical usage throughout this section. As such, there is no "becoming" in his Person as his personhood is eternally and immutably "constituted" in timeless relation with the Father as the Son (Wellum, 2016). On the other hand, as will be shown, the *human* personality (*personalitas*) and self-consciousness of Christ are fundamental aspects of his human nature (Galot, 1981).

[37]Modern Christology typically follows Barth in holding that the miracles of Jesus attest to the divinity of Christ (see Wellum, 2016). Yet, within the synoptic Gospels Christ is portrayed equally as a human being chosen by God to fulfill the purposes of God the Father on humanity's behalf (i.e., "Son of man"). So, for instance, in the Matthean account of Jesus' healing of the paralytic, his forgiveness of the man's sins triggers not wonderment that God himself had stepped into human history, rather, the crowds "glorified God, who had given such authority *to men* [τοῖς ἀνθρώποις]" (Matt 9:8; cf. Mark 2:1–12) (see Davis, 2006).

[38]Brunner (2014) remarks that this is "the real intellectual problem of the doctrine of the Two Natures" (p. 360).

divine Son has "become like his brothers and sisters in every respect" (Heb 2:17, NRSV), yet, as historical Christian orthodoxy has maintained, without any consequent diminution or degradation of his divine nature and person (Galot, 1981; Macleod, 1998; Wellum, 2016). According to the New Testament, "The Word became flesh" (John 1:14), yet in so doing he did not at any moment cease to be the one by whose divine power creation coheres and is upheld (Col 1:17; Heb 1:3; see Bauckham, 2008; Harris, 1992). Christ is and remains, therefore, the eternally begotten Son, the second Person of the Trinity, who, according to the Chalcedonian Definition of 451, shares "the same essence with the Father." Nevertheless, Chalcedon also affirms that this divine Son has become in the person of Jesus of Nazareth—mysteriously, paradoxically, yet irretrievably—human.[39] Thus did the early church fathers seek to establish that Jesus of Nazareth is the same "person" as the divine Son, yet possessed of both a divine and a human nature as of the Incarnation.

At least since the fourth century, Christian philosophical theology has undertaken to explicate in metaphysical terms how the person of Christ can be both irreducibly human and divine. Especially during the high Middle Ages, it was a topic of seminal importance to theologians intent on deciphering the mystery of the incarnation (see Cross, 2005). So, employing metaphysical categories inherited from the

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[39]Care must be taken here to avoid suggesting either (1) the mutability of God the Son in using the language of "becoming," or (2) the existence of two "persons"—one human and one divine—by speaking as I have here of the second "Person" of the Trinity and the "person" of Jesus of Nazareth. The former (1) would represent a departure from the orthodoxy of divine immutability; the latter (2) amounts to Nestorianism, a heterodox Christology roundly condemned as tantamount to adoptionism by the ecumenical councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon in 431 and 451, respectively (Wellum, 2016). Yet, the fact that such views gained support in the early church may indicate the sincere desire to rightly interpret and "translate" the non-technical language of the New Testament into terms readily compatible with the regnant metaphysical paradigms of the day (DeWeese, 2007). So, though the Gospel writer declares that Word "became [ἐγένετο]" flesh (John 1:14), the early church held that the divine Word nevertheless remained unchanged by this union (see Barth, 2010, I/2, pp. 149ff.). Furthermore, a Nestorian duality in the person of Christ may, perhaps, shield the divine Word from the scandalous suggestion that God "became" human, while, allegedly, preserving to the fullest degree the humanity of Christ. Yet, how then could Nestorianism not fail to fundamentally undermine the biblical dogma that the Word "became man, true and real man, participating in the same human essence and existence, the same human nature and form, the same historicity that we have" (p. 147)?

philosophical discourse of ancient Hellenism, the Chalcedonian council would establish—and scholasticism would later expand upon—the orthodox formula for Christ's personhood. They held that the "person"—*hypostasis*—of the divine Word became a human being like every other when, at the moment of conception within the womb of Mary, he assumed or took on a human "nature"—*physis*—such as all human beings possess, yet without putting off or compromising his divine nature (or personhood) in any way. In spite of the clarity of the formula, however, the council's "Definition" left the terms *physis* and *hypostasis* essentially undefined (Galot, 1981; Macquarrie, 2003a; Norris, 1996).[40] So, in his subsequent defense of Chalcedonian orthodoxy, Boethius proffered definitions of "nature" and "person" which, as it happened, served to ground subsequent christological discourse in explicitly Aristotelian terms (Grenz, 2001).[41] "Nature," he writes, "is the specific property of any substance, and Person is the individual substance of a rational nature" (Boethius, 1978, p. 93). Thus, a nature is not a substance, but rather the constitutive set of properties possessed by a substance. Similarly, a person—whether human or divine—possesses discrete properties in accordance with his or her nature.[42] From these definitions, scholastic philosophical

[40]Coakley (2002) determines that "the major achievement" of Chalcedon was in establishing a "'regulatory' vocabulary, on which semantic grid the events of salvation are now plotted" (p. 148). DeWeese (2007) further surmises, "While some of the ambiguity resulting from the lack of clear definitions of the terms *physis* and *hypostasis* may have been intentional, some also resulted from the shifting metaphysical background in the Eastern portion of the church. There Neoplatonism, which would remain dominant in the West for several centuries longer, was being supplanted by a renewed form of Aristotelianism" (p. 121). DeWeese notes the role political considerations seem to have played in alternately fomenting and resolving many of the Christological controversies throughout the church's adolescence (pp. 121ff.).

[41]Boethius sought to curtail two nascent perspectives that appear to have arisen as a consequence of the ambiguity of Chalcedon (Grenz, 2001). His definitions of "person" and "nature" defended against the Nestorian notion that the person of the divine Word had assumed or "possessed" a separate and distinct human person resulting in the union of two persons into one body–soul composite. It also ruled out of bounds the Eutychian assertion that the divine and human natures had somehow blended or commingled into a single semi-human, semi-divine amalgam or *tertium quid*. Grenz (2001) observes the particular Aristotelian nuance of Boethius' definitions, remarking that they made possible "the claim that personhood belongs to the realm of unchanging essence rather than changeable characteristics" (p. 66).

[42]By the late Middle Ages, Aquinas, Scotus, and Ockham would contribute a further nuance by distinguishing substance from *suppositum*—"an independently existing ultimate subject of characteristics" (Freddoso, 1986, p. 28)—further grounding the personhood of Christ in the identity of the Word (see also

theology, over the next 700 years or so, would continue to develop what has in modern

times come to be known as the "classical" metaphysical model of the hypostatic union of

Christ's two natures (Wellum, 2016; see Cross, 2005).[43] In so doing, the medieval model

reified Boethius' strictly metaphysical definition of "person."[44]

    According to the classical definitions of "person" and "nature," in order for

Christ to be regarded as fully human he must be a person who instantiates the "concrete

particulars" common to all human beings—which would necessarily include a human

body and a "rational human soul" (Crisp, 2007; Wellum, 2016).[45] So, as the classical

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Cross, 2005; DeWeese, 2007; Stump, 2002).

    [43]The christological "formula" derived from Chalcedon, as summarized by Crisp (2016), entails four key metaphysical propositions: "1. Christ is one person. 2. Christ has two natures, one divine and one human. 3. The two natures of Christ retain their integrity and are distinct; they are not mixed together or confused, nor are they amalgamated into a hybrid of divine and human attributes (like a demigod). 4. The natures of Christ are really united in the person of Christ—that is, they are two natures possessed by one person" (p. 82). These pillars of Chalcedonian orthodoxy provide the discursive bounds of the incarnation, ostensibly preserving perspectives on Christ's human nature from in any way denigrating his divinity, or vice versa. Wellum (2016) articulates his own "classical" formulation of the hypostatic union in terms of the Chalcedonian–Boethian distinction between person and nature thus: "[T]he *divine person* of the Son, subsisting in the *divine nature*, did not become a human person but assumed a *human nature*, such that the same *I* is the *person of Christ* that now subsists in the *divine nature as God* and in a *human nature as man*" (p. 429; author's emphasis).

    [44]Freddoso (1986) makes a crucial observation regarding the resistance in modern ethics to maintaining a metaphysical sense of personhood. If, as contemporary philosophers would have us believe, personhood is merely "evaluative" rather than intrinsic, then "an entity x is a person only if the rest of us (or, perhaps, those in charge or those in the know) consent to treat x in the special way associated with personhood" (p. 50n5). Along these lines, Evans' (2002) "non-metaphysical" definition—"being a self is not being a special type of entity, but rather it is a matter of having a special status, a status that is linked to social relationships"—leads him to acknowledge an evaluative consequence for personhood: "On such a view, a human being may become a self, or might cease to be a self" (p. 73). Clearly, this perspective opens the door to potentially grave ethical consequences—a point that Moreland & Rae (2000) urge Christian ethicists to bear in mind.

    [45]Medieval scholars intent on maintaining the linguistic and conceptual boundaries of Chalcedon were confronted with the challenge of articulating their models of the incarnation within this discursive framework (Adams, 1999; DeWeese, 2007). At times, this resulted in conceptual and rhetorical figurations some modern readers have regarded as problematic. By way of example, Swinburne (1994) remarks with no small irony on Aquinas' use of *hypostasis*, "For all humans other than Christ Aquinas held . . . the human person is the same thing as his or her individual human nature. . . . What, according to Aquinas, distinguishes Christ from other humans is that while Christ is a person who is a human being, he is not a human person" (p. 214). Crisp (2007) in his own articulation appears to equivocate on this point. Maintaining a medieval exegesis of Chalcedon, he avers, "The human nature of Christ is not a person independent of the Word. Nor is the human nature of Christ a person in itself, as it were, once the Word has assumed it" (p. 82); yet, "[the human nature of Christ] *becomes a human person* on its assumption by the Word" (p. 80, emphasis mine). Yet, as Freddoso (1986) rightly maintains, the "medieval tradition" of maintaining a distinction between "human person" and "person who is a human being," while metaphysically significant, should in no way undermine our ability to posit his full likeness to the rest of humanity (p. 30). In other words, metaphysical considerations notwithstanding, the New Testament witness as well as the confessions of Christian orthodoxy prevent us from in any way diminishing the

formulation holds, the presence in the person of Christ of a human mind–soul means that he possesses a comprehensive array of human cognitive and psychological capacities distinct from, and supplementary to, the divine capacities he possessed as the preincarnate Word. He is a divine person with a divine nature, his humanity, metaphysically speaking, having been added onto what he already possessed by reason of his divinity (Warfield, 2015). So, Runia (1984) explains, "[Christ] had a truly human mind, will, consciousness and personality" (p. 107).[46] Yet, his human faculties have not in any way supplanted or replaced his divine mind, will, or consciousness. Moreover, Christ's ownership, so to speak, of two distinct centers of cognition and volition should not be taken to suggest the Nestorian presence of two persons. Rather, the conclusion of orthodoxy is that God the Son committed himself to thinking and willing *as a human being*, minimally, for the period of his terrestrial, pre-Easter life. Only by his ownership of a human mind–soul and accompanying neurobiological system could he accomplish this agenda. As Galot (1981) helpfully clarifies,

> Jesus' human nature is fully endowed with human reality and human existence . . . with a human consciousness and a human will, a soul that acts according to the laws of human psychology and remains distinct from his divine spirit, "without any commingling." Without losing any of its own qualities, this human nature is personalized by the relational being of the Word. (p. 306)

Clearly, this way of delineating the particulars of Christ's humanity falls under the same metaphysical rubric as the constitutive *imago* in that it posits his ontic status *qua* human in strictly static, formal terms. The emphasis of the model lands squarely on

significance—whether theological or ontological—of Christ's human nature.

[46]Freddoso (1986) cautions against concluding from medieval location of the "person" of Christ in the person of the divine Word that "Christ's human nature lacks its own *personalitas* (personhood)." The scholastics, he notes, explicitly denounced "the psychological claim that Christ lacks a human personality, where the English word 'personality' is taken in the usual way to connote a configuration of character traits and temperament" (p. 50n7). While the presence of two minds in Christ— one human and one divine—might suggest the existence of two relational centers, this would open the door to a Nestorian duality in which Christ-as-human relates *inter*subjectively (rather than *intra*subjectively) to Christ-as-divine. Morris (2001) develops an analogy with human psychology by adducing the interaction between a normal human being's conscious and unconscious "minds."

the "parts" and capacities of human nature—Christ's and ours—but neglects what is, arguably, most fundamental to personhood, whether human or divine, namely, relationality (Zizioulas, 1985). As Reformed anthropology from Calvin to Barth would insist, the image of God entails more than a set of merely formal functions or structural capacities. The constitutive *imago* certainly provides a metaphysical basis for positing the covenantal *imago*—we *have* the image of God so that we might *be* imagers of God. Yet, biblically and theologically, the possession of this capacity is meaningless without the (human) freedom with which to exercise it. Therefore, if Jesus fulfills the distinctives of humanity's covenantal *imago*, must it not be the case that he relates to God and to others as a truly, if not merely, human being? In other words, a metaphysical account may supply a discursive framework for the ontology of the incarnation, but it does not clarify the nature of Christ's relationship to the Father and to us as a human being "like his brothers and sisters in every respect." As Bavinck (2006) suggests, metaphysical models of the incarnation establish the parameters according to which Christ fulfills—or, perhaps, fills up—the constitutive *imago dei* with which humanity has uniquely been endowed (p. 259). On the other hand, from the moment of the incarnation, the person of the Son by reason of his human nature possessed the immanently human capacity to image God in the active, dynamic sense of the covenantal *imago* (see McMartin, 2013).[47] And it is from this perspective that Christology most meaningfully informs and interacts with anthropological discourse. After all, Christology is, as Barth (2010) has pointedly remarked, "more than an obscure metaphysics" (IV/3, p. 136).

Christological reflection on Christ's humanity must inevitably transcend metaphysical considerations to be truly fruitful for Christian anthropology. As Brunner

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[47]This point should not be construed to suggest that the preincarnate Son did not image the Father actively and covenantally. It is crucial, nevertheless, to affirm that Christ *in his humanity* provides the ultimate key to understanding our human capacity to image God (so, Tanner, 2010). As McMartin (2013) righty concludes, "[I]f we only have reason to think that Christ bears the image in virtue of his divine nature, then a major motivation for connecting anthropology and Christology will be lost" (p. 143).

(2014) rightly observes, "[O]nce we begin to think in abstract terms of the *schema* of the Two Natures, then we cannot hold the unity of the divine-human Person save through the denial of [Nestorian] duality" (p. 362).[48] Even so, the unity of Christ's personhood must be preserved even at the risk of resorting to the category of mystery (Pannenberg, 1977). On the other hand, subsequent affirmations regarding Christ's humanity, firmly buttressed by Chalcedonian orthodoxy, will necessarily proceed beyond the bounds of metaphysical discourse. On this point, Davidson (2001), articulates the crux of the distinction between constitutive and covenantal Christologies respective to the import each bears on theological anthropology:

> Christology is not about [metaphysics], but the dramatic exposition of the encounter between God and humanity. . . . The humanity which the Son of God assumes is not an 'impersonal' substance somehow taken up. . . . God does not become incarnate *simpliciter*: God particularizes the history of Jesus as God's own. Jesus' fleshly existence, the life of this real man, is . . . as a genuinely human being . . . subject to all the normal conditions of creaturely finitude and even fallenness. Jesus is no demigod or angel, but one with us in the frustrations, struggles, drives and needs of human life. There is a radical and comprehensive solidarity with humankind. . . . Without this, talk of . . . 'solidarity' in any ultimately transformative or redemptive sense, would be meaningless, for Jesus would not truly represent God to humankind or humankind to God. It is by his obedience within the terms of this humanity, not as an ideal, that the incarnate Word deals with sin and reconciles to God. (p. 144)

To reiterate, the *imago* is the "sign" of God, alternately reflecting and representing God along two axes—one vertical and one horizontal. As the Son, Jesus both perfectly reflects to God the image of the Father and "projects" that same image to—and onto—fallen humanity. But, crucially, in taking on flesh the Word does not merely impersonate, but rather en-personates, so to speak, a human being fully conformed—and, at least for the

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[48]Brunner (2014) goes so far as to conclude, "[T]he whole complex of problems raised by the doctrine of the Two Natures is the result of a question which is wrongly posed, of a question which wants to know something which we simply cannot know, namely, how divinity and humanity are united in the Person Jesus Christ" (p. 362). Barth would certainly proceed further than Brunner's apophatic avowal in his retrieval of Leontius' sixth-century *anhypostasia–enhypostasia* distinction (Barth, 1991, p. 157ff.; see Crisp, 2007, Chapter 3; Davidson, 2001). Stated succinctly, the human nature of Christ is said to subsist only in the hypostasis of the divine Word. Apart from this proviso Christ's human nature is to be regarded as anhypostatic or impersonal, having "no reality in isolation from the subjecthood" of the second person of the Trinity (Davidson, 2001, p. 135). Yet, at the moment of Christ's incarnation the Word hypostasized his human nature rendering it enhypostasized by means of his divine personhood.

period of his terrestrial life, conforming—to the image of God. For this reason the writer of Hebrews, operating within the highest of Christologies, speaks of Jesus having "learned" (ἔμαθεν) obedience and his "being made perfect" (τελειωθεὶς) with the result that he "became" (ἐγένετο) for us the means of our redemption (Heb 5:8–9).

The crucial distinction of a covenantal Christology, over and against a constitutive, metaphysical model, is its emphasis on the unity between Jesus and his Father, rather than on the union of his human and divine natures, which the former nonetheless presumes. While the latter provides epistemological warrant and conceptual clarity to the ontology of incarnation, it cannot fully elucidate the significance of Jesus' humanity for anthropological discourse. This is necessary for any christological account of the *imago* in humanity and, more to the point, to a Christocentric account of self-knowledge. Moreover, a covenantal Christology that presupposes Christ's two natures will speak of two means by which the person of the Son relates to the Father: firstly, as the divine Word who eternally and unwaveringly shares in the glory of the Father (John 17:5); and, secondly, as a human being who, though fully divine, set aside certain of his divine prerogatives that he might relate to God and to us as one of us (Phil 2:6–8). Both are true and vital elements of orthodox Christology. Yet, only by means of the Son's human relationship with the Father does he accomplish the fulfilment of humanity's vocation to serve as God's image in and for the world. Furthermore, although Jesus accomplished this mission at the cross (John 19:30), his aim was not merely to redeem fallen humanity from its sinful state. A ransomed humanity is only halfway there. To clarify, Christ imparts to us more than forgiveness—justification from sins. Supremely, he mediates humanity's reconciliation to the Father by drawing us into the very communion he set aside, albeit temporarily (see John 17:24), in offering to God with his (human) blood the ransom price for humanity's bitter estrangement from God (Rom 5:10; Eph 2:13; Col 1:20, 22; 1 Pet 1:17–20; cf. Ps 58:3; Isa 1:4; Ezek 14:5). Christ accomplishes this by renewing in us the covenantal *imago* that had been lost at

humanity's fall. So, Athanasius (2012) fittingly concludes, "[T]he most holy Son of the Father, being the Image of the Father, came to our region to renew man once made in His likeness, and find him, as one lost, by the remission of sins" (p. 43).

As God, the Son perfectly reveals the Father to us; as a human being, Jesus not only makes visible the invisible God but he also reveals in himself the perfection and perfectibility of the *imago dei* to which we have been called. In the latter sense, Christ's revelatory role assumes its greatest anthropological significance. Noting this distinction, Spence (1991) assigns Christ's revelatory role to his human, rather than divine, nature and cautions, "[W]henever the divine nature is considered as directly determining the humanity of Christ, some aspect of his human nature is either neglected or denied" (p. 92). Thus, from the vantage point of the covenantal *imago* Christ reveals the Father inasmuch as he is the true image of God, not merely or even primarily due to the fact of his divinity. God's will from the beginning, after all, was that humanity would serve as the visible sign of his glory and goodness in the world (Gen 1:26–27). Christ accomplishes this expressly human vocation in and through his human relatedness to God as the fulfillment of the covenantal *imago*. This crucial distinction could potentially be lost or effaced by placing undue emphasis on a constitutive Christology. As Pannenberg (1977) explains,

> The actual event of the unification of God and man in the temporal execution of the course of Jesus' existence is obscured by the perception—in itself correct—that Jesus' human existence in the whole of its historical course has the ground of its unity and meaning (and thus also of its facticity) in the fact that Jesus is the eternal Son of God. (p. 338)

If, on the other hand, the deeper significance of Jesus' historical existence is to be found not in his "ontological dependence" on the Word but in his eminently human "dependence on the Father," then Christ may also be shown to be the perfect image of God who reveals what it means to be fully human (p. 339).[49] For all its merit and validity,

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[49]Had God the Son never assumed a human nature he would still perfectly reveal the Father (as "the Son"), yet we could not affirm his full humanity and thus any direct christological link with the *imago*

on its own terms Chalcedonian Christology establishes the conditions but not the means

by which Christ is the fulfillment of the covenantal *imago dei* and, thus, the key to

understanding human nature *coram deo*.[50] Only in the light of his dual relational

trajectory—to/with the Father and, on the Father's behalf, to/with his fellow human

beings—does Jesus merit this distinction and provide the theological basis for a

thoroughgoing christological anthropology.

The human self-consciousness of Jesus. From the fifth century, the

orthodoxy of Chalcedon—one person, two natures—has withstood the weight of intense

philosophical and theological pressure, proving resilient in the face of its erstwhile

theological and cultural despisers.[51] Yet, in emphasizing the dogma of the metaphysical

unity of Christ's personhood, a commensurate emphasis on Christ's fulfillment of the

covenantal *imago* has, arguably, been lost. Noting this deficit, Spence (1991) writes,

> [A] survey of the history of doctrine suggests that the Church has by and large failed
> to bring its perception of Christ as the incarnation of the eternal Son of God into a
> coherent relation to the Gospel portrayal of Jesus as a man of the same nature as
> ourselves who is inspired by the Holy Spirit. Such a failure . . . has resulted in the
> widespread neglect in practice of a foundation of Christian anthropology, that is, the
> doctrine that in the life of the incarnate Christ there has indeed been an historical
> exemplification of "true man." (p. 75)

The resulting imbalance has had the unintended consequence of problematizing

discussions regarding certain practical implications of Christ's humanity (Ware, 2012).

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dei would be lost. Due to the fact of his subsistence as the divine Word, Christ reveals true God; but only in his Spirit-mediated dependence on the Father does Christ reveal true humanity—making the image visible, as it were (John 1:18; Col 1:15; 1 John 4:12[!])—and inform a Christian understanding of human self-knowledge.

[50]Pannenberg (1977) has termed this christological dilemma, "the impasse of the two-natures doctrine" (p. 323). He further explains that "the concept of the incarnation, inescapable though it is, cannot explain the unity of God and man in Jesus Christ because it is itself an expression of this unity, which must be explained and established on other grounds. The impasse reached by every [historical] attempt to construct Christology by beginning with the incarnational concept demonstrates that all such attempts are doomed to failure" (p. 322).

[51]According to Runia (1984), since its inception, this "old Christological dogma" has remained, "the shibboleth that distinguished orthodoxy from liberalism," for Eastern and Western churches, for Catholic and Protestant believers, and among all major branches of reformational piety (p. 13).

As previously stated, to aver that Jesus is God does not imply that he is less than fully human, only, rather, that he is not merely human. Yet, would not positing certain human "limitations" necessarily curtail our ability to maintain the full deity of Christ? Along these lines, there is the thorny question of Jesus' knowledge of his identity, or more precisely, his self-consciousness.[52] Was Jesus, *qua* human, conscious of himself as the eternal Son during his entire earthly tenure? Did he have direct, undiminished cognitive access to God the Father during the time of his life on earth? And, even if we answer in the affirmative to these questions, what was the means of his awareness, whether ontological or relational? In other words, did Jesus' human mind–soul possess a full, divinely "infused" knowledge[53] of his identity and vocation as the divine Word sent from the Father to redeem humanity at every moment following his conception in the womb of Mary; or did he come to this awareness by means of human experience analogous to our own normative human development?[54] If the former, then we would surely have reason to

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[52]In his now-dated christological study, R. E. Brown (1967) argues that one reason for the hesitancy among Catholic scholars in pursuing this line of inquiry had been the fear of "repercussions" for the "charge of denying the divinity of Jesus" (p. 41). This hesitancy ensued, he observes, in spite of the biblical affirmations of Christ's full humanity and the Chalcedonian asseveration that the eternal Son became in the incarnation "consubstantial with us according to his humanity; in all things like unto us, without sin." Brown goes on to remark pointedly that "only when one has a strong faith in the divinity of Jesus is there a real problem about admitting that his knowledge might have been limited" (p. 42). Surely this is the case.

[53]The suggestion that Jesus "knew" his identity as the divine Word requires that further qualification be made between knowledge and consciousness. Along these lines, Rahner (1966) helpfully distinguishes between the knowledge of particular objects and what he terms "nonobjective consciousness." The latter he defines as an "*a priori*, nonobjective knowledge about oneself [or God] as a fundamental given of the spiritual subject in which it is by itself and simultaneously aware of its transcendental reference to the totality of possible objects of knowledge and freedom" (p. 200). McDermott (1993) clarifies Rahner's distinction in what amounts to very Kierkegaardian language: "Immediate self-presence and presence to God as the ultimate goal of all our knowing and loving are forms of nonobjective consciousness, not knowledge of objects. Consciousness of self and of God as the goal of our spiritual dynamism are concomitant with our knowledge of objects, and compared with the latter can seem dark and fragile. Self and God as goal of our self-transcendence are indirectly given in consciousness through our implicit awareness of self as origin and God as ultimate 'whither' of all our knowing and loving" (p. 204). In other words, consciousness of self is subjective (and consciousness of other/Other intersubjective) rather than objective, though it necessarily entails at least some objective knowledge (see Burke, 2002, pp. 152ff.; Moloney, 1999). Thus, for Rahner, Jesus could have come to consciousness of himself and of God *qua* human in a manner analogous to our own acquisition of subjective knowledge of God and self apart from a direct perception of God and self as "objects" of knowledge (cf. Pannenberg, 1977, pp. 330ff.).

[54]Vos (1953) determines that such a "purely speculative" question can have no bearing on Christology due to the lack of "biographical data for the pre-baptismal period of Jesus' life" (pp. 88–89). Vos does not appear to regard Luke 2:41–49 as carrying sufficient exegetical weight to merit inquiry into Christ's pre-baptismal self-consciousness, though, conversely, he cites 2:49 as evidence that Jesus

question the existence of a christological basis for relational self-knowledge rooted in reciprocal personeity. If, on the other hand, Christ *qua* human grew in his consciousness of himself as Israel's Messiah and even as the Johannine Word-made-flesh by means of his human devotion to God his Father, then this would potentially provide sufficient warrant for the development of a christological account of relational self-knowledge in human beings.

With due deference to Chalcedonian orthodoxy, O'Collins (2009) concludes, "With respect to his divinity Christ is omniscient, but with respect to his humanity he is limited in knowledge" (p. 240). One challenge confronting orthodox Christology, then, is to explain in non-contradictory terms how both an unlimited and a limited knowledge can be apposite with respect to a single person.[55] Traditionally, "*qua*"—meaning, with respect to or in the capacity of—has provided the rhetorical means of distinguishing metaphysically between the divine Word's existence and functioning in and through his two natures (O'Collins, 2011). Axiomatically, God the Son is, *qua* divine, omniscient (Harris, 1992; Wellum, 2016). As an immanent aspect of his divinity, God possesses an eternally present awareness of all that is knowable (Helm, 2011; Ware, 2000). But does this mean that Jesus *qua* human possessed the same, infinite awareness of his unique identity as the divine Word, the second Person of the Trinity at every moment subsequent

considered himself to be the Son of God (see pp. 143, 170). Surely, despite the paucity of such texts, there is sufficient *theological* warrant, derived from the biblical affirmation of Christ's humanity (Heb 2:17), to justify explorations of Jesus' development of a fully human self-consciousness.

[55]Together with the Trinity, the doctrine of the incarnation has historically elicited more accusations of paradox or even blatant contradiction than any other. By way of example, there is Feuerbach's (1989) classic denunciation of Christianity as "*a contradiction . . . personified in the God-man*" (p. 332; author's emphasis). He further concludes, "The divine nature, notwithstanding the position that Christ was at once God and man, is just as much dissevered from the human nature *in* the incarnation as *before* it, since each nature excludes the conditions of the other, although both are united in one personality, in an incomprehensible, miraculous, i.e., untrue manner, in contradiction with the relation in which, according to their definition, they stand to each other" (pp. 333–334; author's emphasis). This is not to say, however, that every assault on the facticity of the incarnation has come from outside of Christianity (see Hick, 1977). Despite such accusations of contradictoriness, O'Collins (2009) issues the orthodox defense of coherence: "The incarnation is a paradox (an apparent contradiction that on closer inspection proves not to be incoherent) but not a blatant, logical contradiction. This belief has not been shown to be metaphysically impossible or logically incoherent like talk of a 'married bachelor' or a 'square circle'" (p. 240).

to the incarnation? Perhaps more significantly, what was the basis of his human self-knowledge—whether due to his ontological union with the divine Word or his covenantal union with the Father?[56] To be sure, the problem of Jesus' self-knowledge bears significantly on Christology.[57] If Jesus' knowledge was limited in some way by his humanity, would not such ignorance suggest the presence of an imperfection in his person?[58] Beyond this, its implications for anthropology are enormous since it is difficult (if not impossible) to conceive of a meaningful sense in which, prior to his exaltation, an omniscient Christ could have claimed solidarity with humanity. Along these lines, Pannenberg (1977) warns,

> [T]o attribute to the [human] soul of Jesus a knowledge of all things past, present, and future, and of everything that God knows from the very beginning, in the sense of a supernatural vision, makes the danger more than considerable that the genuine humanity of Jesus' experiential life would be lost. (p. 329)[59]

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[56]Wellum (2016) would likely reject the dichotomy implicit in this question. Drawing heavily on the Johannine attestations of the Word's divine union with the Father, he concludes, "*The incarnate Son relates to the Father in divine-filial dependence as he has from eternity*" (p. 431, author's emphasis). Thus, Wellum shifts the locus of Christ's relatedness to the Father away from his humanity toward his divinity, essentially conflating the economic relationships within the Trinity and Jesus' human relatedness to God (p. 430; cf. John 6:38). As of the incarnation, the divine Son relates to the Father, according to Wellum, as he has from all eternity, yet, from the moment of the incarnation, he may now do so within the context of his human nature (i.e., body–soul composite). Wellum's approach shares much in common with the trinitarian Christology of Catholic theologian Hans Urs von Balthasar who viewed the vocation (*missio*) of Christ as a modal extension of the intratrinitarian procession (*processio*) of the eternal Son from the Father (Balthasar, 1992b; see Swain & Allen, 2013). Respecting Balthasar's approach, Moloney (1999) notes, "Sonship . . . and the obedience which is its primal expression, are the fundamental themes of Christ's consciousness and knowledge. Through the notion of sonship, that which the Word is at the heart of the Trinity can be transposed into the language of this world" (p. 91).

[57]Wright (2011) shares his own concern that constitutive Christologies shed insufficient light on the matter: "Unless we can give some sort of account of Jesus' own self-understanding, I simply don't think it's good enough to talk about two minds (or one), two natures (or one), or about the various combinations and permutations of persons and substances" (p. 53).

[58]This seems to have been a concern Aquinas endeavored to obviate in positing that Christ possessed the "beatific vision" of God "from the first moment of his conception" (*Summa Theologica*, III, q. 34, a. 4; see Moloney, 1999, pp. 57ff.).

[59]Pannenberg, in his well-known adumbration of a Christology "from below," seeks to ground "the recognition of [Christ's] divinity" by "rising from the historical man Jesus," particularly from the historical fact of his resurrection in and by the power of God, rather than through the theological formulation of the incarnation established by Chalcedonian orthodoxy (Pannenberg, 1977, p. 33). Yet, despite his concerns regarding a *strictly* ontological Christology, he nonetheless affirms his commitment to "retain the truth included in that [traditional] formula" (p. 339). It is unclear on what basis, then, Gunton (1997) maintains with stark certainty: "Pannenberg rejects the Christology of Chalcedon" (p. 23). Runia (1984), for instance, deems as "evident" the fact that "Pannenberg's Christology, through starting 'from below' . . . ultimately comes very close to the classical Christology," though he acknowledges the latter's commitment to developing a "variant of the Chalcedonian tradition" (pp. 36–37), and further notes that

Furthermore, Moloney (1999) concludes, "It is far from clear how one can vindicate any reality in Christ's humanity if one denies him a human consciousness and freedom" (p. 108).

The New Testament witness to the life and ministry of Christ, to say nothing of the Chalcedonian formula, expressly grants license for positing limitations in the knowledge and self-consciousness of Jesus *qua* human. Jesus himself, after all, explicitly acknowledged his own "limited" knowledge respective to the date and time of his parousia (Matt 24:36; see parallels)—the fact of which, Berkouwer (1972) confesses, presents us with "a great mystery about the person of Christ" (p. 258). Still other passages strongly suggest that Jesus obtained experimental knowledge of himself, of others, and of the world like any other human being (Luke 2:52; Mark 5:30-33; John 11:34).[60] So, Bray (2012) concludes regarding Jesus, "[A]lthough he was a divine person, he was functioning within the parameters of his human nature and could not exceed them without compromising the integrity of his humanity" (p. 570). Wellum (2016) further insists, "[Jesus] knows as a man, which entails that he knows subject to the same laws of perception, memory, logic, and development as we do" (p. 455). Yet, what of Jesus' knowledge of himself? Who did he believe himself to be?[61]

Luther himself insisted on a Christology "from below" on exegetical grounds (p. 97). Where Pannenberg certainly does fall short is in his twin denunciations of the historicity of the gospel accounts of Jesus and of his virgin conception. In spite of Gunton's critique of Pannenberg as "over-rationalist," he nonetheless sees "possibilities" toward what he calls "a purified Christology from below" suggested by Pannenberg's theology (Gunton, 1997, p. 30). Gunton hastens to add that such a Christology would need to begin with "the New Testament Jesus" rather than proceed through any "Hegelian framework of meaning" and unity (p. 31).

[60]Alongside these passages, others can be cited to demonstrate Jesus' possession of extraordinary, even supernatural, knowledge (see John 1:48–49; Mark 11:2, and parallels; Matt 17:24–27).

[61]From the moment of Jesus' emergence from Galilean obscurity, the Synoptic accounts depict him as a man preternaturally aware of his unique identity as well as his divinely appointed vocation. As events unfold, at every turn he seems to know more about himself and where he is headed than his closest followers manage to grasp (Mark 8:33; Luke 24:25; John 12:16; et al). Yet, interestingly, what the disciples come in fits and starts to acknowledge—and what he expressly forbids them to disclose—is not his deity, but rather his status as Israel's Messiah (Matt 16:16; John 11:27; cf. Matt 26:63; John 10:24). On the other hand, ignorance of Jesus' *messianic* identity is something the Gospel writers take pains to preemptively and assiduously undermine in their readers. Indeed, the mention of John the Baptist's conferral of messianic distinction on Jesus as well as the evangelists' editorial connection of the former's prophetic ministry with Isaiah 40:3ff. (see Matt 3:3; Mark 1:2–3; Luke 3:4–6; John 1:23) seems intended to forestall any potential

The preincarnate Word is a divine person who *qua* divine knows himself exhaustively and eternally. Yet, in taking on a human nature the divine Son willingly subjected himself to the covenantal dynamic by which all human beings come to know themselves, namely, through his agapic relationality to the Father and to others. Therefore, in all things divine or mundane Christ grew in knowledge—of God, himself, and others—as we do. As Macleod (1998) avers, "in all these respects" Christ's knowledge "was parallel to our own" (p. 167). Furthermore, at every instance when Jesus appeared to possess knowledge that he could not have come to possess through "normal," i.e., natural, means (see Matt 17:27; Mark 14:13; Luke 2:47; 5:4–6; John 1:47; 4:18; 11:14), he received it as a divine gift mediated to his human mind by the Spirit from the Father. So, Wellum (2016) insists, "In his humanity, the Son knew as we know and received supernatural knowledge in relation to the Father and by the Spirit, as other prophets in Scripture received revelation" (p. 457). As with his knowledge of the events and affairs of all things external to himself, Christ's knowledge of himself was constituted throughout the course of his life into a fully mature, well-developed self-consciousness by means of his relationships with God and with others. As regards the distinction of his personhood and his consciousness of his identity, O'Collins (2009) concludes,

> [Jesus'] personal identity (as Son of God) did/does not depend upon his human awareness of himself—that is to say, upon the self-consciousness mediated through his human mind. Yet, his (human) sense of his own identity did depend upon his awareness of himself and his experience of the world. . . . His self-identification depended upon a self-consciousness of the world 'out there.' Through his (human) awareness of his own personal identity, Christ knew not only his distinct identity in himself but also his identity-in-relationship (his 'social' self) as subject-in-relation to the God whom he called 'Abba.' (p. 244)

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ambiguity in this regard. Arguably, only in the Gospel of John does it become explicit that Jesus is not "merely" the Messiah—i.e., the "son of God" through whom God intends to fulfill the promises he made to (and through) David for his people Israel—but God himself come among us to fulfill what only a divine Son could accomplish, namely, the redemption of the world (Köstenberger & Swain, 2008; Wright, 1996).

As an object of his human self-knowledge, Jesus' self-understanding as the divine Word

would have been entailed within the rubric, "things that he had to learn as he grew"

(Ware, 2012, p. 126). In other words, Jesus' human development would have been—and

not merely seemed—perfectly normal.[62] Yet, as he grew in his consciousness of God and

of himself, he would eventually, and rightly, come to grasp the astounding reality of his

unique identity and relationship with the Father. Spence (1991), in defending the

preservation of a distinctly human self-consciousness in Christ, notes that the conclusions

of Jesus' introspection would have fundamentally differed from ours:

> There seems no reason . . . to consider the functioning of Jesus' human self-consciousness as discontinuous with our own, forming and developing as he grew in his experience of himself, the world and of God. Rather, it was in the content of this perception of himself that the distinction lay. (p. 94)

To be clear, the center of subjectivity—the "self" or "I"—of which Jesus *qua* human

became conscious was that of a divine Person, according to the classical, metaphysical

understanding of person as *hypostasis*.[63] Yet, though "owned" and enervated by the

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[62]Crowe (2006) writes, "The ordinary child does not know the word 'I' but has to learn to use it . . . I see no reason for asserting anything different about Jesus" (p. 210). It is difficult to imagine the reason for the dismay of Jesus' family and neighbors at his sudden, apparent pretensions—to their thinking—concerning his identity and mission had they witnessed anything other than a normal, mundane upbringing in which he evinced the limitations, both cognitive and behavioral, common to every stage of human development (see Matt 13:55–56; Mark 3:21; John 7:5). On the other hand, had Jesus only *seemed* to develop the ability to think and act as, say, a normal human toddler forming words and phrases out of gibberish, or a ten-year-old learning to parse the logic of a given proposition, etc., would we not be right to reckon him a merely docetic Christ?

[63]This conclusion presses the distinction between Christ's (unitary) self and his (dual) self-consciousness to a greater degree than some have been willing to countenance. So, for example, Schoonenberg (1971) has argued, "If in Jesus Christ the human ego or act-centre stands psychologically outside his ontological person, it is then clearly not the ego or act-centre of Jesus" (p. 70). Along the same lines, Pittenger (1959) objects that a bifurcated consciousness expressive of the singular person of the Word, "makes Jesus nothing more than a body manipulated as an external instrument for deity" (p. 95). By way of answer to these critiques, Moloney (1999) cites Bernard Lonergan's work clarifying in metaphysical terms how "two distinct levels of consciousness, the human and divine" can be "grounded in an 'ego' which is ultimately one" (p. 112). He writes, "[T]he principal interest in [Lonergan's] approach lies in the possibility it gives us of appreciating the unity of Christ's conscious activity without trespassing on the question of his personhood. Problems of the development of Christ's consciousness and knowledge are questions about his human subjectivity. Subjectivity is an area of diversity and development. All the richness of human psychology can be found there. Even the sense in which the human ego is said to develop is to be accounted for on this level. But clearly this subjectivity must have some principle of unity proper to itself. The diversity of acts in our conscious activity are not total confusion" (p. 113). Indeed, I argue that that only by grounding *human* personhood in this christological dialectic—Christ's unitary essence within a dual existence—will the otherwise illusory human self finally be rescued from the radical contingency being thrust upon it by postmodern deconstructionism and ontological anti-realism.

Person of the divine Son, Jesus' human self-consciousness nevertheless grew in perception and awareness through the normal, human process of dialogical self-knowledge. Jesus' knowledge of his identity, therefore, included the fact that though his is a divine Person, he is also a human being in every sense of the word.

Along these lines, the devil's temptation in the wilderness appears to be principally aimed at undermining Jesus' subjectively construed perception of his unique identity: "If you are the Son of God . . ." (Matt 4:3; 6; see parallel in Luke 4:3; 9; see Wright, 1996). Situated as it is so soon after God's public declaration, "This is my beloved Son" (Matt 3:7), the wilderness temptation will serve to "put to the test . . . precisely Jesus' *sonship*" (Gerhardsson, 2009, p. 20; emphasis in original). Yet, what possible purpose could this line of attack serve, if Christ was divinely—which is to say, omnisciently, beatifically—immune to the possibility of self-doubt? If, on the other hand, the certainty of his identity and vocation was mediated to him not by his divine nature but by his perfect (human) reliance on the Father—specifically, God's declamatory approbation at the Jordan—Jesus' limited self-awareness would have allowed for the possibility that Satan's attacks were a true source of testing.[64] "You believe that God has declared you to be the Son of God?," the devil seems to be saying, "How can you be sure you have not become self-deceived?" Surely, Jesus' confidence in his identity as the Son of God and in the uniqueness of his relationship to the Father was the target of the

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[64]The point that Jesus was tempted in this way should not be construed to suggest the peccability of the Son (see McKinley, 2009). McDermott (1993) offers two crucial senses in which it was impossible for Jesus to sin: "Jesus' earthly life was that of the Son of God incarnate, the definitive self-communication of God to the world. As such, he could not have sinned; he could not have chosen contrary to his deepest character as the authentically human and the incarnate self-expression of God. But, given the supreme importance of his freedom for our salvation, when we consider Jesus as a *viator* on the way before his resurrection, then we do better to say that as he continued to choose the Father's will through the various states of his life, it became increasingly impossible *morally* for Jesus to sin; his human will became developmentally more and more confirmed in grace . . . so that his death was not only the darkest and most 'testing' period of his life but also the time when his freedom acquired definitive shape as fully belonging to God his Father and fully in solidarity with those for whom he lived and died" (p. 207; author's emphasis).

tempter's testing. As France (2007) concludes, "The devil is trying to drive a wedge between the newly declared Son and his Father" (p. 127).

Although the divine Word could have opened his own human mind to the reality of all the awareness and knowledge he possesses *qua* divine, this would surely have been tantamount to turning stones into bread—accommodating his human weakness by recourse to the prerogatives of his divine nature. Such a decision would have fundamentally amounted to a "sin" against his human nature. Moreover, considering the limitations of his humanity, Christ's human mind could not probe in the opposite direction to gain a more direct awareness of his identity apart from the mediating influence of the Holy Spirit.[65] As Spence (1991) concludes, "His human self-consciousness knew and experienced God always indirectly and by means of the Holy Spirit, for only in this way could it remain truly human" (p. 94). Thus, the only option afforded to him in the wilderness was to trust and obey the God whose Son he (rightly) believed himself to be. Jesus' knowledge of himself grew as the Holy Spirit confirmed his vocation—at his baptism, in his miracles, and through his understanding of the Scriptures.[66] From this, we may provisionally draw the inference that Christ's knowledge of himself as the eternally preexistent Word—"before Abraham was, I am" (John 8:58)—

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[65]The asymmetry of the two minds of Christ is vital to maintaining a dyothelite (two-willed) Christology as well as an orthodox perspective on his human and divine natures. Regarding the link between Christ's two natures and his bifurcated consciousness, Moloney (1999) concludes, "If there are two levels of nature in Christ, then there are two levels of consciousness as well" (p. 109). Likewise, O'Collins (2011) observes, "The relationship between these two minds was and is radically unsymmetrical. During the earthly life of Jesus, the person of the Word (through his divine mind) knew the human mind (of Jesus) as his own human mind, but not vice versa" (p. 14). Moreover, if Christ possesses two minds with two wills, then it might also be proper to say he possesses two agentic loci, one divine and one human (though the latter, in some sense, is a subset of the former).

[66]This seems to be Wright's (1996) main thesis regarding Jesus' self-understanding. He does not claim that Jesus was unconscious of his identity as the divine Son (contra Wellum, 2016; see p. 169n51); rather, Jesus' self-knowledge was indirect and inferential, along the lines of Rahner's nonobjective consciousness. Wright concludes, "As a part of his human vocation, grasped in faith, sustained in prayer, tested in confrontation, agonized over in further prayer and doubt, and implemented in action, he believed he had to do and be, for Israel and the world, that which according to scripture only YHWH himself could do and be. He was Israel's Messiah; but there would, in the end, be 'no king but God'" (p. 653). To afford Jesus (*qua* human) direct access to an awareness of his divinity, as I have already demonstrated, would transgress the asymmetrical relationship and "unidirectionality" of his divine and human minds effectively effacing the meaningfulness of his humanity.

could certainly have resulted from his increasing, developmentally appropriate relatedness to the Father through the Spirit, along with the conclusions he drew from his own supernaturally endowed—yet eminently human—understanding of the Scriptures, rather than through any direct, immediate perception of time immemorial.

Agapic Reconciliation as the "Work" of Christ

The covenantal image of God finds its ultimate fulfillment in the agapic relationality Christ evinced in his dedication to the Father and in his devotion to his fellow human beings. By way of contrast, in the garden humanity failed in its calling to maintain relational unity with God when we abrogated our vocation, abandoning our place of correspondence to God and, on God's behalf, to each other. As a result of their sin, our first parents lost their likeness to God and fell from their former state and status as covenantal image bearers.[67] The devastating effects of this fall now pervade the fallen self-consciousness of human beings as evidenced in our pathological inclination toward sinful self-blindness and self-deception. Our ability to know ourselves has been fatally curtailed by this estrangement—from God, from others, and from self—brought about by sin. We no longer know because we did not love; though, in our present predicament, we cannot love because we do not know. Christology provides a theanthropological framework for Christian self-knowledge precisely because Christ in his person embodies—even as in his "work" he mediates—the intimate connection between agapic relationality and the mutual, perichoretic[68] knowledge of God, self, and others. Put another way, on account of his perfect, loving "attachment" to the Father, the man Jesus

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[67]This appears to be Calvin's point of emphasis. If the image is merely constitutive, then the repercussions of the fall appear to be mainly limited to individuals, their minds, bodies, and other formal attributes.

[68]Again, "perichoretic" refers to the kind of interpersonal, dialogical knowing that comes only through the penetrating presence of the Spirit of God. It is not, therefore, a "person-*perichoresis*" like that within which the triune Persons of God eternally subsist, but a "nature-*perichoresis*" in which human beings participate in the divine life that Christ experienced *qua* human with the Father through the Spirit.

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could not become sinfully self-ignorant or self-deceived. Moreover, Christ embodies agapic relationality with other human beings not merely, as a eudaimonist perspective might suggest, by the pursuit of personal wellbeing in and through wise and virtuous communion with God and others. To the contrary, he is "for us" (Eph 5:2): he submits his own life and wellbeing to the will of the Father (Matt 26:39); he serves others at great personal cost (Mark 10:45); he forgives his enemies (Luke 23:34); he lays down his life for his friends (John 15:13). Indeed, the life of Christ is characterized by the fierce pursuit of agapic "attachment" to the very ones whose sin robbed them of their likeness to him, and whose rebellion drove them to crush and despise in him the true and perfect image he sought to restore in them (Isa 53:3).

In shifting away from a constitutive Christology to a covenantal framework, the "work" of Christ comes into sharper focus. Indeed, Christ is "for us" in the sense that he completes his work on our behalf, as well as "for us" in the sense that he offers to us what only God could grant. As such, Christ's role as mediator and reconciler between God and humanity is crucial for understanding his person. "Reconciliation," says Barth (2010), "is the fulfillment of the covenant between God and man" (IV/1, p. 22). Whereas Calvin issued a call for the renewal of the covenantal *imago* in anthropological terms, Luther and Melanchthon would stake rather firm polemical positions against a strictly constitutive perspective respective to Christology (Berkouwer, 1954; Gerrish, 2015). Melanchthon (2007), frustrated with the "sophistry" of medieval scholasticism, would come to sharply criticize their metaphysical framework, which he believed only beclouded the essence of the gospel:

> [T]o know Christ [is] to know his benefits and not as [the scholastics] teach, to perceive his natures and the mode of his incarnation. . . . [I]t behooves us to become acquainted with Christ who has been given as a remedy for us, or to use the language of the Scripture, "for our salvation." (pp. 68–69)[69]

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[69]In similar terms Luther would rail against a speculative metaphysics of the incarnation: "Christ is not called Christ because he has two natures; what is that to me? But he bears this glorious and comforting name from the office and work which he took upon himself. That he is by nature both God and

This is not to say that these early Reformers sought to break with the ancient creeds; rather, according to Berkouwer (1954), their chief concern was to understand "*why* Christ has put on human flesh" in order that we might "learn to know Christ as medicine, as our complete salvation" (p. 102; emphasis in original). Barth (2010) would echo this judgment in his analysis of the "theological mood" of Melanchthon's—and Luther's—critique of scholasticism. As it pertains to their inquiry into matters of "untheological metaphysical speculation," he determines that "[t]he Scholastics had become fools in investigating these things and the *beneficia Christi* had been obscured thereby" (I/1, p. 416).[70] The task of dogmatic Christology, Barth maintains, is to stress "what [Christ] is as the One who makes reconciliation, as the One who fulfills the covenant, as the One in whom the world and man have been and are converted to God" (IV/1, p. 126). Thus, for the early Reformers and those faithfully retracing their footsteps, the person of Christ is best perceived in his covenant-fulfilling work on our behalf.[71]

Christ—the Mediator and Reconciler of God and humanity. The work of Christ is to bring us to the Father, to renew the covenantal relationship between God and

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man belongs to himself, but my comfort and benefit is that he used his office on my behalf, and poured out his love and became my Savior and Redeemer" (Luther, *Werke: Kritische Gesamptausgabe*, 17/1:255; as cited in Berkouwer, 1954, p. 103).

[70]Barth was equally, if not more, concerned to defend the early Reformers' lack of nuance from its misappropriation at the hands of Bultmannian (i.e., Ritschlian) liberalism (I/i, pp. 416ff.; see Barclay, 2015, pp. 135ff.).

[71]Brunner (2014) inverts the standard christological methodology by beginning with the work of Christ before moving on to his person. The basis for his decision can be found in the "substantive" character of Christ's titles, which, he argues, "all describe an event, a work of God, which He does through Jesus in or for humanity" (p. 272). Distinguishing between the "person" and "work" of Christ, certainly to the degree the early Reformers did, may in the end be unhelpful. For, indeed, the constitutive person of Christ dialectically mirrors his covenantal work, and vice versa. So, as Barth (1960) writes, "Jesus Christ is in His one Person, as true *God*, *man's* loyal partner, and as true *man*, *God's*. He is the Lord humbled for communion with man and likewise the Servant exalted to communion with God. . . . He is both, without their being confused but also without their being divided; He is wholly the one and wholly the other. Thus in this oneness Jesus Christ is the Mediator, the Reconciler, between God and man. Thus He comes forward to *man* on behalf of *God* calling for and awakening faith, love, and hope, and to *God* on behalf of *man*, representing man, making satisfaction and interceding" (pp. 46–47; author's emphasis). Christ is *in se* an ontological "work" of reconciliation between God and humanity, though clearly his atoning death is the means by which he *effects* reconciliation for God's people (Eph 2:16).

humanity by restoring us to his image. The instrument of Christ's atoning work—the means by which he effected this work of reconciliation and restoration—is the cross (Rom 5:10; Eph 2:16; Col 1:20, 22). If the gospel of God is the person of Christ—the one sent from God in order to restore humanity to God—the cross is the "heart" of that gospel (Packer, 2007). Indeed, the cross is, as Warfield (2015) has demonstrated, the very "essence of Christianity" (pp. 479ff), since at the cross the vital link between Christology and soteriology becomes most evident. "With his wounds," declares the prophet, "we are healed" (Isa 53:5; cf. 1 Pet 2:24). Moreover, the New Testament makes clear that this healing amounts to more than a merely subjective renewal of individual human beings. Christ died to restore fallen humanity to its former status as covenantal image bearers through their union with him. Having become estranged from God due to our sin, we needed God to act on our behalf if there was to be any hope of reconciliation (Rom 5:6–8; 8:3). This fact alone supplies Calvin (2008) with sufficient cause to postulate the necessity of the incarnation:

> What was best for us, our most merciful Father determined. Our iniquities, like a cloud intervening between him and us, having utterly alienated us from the kingdom of heaven, none but a person reaching to him could be the medium of restoring peace. But who could thus reach to him? . . . Thus the Son of God behooved to become our Immanuel, i.e. God with us; and in such a way, that by mutual union his divinity and our nature might be combined; otherwise, neither was the proximity near enough, nor the affinity strong enough, to give us hope that God would dwell with us. (pp. 297–298)

Christ's death, archetypally representative of humanity's estrangement from God, is thus, simultaneously, paradoxically, the means of its reversal. The "remedy" for our alienation from God, brought about as it had been by humanity's breech of covenant faithfulness, is Christ's atoning death *in our place* (p. 298).[72] In the end, Christ's cross is "the ultimate

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[72]Barth (2010) echoes Calvin on precisely this point: "What took place [at the cross] is that the Son of God fulfilled the righteous judgment on us men by Himself taking our place as man and in our place undergoing the judgment under which we had passed. . . . *Cur Deus homo?* In order that God as man might do and accomplish and achieve and complete all this for us wrong-doers, in order that in this way there might be brought about by Him our reconciliation with Him and conversion to Him" (IV/1, pp. 222ff).

expression of God's loving choice to be with sinners" (Tanner, 2010, p. 248). Indeed, with this "gift" of "God's *love*," Christ actualizes his "movement of personal and individualized commitment—toward the unworthy" (Barclay, 2015, p. 479, author's emphasis; cf. Barrett, 2013).

Atonement and the gospel of peace. At the cross the triune God accomplished infinitely more than a bare demonstration of love—an exemplar of reconciliation. By means of Christ's atoning death, supremely, God has *effected* believers' salvation, unilaterally granting them the full measure of his gracious love in and through Christ (Rom 1:16; Eph 1:3; 2:8–9; see Harris, 2005, pp. 436ff.). As a result of his initiatory movement toward sinners, there need be no fear of future judgment or alienation on the part of believers (Rom 8:1). In Christ, his people are "at-one" with—i.e., reconciled to—God (Rom 5:10). This is the essence of atonement. In fact, little of what is typically entailed in "salvation" can be excluded from its broad compass:

> 'Atonement' may be defined as God's work on sinners' behalf to reconcile them to himself. It is the divine activity that confronts and resolves the problem of human sin so that people may enjoy full fellowship with God both now and in the age to come. While in one sense the meaning of atonement is as broad and diverse as all of God's saving work throughout time and eternity, in another it is as particular and restricted as the crucifixion of Jesus. (Yarbrough, 2000, p. 388)

Moreover, whereas numerous accounts of "the" atonement[73] have arisen from within Christian history, taken as a whole they illustrate the richness with which the New Testament writers depict its significance for fallen humanity (Blocher, 2005; Franks, 1962; Stott, 2006). No single theory of the atonement has elicited universal approval, but each agrees on this essential premise: with Christ's death on the cross, God has reversed

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[73]Demarest (2006) traces the meaning of the English "atonement" from its early provenance in the Authorized Version (AV) where it was first used to translate καταλλαγή in Rom 5:11. It is employed there, he argues, to signify "the restoration of harmony between estranged parties (suggesting 'reconciliation')"; yet, as he notes, it would become "gradually broadened to include notions of propitiating God and expiating sins." Only over time, he observes, would "atonement" come to its modern denotation as "the *means* whereby reconciliation, propitiation, and expiation are achieved" (p. 167; author's emphasis).

the estrangement brought on by human sin and opened the way for humanity, through their union with Christ, to resume agapic fellowship with him and with one another.[74]

Two exegetical arguments drawn from the Pauline corpus may be offered in support of this bipartite conclusion. First, respective to the atonement's implication for divine–human relationality, Paul's depiction of "reconciliation" in the fifth chapter of Romans is noteworthy. There the apostle supplies a basic outline of humanity's relationship to God in closely related terms. As of Adam's sin (v. 12, 18), human beings have become irretrievably estranged from God—enemies of righteousness (v. 10, 19; cf. Rom 1:18; Eph 5:6; Col 3:6). Yet, with Christ's death on the cross, humanity, through faith in Christ, has been granted reprieve from this enmity (vv. 9, 11; cf. Eph 2:16; Col 1:20). Christ has opened the way for us to return to the Father (cf. John 14:6; Heb 10:19–20). Moreover, although Paul's use of "justification" language ($\delta\iota\kappa\alpha\iota o$-) is more often the exegetical focus of the passage,[75] as Gerrish (2015) notes, it is only one side of the coin, so to speak (see pp. 164ff). Indeed, according to Murray (1968), "Peace with God is a blessing coordinate with justification," since it "denotes relationship to God" and a "status . . . flowing from . . . reconciliation" (pp. 158–159). In Pauline theology, the two terms are "alternate ways of describing God's work in Christ," though, rightly construed, justification should be seen as the objective "basis" of reconciliation (Schreiner, 2008, p. 364). The intersubjective benefit of God's objective declaration amounts to the renewal of

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[74]A succinct summary of historical atonement theories can be found in Blocher (2005).

[75]For numerous scholars of whom Wright (2009) is representative, "the whole passage is 'about' justification" (p. 238). Eschewing this tendency, Martin (1989) concludes that the theme of reconciliation stands at the center of Pauline theology and that Paul's discussion of justification is "preparatory" and "indispensable as a basis" for the unfolding of his central theme: the "new relationship with God" that informs the believer's life (p. 139). At the opposite extreme, Moo (1996) ranks "reconciliation" behind the themes of "justification," "hope," and "glory" (v. 10) since these three appear to frame Paul's argument in Rom 5:1–11 (i.e., justification leads to peace/reconciliation leads to hope leads to glory). In surveying the entire Pauline corpus he concurs with Käsemann (1971) that the terminology of reconciliation is "too infrequent," the ideas "too undeveloped," and that it is "better" to regard reconciliation as "one image . . . among many others" employed by the apostle to illustrate God's saving work in Christ (Moo, 1996, p. 297n20). Contra this conclusion, however, is Paul's own summary of his entire ministry—and, indeed, of gospel ministry generally—as being one of "reconciliation" (2 Cor 5:18), though clearly justification occupies a place of prominence in his polemical and apologetic agendas.

right relationship with God: "*since* we have been justified by faith," Paul writes, "we have peace with God" (v. 1). Justification, then, amounts to a remedial prerequisite to God's conciliatory aim, that is, the cessation of hostilities between formerly estranged parties and the resumption of amicable relations (see Porter, 1993). Moreover, it is by reason of their Spirit-effected union with Christ that believers "enjoy" this renewed fellowship with God (Campbell, 2012, p. 259; cf. Rev 3:20).

Second, in Paul's letters to Colossae and Ephesus, the theme of reconciliation/peace between believers figures prominently as a function or extension of Christ's atoning work. In Ephesians 2:11ff, the apostle reminds his Gentile readers of their former state of alienation from God (v. 12). Under the old covenant, the Gentiles stood outside the bounds of the titular people of God. Yet, as Paul would continually remind the church, those "who were once far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ" (v. 13; cf. Gal. 2:11ff). Believing Jews and Gentiles have been made "one" in Christ (v. 14); Christ himself, after all, is "one" (see Eph 4:5–6; Col 3:11; cf. 1 Cor 1:10ff; 8:6). On the basis of this "gospel of peace" (Eph 6:15), Paul declares an end to the "hostility" that formerly characterized relations between the two: "he himself [Christ] is our peace" (2:14). With his death, Christ has brought about the death of estrangement (v. 16). Accordingly, Thielman (2010) holds that the peace Paul has in view here is a peace *with* God, not merely peace *from* God, though the former certainly precipitates the latter (p. 364; cf. Gorman, 2015).[76] Likewise, in Colossians 3:15, the "peace of Christ" to which Paul refers is not primarily personal but interpersonal (cf. 1:20). So, Bruce (1984), in noting the vertical and horizontal aspects of Christ's peacemaking work at the cross, concludes, "Christian, having been reconciled to God, enjoying peace with him through

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[76]Porter (1993) remarks that, according to ancient Greek thought, relational "peace" was predicated on "a state of objective wellbeing" in the individual (p. 696; cf. Martin, 1989). This paradigm would certainly make sense within a eudaimonist ethics; however, it inverts the New Testament framework wherein God authors peace between himself and us resulting in the happy consequence that peace is now possible both *for* individuals (intrasubjectively) and *between* individuals (intersubjectively).

Christ, should naturally live at peace with one another" (p. 157). To which Martin (1989) adds, "[T]he Pauline teaching on reconciliation gains a fresh dimension by being applied to persons-in-community" (p. 198). Indeed, only by enacting their role in peacemaking's horizontal dimension can believers appropriate their "blessed" designation as images of the Son (Matt 5:9).[77]

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**Perichoretic Self-Knowledge through
Agapic Relationality**

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Agapic relationality with God and between human beings finds its clearest basis in the person and work of Christ.[78] Moreover, only by means of one's Spirit-mediated union with the person and "work" of Christ—through our dying to self and living unto God as Father and for the good of others—can human beings access and appropriate the covenantal dynamic that Christ embodies and effectuates. Only by "abiding" in him and in his perfect love can humanity escape the infecundity of autonomy (John 15:4ff.). The aridity and barrenness of life "outside the garden," moreover, not only severs the vitality of our relationships with God and others but in our relating to self as well. Sin—that which sunders self from God—likewise leads to estrangement from self, inducing an inevitable dissociation of self from self-consciousness. Having lost sight of God, we became blind to self. Yet, in spite of our blindness to self, we insist that we can see and know ourselves truly, though what we "perceive" is none other than the intrasubjective parallel of idolatry: a self-image crafted to serve our interests. And so, we become self-deceived. Christ has come to restore our vision, but our pathological inclination is to maintain that we have no need of his healing

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[77]Drawing on Paul's doctrine of reconciliation through union with Christ, Williams (2010) addresses the gospel sins of racial hostility and discrimination among believers.

[78]Why would the Trinity not be the clearest basis? Most plainly, believers are not commanded to imitate Triune relatedness as they are called to imitate Christ (John 15:12), though the latter obviously relates analogically to the former. We can only infer the nature of immanent relations between the divine Persons. But we are able to "see" and know Christ in his relatedness to the Father. As I have argued, the image to which we are called to conform is that of Christ (Rom 8:29). He is our archetype and the "key" to understanding human nature and relationality.

(see John 9:39–41). To acknowledge our need means we must cast down the graven images we most cherish:

> [N]owhere so much as in the sphere of self-knowledge does sin blind men to the truth, and cause so many hindrances; further, that before he is stripped bare in the light of revelation man does not want to be exposed to the light, but either he thinks of himself in naturalistic terms, which provide him with convenient excuses, or he sees himself in a romantic idealistic light. Hence it is part of the genuine Christian experience that only the man who has been influenced by the truth of Christ is honest with himself, because he alone dares to look the naked truth in the face. (Brunner, 2014, p. 47)

To entertain the light that Christ offers is to risk beholding self as it truly is—sinful, deformed, unclean. So, we hate and reject the light, in part, because we have hated and rejected ourselves (John 3:19–20). On the other hand, the love of God in Christ has the power to deactivate our intrasubjective hostility—the internalized, reflexive antagonism that arises from shame and its concomitant fear of exposure as well as the self-loathing that results in intrapersonal estrangement (Kierkegaard, 1980). In Christ and through the believer's willingness to "abide" in his love, God brings about the reconciliation of self and self-consciousness, thus inaugurating a peaceful "relation" that, through his Spirit's working, may issue forth into healing and wholeness.

As suggested in the previous section, constitutive and covenantal Christologies (and, therefore, christological anthropology as well) are best appropriated and adumbrated dialectically. Christ *acts* from who he *is* (Bonhoeffer, 1996). What he achieves in effecting our salvation is the exposition of his Person. As the divine Word, his identity and his instrumentality are inextricably linked (Barth 2010; see John 4:34; cf. Isa 55:11). So, in the incarnation he brings together divine and human existence with a singular essence. Whereas, at the cross he reconciles God and humanity as he suffers and dies "for" both. To divest ontology from its soteriological significance runs the risk of fatally undermining the christological warrant for anthropology. What we say about the person of Christ bears directly on the work of Christ, and vice versa. His cradle and his cross, to put it another way, are indivisible.

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Moreover, the same is also true, as we should expect, with respect to our human being and becoming as the *imago Christi* in the world. Human beings' "possession" of the *imago* is conditional upon their "participation" in their image-bearing vocation. The direct implication of the believer's renewed amity with God-in-Christ, as we might expect from its reversal of the vertical estrangement brought on by the fall, is the New Testament's call for agapic relationality between believers and for the world. "Just as I have loved you," Jesus told his disciples, "you also are to love one another" (John 13:34). Understood christologically, the *imago* is instantiated in and through the believer's relation to Christ and, on Christ's behalf, to the world. On the other hand,

> Self-interested and self-seeking individuals who, in relation, are only there in, for and with themselves are destructive of the possibilities of genuine relation and identity. For true persons are centres directed beyond themselves in a process of self-transcendence and return. (McFadyen, 1990, p. 151)

Christian baptism is, first and foremost, a demonstration of the believer's union with Christ's person and work. "In baptism," Beasley-Murray (1973) writes, "we *put on* Christ; the baptismal life *is* Christ"; yet, equally, "in so far as it is truly lived it will be Christ-like" (pp. 286–287, author's emphasis; see Rom 6:4; Col 2:12). Along these same lines, Christ's call to take up one's cross and follow him is also instructive (Matt 16:24; see parallels; cf. Gorman, 2009).

The notion of the inseparability of life *in* and *for* Christ becomes most evident, however, in Paul's illustrative designation of the church as "the body of Christ" (Rom 12:4ff.; 1 Cor 10:16–17; 12:12ff.; Eph 3:6; 4:4ff.; 5:30; Col 1:18; 24; 2:19; 3:15). Ridderbos (1975) provides the basis of Paul's use of "body" language by linking believers ontologically with the crucified Christ: "[A]lready in his suffering and death he represented [the church] in all its parts and united it in himself into a new unity" (p. 377). Now, through the Holy Spirit, Christ is truly present in and among believers effecting their conformity to his image (Bonhoeffer, 1998).[79] Thus, union with Christ speaks to

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[79]While "body of Christ" language in Paul should be understood metaphorically, there is ample

both an ontic and ethical renewal that takes place within believers. And this union of Christ's body, as Douty (1973) explains, has sufficient potency to bring about its reflection among every member: "as each person is joined to Christ by the incoming of the Holy Spirit, it necessarily follows that all those who are thus united to Him, are also united to one another" (p. 238). In sum, as Christ is, so we are called to be, both individually and corporately; as Christ has done, so we are called to do. Only this way will Christ, in Bonhoeffer's words, "*take form among us today and here*" (Bonhoeffer, 2005, p. 99; emphasis in original). Indeed, as Gunton (1997) concludes,

> [T]he Church is the place where the logic of the divine love that is Jesus takes form in the present, and in so far as it does, it becomes real also for the rest of humanity. It is when the community is taken up into the love of God that it becomes that love for and on behalf of mankind. (p. 177)

All of which, we might add, redounds unto the glory of God in Christ.

Union with Christ—"Attachment," *Perichoresis*, and the "Ecclesial Self"

Agapic reconciliation to God-in-Christ grants human beings the means by which self may overcome its pathological inclination toward dissociation and self-deception. Dissociation—the psychological means by which we hide the plank from ourselves (see Matt 7:3ff.)—enables the individual to ignore unpleasant realities pertaining to self and others. It is a form of noetic or cognitive detachment from self. Self-deception, on the other hand, is a higher order, ethicospiritual maneuver by which we believe what we could not were we to acknowledge the painful truth. Through believers' real (i.e., nonfigurative) union with God-in-Christ, mediated by the Spirit, and instantiated in relationship with others, however, they may gradually come to see themselves through the eyes of the loving Other. Where formerly the motivation to

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reason to assume an underlying ontological reality to which the apostle is referring (Campbell, 2012; Pelser, 1998).

remain willfully ignorant and self-deceived regarding personal weaknesses, sin, etc.,[80]

only perpetuated these dissociative tendencies, in time, the self can become increasingly

capable of bearing the weight of self-awareness. What self could never handle alone is

made less unmanageable in loving relationship (Gal 6:2; see Stratton, 2006). The person

and work of Christ, abiding perichoretically in self and others, brings about a

reconciliation between self and self-consciousness.

Healthy, loving "attachment" of self to Christ and others helps disarm internal

defenses and resolve intrasubjective hostility.[81] As a result, the disordered, dissociated,

and self-deceived self of the past comes to assume "its own perfect shape through

attachment to the divine image" in Christ (Tanner, 2010, p. 16). Moreover, as the

motivation to dissociate unpleasant truths about self decreases, the likelihood of self-

deception becomes increasingly remote:

> By way of this attachment, its very human character becomes an image of God in a
> stronger fashion than before. . . . By having the one whom they are not, the Word,
> for their own in Christ, [believers] should one day be able to lead human lives that
> imitate God in the most perfect way possible for mere humans. (pp. 16–17)

Attachment to Christ is possible for human beings precisely because of the incarnation

and the atonement.[82] Taken together they actualize the ontological and covenantal aspects

of the union of God and man, and the reconstitution of the covenantal *imago dei* in

human beings. According to our christological definition, a person is "a relation that

possesses a reality of its own" (Galot, 1981, p. 299). Only through relationship—to God,

self, and others—does a person come to be conscious of oneself as a self. "Consciousness

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[80]In Chapter 4 I will enumerate some of the ways in which brokenness and sin perpetuate dissociative and self-deceptive tendencies.

[81]"Attachment" is an important term in modern psychology and will be explored further in Chapter Four. At this stage, it should be viewed primarily theologically as a psychologically-informed expression of one's union with Christ (Tanner, 2010).

[82]And also Christ's resurrection and exaltation, without which the Spirit would not have been given (John 16:7). In the present context, however, the emphasis is on Christ's person and work: incarnation most directly relates to Christ's person, and atonement to Christ's work. The work of the Spirit, by contrast, is effecting the union of Christ with his people which should not be separated from the person and work of Christ.

of *I* comes only in relation to a *you*," offers Wellum (2016), such that, "As different *I*'s interact, each discovers the incommunicable character that makes it an *I* in relation to *you*'s" (p. 428; author's emphasis). Our contingent, relationally constituted self-consciousness takes shapes in predictable ways, distinct from the relatively static, non-directional mode by which we acquire objective knowledge:

> Knowledge simply discovers reality, and by definition leaves its object unchanged. Consciousness is constitutive of reality: it moves the subject from being unconscious to conscious, and so leads it into a new level of activity and attainment. Consciousness is that element in our conscious activity by which we are aware that it is *we* who are carrying out this activity. (Moloney, 1999, p. 109; author's emphasis)

Consciousness of self-in-Christ, mediated through our Spirit-actualized attachment to an agapic other, resolves the damage caused by unhealthy or sinful attachments. Yet, this takes time. Due to pervasive and devastating effects on humanity effected by the fall, the Christian life is, perhaps, best characterized as the long-term remediation of the broken, self-deceived self through believers' ever-increasing appropriation of the benefits of their union with Christ (see Johnson, 2017).[83]

   Perichoresis—*entis* and *analogia*. "Attachment" is illustrative of relationship and, particularly, dependence. It speaks to the asymmetry of the believer's union with Christ. A similar Johannine term, found in Jesus' teaching on the vine and the branches, is "abiding," from the Greek μέν- for remain or reside (Danker, 2001; see John 15; cf. Isa 5:1ff). Paul in his letter to the Romans employs similar imagery in describing Gentile believers as having been "grafted in" to the one people of God (Rom 11:17ff.). In both biblical usages, the link between metaphor and objective reality can be discerned in the need for believers to remain vitally "attached" to Christ, drawing on the life-sustaining power of his own divine existence as mediated by the Spirit. To be attached to Christ is to

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[83]The role other human beings, and especially those within the body of Christ, play this process will become increasingly clear in later chapters.

become dependent upon him for life and growth into his image (see Tanner, 2010).

Similar in semantic bearing to "attachment," though much richer in meaning, *perichoresis* is an ancient—and expressly—theological term popularized in the eighth century by John of Damascus in his *De fide orthodoxa* to refer to "the simultaneity of rest and movement, of coinherence and interpenetration" characteristic of God's triune Personhood (Harrison, 1991, p. 55). The earliest use of the concept of *perichoresis*, however, occurred approximately 400 years earlier in reference to "the intimate communion of the two natures of Christ" (Otto, 2001).[84] Only over time would this christological conception of the Son's divine activity in and through his human nature come to dominate formulations of intratrinitarian communion.[85] As Macleod (1998) observes, "*perichoresis . . .* quickly became a trinitarian rather than a Christological term, and the concept of a *perichoresis* between the two natures in the incarnate Mediator was never developed" (p. 194). This christological lacuna is addressed to some degree in Crisp (2007) who argues that the "nature-perichoresis" instantiated in the incarnation

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[84]Harrison (1991) traces the term's provenance to Gregory Nazianzen's famous, fourth-century epistle (no. 101), wherein the father suggests in passing a mutual reciprocity in the relationship between Christ's divine and human "names," describing it thus: "being mingled like the natures, and flowing into [περιχωρουσῶν] one another" (Nazianzen, 2012, p. 440). Pannenberg (1977) notes that Gregory failed, at this early stage, to adequately circumscribe his meaning; as a result, he regrettably implied a Eutychian commingling in the natures in Christ (p. 297). The Chalcedonian Definition would provide the clarity needed on this point.

[85]The life and being of the triune God has historically been characterized as a dialectic of "union and distinction" (Barth, 2010, p. 369): three persons (*hypostases*) sharing a single, divine essence (*ousia*). Thus, "[God's] life is a life of free distinction and communion in the *perichoresis* of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit" (Hunsinger, 2004, p. 172). From the eighth century, the doctrine of trinitarian *perichoresis* has "expressed the truth that the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are distinctive Persons each with his own incommunicable properties, but that they dwell *in* one another, not only *with* one another, in such an intimate way . . . that their individual characteristics instead of dividing them from one another unite them indivisibly together" (Torrance, 1996, p. 172). Augustine (2002) connected the three-in-one personhood of God directly with the *imago dei* in individual human beings; several limitations of his characterization of the human mind as a triunity have already been noted. Since Barth (2010), the doctrine of divine *perichoresis* has led to the flowering of trinitarian anthropology (see Oh, 2006). Grenz (2001) is representative: "The ingenious use of perichoresis to describe the manner in which the trinitarian persons are constituted by the mutuality of relationships within the life of the triune God opened the way for the development of a dynamic ontology of persons-in-relationship or persons-in-communion. This ontology characterizes the essential nature of personhood as consisting of mutuality and interdependence" (p. 317). While there is certainly reason enough to affirm this *analogia*, a better, i.e., more direct, route to a perichoretic conception of self-knowledge is through the "nature–perichoresis" instantiated in the person of Christ.

should be conceived as "an asymmetrical relation between the two natures of Christ" (p. 19). He goes on to characterize this "nature-perichoretic relation" as a "penetration" rather than "interpenetration" (p. 22).[86] As such, the relationship between Christ's divine and human natures is unidirectional, unlike the mutual, symmetrical, perichoretic communion of trinitarian persons. While the divine person of the Word "owns" and enervates the human body–soul composite of Christ, the reverse is not the case. Furthermore, on the basis of this christological formulation of *perichoresis*, Crisp concludes,

> God *could* act upon other human beings in the way in which he acts upon Christ. All that distinguishes the perichoretic relation that Christ's human nature experiences with his divine nature, and that my human nature experiences with God, is the degree to which the divine nature of Christ penetrates his human nature. (pp. 25–26; author's emphasis)[87]

Understood in this light, this "nature-perichoresis"—the "penetration" of Christ's human nature, i.e., his body–soul composite, by the divine Word—may be understood as an alternate, christologically derived analogue of the believer's "attachment" to Christ mediated through the indwelling Holy Spirit. To be clear, it is not in any shared being (*entis*) through which God and the believer mutually coinhere at a metaphysical level.[88] This kind of "person-perichoresis" can only be posited, with qualifications,[89] of the divine persons of the Trinity (Kilby, 2000; contra Moltmann, 1993).

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[86]In this he differs from John Damascene who held that the human nature of Christ was divinized upon its appropriation by the indwelling Son (*De fide orthodoxa* 3.7).

[87]So long as Crisp distinguishes between person-*perichoresis* and nature-*perichoresis*, his analogy between how God's Spirit acts upon Christ's human nature and other human beings holds. At the level of application, we may consider Paul's discussion of fruits of the Spirit in Gal 5:22ff. One's ethicospiritual dependency on Christ depends wholly on the reality of perichoretic union with Christ (cf. John 15:5). Surely, a merely metaphorical union—one that is not real, but only to be imagined or considered as real—is not what Jesus means with his parable of the vine and the branches. And yet, it is his nature rather than his Person, classically understood, in which believers share.

[88]Rightly, Otto (2001): "Seeing the image of God as mirroring the perichoretic 'tri-personal being-in-communion' of God . . . is useful as an analogy, provided it maintains the ontological basis and necessary distinctions of the persons involved" (p. 379).

[89]The caveat in this case is the necessity of preserving the relational distinctions that characterize Father, Son, and Spirit; so, Crisp (2007): "The persons of the Trinity share all their properties in a common divine essence apart from those properties that serve to individuate each person of the Trinity,

Perichoresis is an onto-relational concept, the most perspicuous spatiotemporal instantiation of which is the incarnation. There, as we have seen, God and humanity have come together at the level of *entis*, albeit "inconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably,"[90] into "a perfect unity which does not destroy but affirms otherness" (Zizioulas, 2007, p. 307). This union, moreover, is unique and, as such, unrepeatable. However, on the basis of the metaphysical "penetration" of Christ's human body–soul composite by the person of the divine Word, we may postulate the possibility of an analogous onto-relational union between God and human beings (other than Jesus of Nazareth) that takes place in their Spirit-mediated union with the person of Christ.[91] The nature of this union is, perhaps, ineffable. As Paul suggests, this is the "mystery" of the real presence of Christ in and among believers, and their "hope of glory" (Col 1:27; Fee, 2009; Mersch, 2011). Therefore, despite our inability to fully articulate it, the real, perichoretic union of Christ with his people is the demonstration of the divine commitment to be not only God-*for*-us, but God-*with*-us.[92] Mersch (2011) eloquently illuminates this mystery:

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or express a relation between only two persons of the Trinity" (p. 31).

[90]The Chalcedonian fathers opposed the principle christological heresies of their day with two terms apiece: ἀσυγχύτως (without confusion) and ἀτρέπτως (without mixture, change) in opposition to Eutychianism; ἀδιαιρέτως (without division) and ἀχωρίστως (without separation) against Nestorianism.

[91]Macleod (1998), in considering the "special kind and intensity of inter-personal unity" of being to which the doctrine of *perichoresis* refers, concludes, "there is no analogy in human experience" (p. 141). Yet, he then proceeds to cite numerous New Testament provisions for positing an analogous—i.e., non-identical, referential—relationship between divine intrasubjectivity and human intersubjectivity. Among these, Macleod includes the one-flesh union of husband and wife (Eph 5:23), and the union of Christ and the church which, he notes, Jesus expressly links to his own divine communion with the Father (John 17:21ff.). Clearly, these serve as biblically construed analogues. For this reason, it is better to aver that, due to the "infinite qualitative distinction" between God and humanity, there can be no human *equivalent* to intratrinitarian *perichoresis*. The "mutual indwelling" and "interpenetration" of human beings both with the person of Christ and, metaphorically, with each other due to their shared union with the Savior is, however, closely related to the perichoretic relationship of the person of Christ respective to his human body–soul composite, i.e., the incarnation (Crisp, 2007; Otto, 2001). In other words, Jesus Christ *is* the *analogia perichoresis*.

[92]The corporate dimension of this commitment is a vital aspect of Paul's body of Christ metaphor. McFadyen (1990) carefully defines the metaphorical sense in which believers are united "perichoretically" with one another in Christ: "The interpenetration of the partners, mediated by the presence of Christ both within and between them, may be neither literal nor complete; but is, rather, metaphorical and limited. Furthermore, the understanding so reached will be neither complete nor direct, but inferential and intimated. The ethical distance between the partners therefore remains, and their

As His excellences pass into men and transfigure them, so do their miseries pass into Him and are there consumed. In Him, by His Blood and His Cross, sin has been destroyed; and the consequences of sin—[Christ's] sufferings, humiliations, and death—become a means of expiation, a source of life and joy. Briefly, in Him and in Him alone is the restoration and the ennobling of man. Freed from his hideousness, transformed into the likeness of Christ, man can draw near to God. (p. 4)

The life inaugurated by the Spirit in believers—as members of a renewed humanity capable of imaging God in and through their relation to Christ and each other—should, therefore, be seen as a perfectly "natural" extension of the enlivening and sanctifying work of God. Here, Moltmann (1997) gets it right: Christ works through his Spirit to bring about "the healing of life that is sick, and the becoming-whole of a life that has become divided and split" (p. 52; cf. Payne, 1995). The dissociated and self-deceived consciousness of the believer, moreover, is but one sphere of his ongoing palingenetic work. So, this intrasubjective remediation is best conceived within the framework of "a perichoretic understanding of the construction of the self in relationship"—relationship, that is, to God-in-Christ lived out in agapic communion within the body of Christ (Grenz 2001, p. 312).

The "ecclesial self." Various dimensions of dialectic are implicated in a christologically informed framework for perichoretic self-knowledge—namely, its vertical–horizontal relational trajectory, its ethical import respective to identity and instrumentality, and its ontological condition of unity in differentiation. To these, a fourth temporal or telic element must also be considered. In contrast to a strictly individualistic understanding of the *imago*, Grenz views the believer corporately and eschatologically in terms of the *telos* of "the person-in-bonded community." He terms this corporatized self, "the ecclesial self," and equates it with "the new humanity in communion with the triune God" (p. 305). He further explains,

The relational life of the God who is triune comes to representation in the communal fellowship of the participants in the new humanity. This assertion calls for a

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presence in each other does not imply a unification, but a community between them" (p. 136).

relational ontology that can bring the divine prototype and the human antitype together. The conceptual context for such an engagement is the philosophical idea of the social self, which, in turn, can be understood theologically as the ecclesial self. (p. 305)

Grenz's ecclesial self is an expressly eschatological reality, which is to say, it is defined by the dialectic of "now" and "not yet." In Christ we have been made new, yet equally we are being made new in anticipation of the day when Christ is revealed and we shall be made new (Col 3:4; 1 Pet 5:4; 1 John 3:2). So, as Grenz relates, "[T]he inbreaking of eschatological power into the present constitutes a corporate people who are all in Christ and consequently who are being transformed into the image of God in Christ" (p. 250). Thus, Grenz emphasizes that the image of God is not so much an endowment, but a destiny: "At the heart of a Christian conception of the soul is a theological anthropology that speaks about humankind in toto and the human person in particular as a creation of God destined to be the *imago dei*" (p. 3; see Almon, 2017). For this reason, the eschatological program of Christian self-knowledge will be conformity to the true image of God-in-Christ (Rom 8:29).

Conclusion

Christology, we are told, is in crisis (see, e.g., Ramm, 1985). Not since the early church Fathers grappled with the heterodoxies of antiquity, so the story goes, has the biblical (i.e., classical, orthodox) understanding of the person and work of Christ been so beleaguered by detractors. The reasons for this loss of confidence in ancient Christologies are clear:

Our age is in many ways like that of the Fathers of Christian theology. They lived at a time when old orders were crumbling, and found themselves not only thinking the foundations of the Christian tradition but also rethinking the nature and reality of human knowledge. Now that we face the apparent collapse of so much of the culture that the Western Fathers, and Augustine in particular, helped to construct, we find that our situation is remarkably similar. (Gunton, 1997, p. 1)

Yet, the key difference between ancient and modern resistance to orthodox Christology

appears to reside within an inversion of oppositions—or "dualisms"[93] (p. 86)—reflective of the respective religious and cultural zeitgeist of each age. For the early Christians, the incarnation was no less scandalous a doctrine than it is today. God had become human? How and why it should be so incited no small degree of controversy. Under the influence of Neoplatonic ideals, orthodoxy's early despisers opposed the apparently absurd notion of Christ's full-bodied humanity, so to speak, on the grounds that it irrevocably demeans the dignity—to say nothing of the divinity—of God.[94] Viewed from this perspective the early Christian heterodoxies bore an immanently theological shape. They represented that age's resistance to God coming down to earth. Neoplatonic epistemology and axiology emphasized humanity's need (and ability) to ascend to higher orders of being, philosophy being understood as the chief means for making this ascent. The incarnation had upended this expectation: God had descended to earth, had taken on flesh in order to redeem flesh, and in so doing overturned both human wisdom and boasting in a single act of divine humility (1 Cor 1:20). Early Christian opposition to orthodoxy mainly consisted of objections to its perceived denigration of God.[95] The christological formulae adumbrated over the course of several centuries in the creeds would come to serve as an increasingly complex system of theological levies preventing the erosion of Christ's deity while positing with increasing specificity the distinctives and parameters of his humanity.

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[93]Gunton explains, "In this context dualism does not refer to a metaphysic in which two different kinds of reality are supposed, but one which conceives two realities as either opposites or contradictions of each other. Mainstream Christianity has always held that God is other than the world but, because he is its Creator, has denied that the two are related in a negative way. Because the created order is dependent upon God, he can be conceived to interact with it. Dualism denies such an interaction, either explicitly or by conceiving the two in such a way that it becomes impossible consistently to relative them. In this sense, both adoptionism and docetism, the earliest and most logically primitive Christian heresies, arise from the same root. Because their assumptions are dualistic they are compelled to deny either that Jesus was fully God or that he was fully man. It is not difficult to understand, also, how [modern] attempts to abstract a merely historical Jesus from the New Testament material about him operate with similar presuppositions" (pp. 86–87).

[94]The identification of Mary as θεοτόκος, "mother of God" (lit. God-bearer), initially triggered concern not that Mary had been inordinately and unjustifiably elevated, but that God himself had been demeaned (Percival, 1991, pp. 206ff.).

[95]Macquarrie (2003b) questions whether an "unconscious docetism" may not be at work in modern calls for a return to pre-Enlightenment Christologies (p. 343).

This early opposition has been essentially inverted in modern christological debate (Gunton, 1997; O'Collins, 2009; Runia, 1984). The stress of ancient Christology, conditioned as it was in conversation with Neoplatonism, fell on the theological side of the coin.[96] Of less concern was what Christology made of man. Modern christological dogma, situated as it is in the age of totalitarian humanism, finds itself wrestling with the anthropological priorities of the modern age (Macquarrie, 2003b).[97] Our age has witnessed an inversion of epistemological and axiological priorities: whereas the ancients felt it was beneath God to become human, arguably, modern objections to the incarnation are often reducible to the notion that it somehow denigrates humanity. In either age, the argument goes, Christ cannot be truly human if he is simultaneously divine. But what appears to be at stake today is the prevailing metanarrative that defines modern (and postmodern) perspectives regarding human beings. Of especial significance in this christological clash is the apparent concern to preserve an elevated status for the human self and its self-consciousness over and against any related theological concerns.[98] As O'Collins (2009) observes, "The consciousness of individual subjects and their experience of themselves and the world have at times become the sole focus of attention and have been turned into the major and even exclusive criterion for christological argument" (p. 217). In order to regard Jesus as fully human, some have deemed it

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[96]Thinkers like Plotinus and Porphyry sought their answers in a realm beyond and above the feeble, mundane concerns of human beings. Modernity has inverted their quest: ultimate meaning is not to be found "out there," but "in here"—that is, within the seemingly fathomless depths of, alternatively, the human mind, human self-consciousness, or even, reductively, within the human brain (see Cozolino, 2017).

[97]Schleiermacher is often cited as the author of modern anthropocentric Christologies (Macquarrie, 2003b; O'Collins, 2009).

[98]As Macquarrie (2003b) observes, modern anthropology since the Enlightenment, having become dissociated from any theological entailments, actually diminished humanity's status within the cosmos even as it pursued its deification. On the one hand, "[H]umanity . . . has been encouraged to think of itself as the highest being of which we have any knowledge and to be moving into an unlimited future in which the earth will be brought ever nearer to the heart's desire"; even so, any supposed status humanity may arrogate to itself is effaced by our vainglorious renunciation of the God in whose image we are made: "[M]odern thought has downgraded the human race. It has stripped humanity of its claim to be a special creation of God and his special concern. It has exiled him from the centre of the universe to an obscure planet in an obscure corner" (pp. 360–361).

acceptable to jettison any meaningful sense of his deity (see Hick, 1977). In pursuit of a Christ "for us" and "with us," this humanizing trajectory in Christology marginalizes as increasingly superfluous and old-fashioned any insistence on his deity. "If Jesus as the Christ is to be our man," determines Robinson (1973), "he must be one of us: *totus in nostris*, completely part of our world . . . ; in other words, a man in every sense of the word" (p. xi). Christology of this sort has clearly been dislodged from its ancient ontological/constitutive foundations in favor of a strictly functional/covenantal model. In light of this, we would do well to heed Macquarrie's (2003b) admonition that modern Christologies should work to preserve a link to patristic and medieval models: "Metaphysics or ontology in some form or another is not finally dispensable in any adequate christology" (p. 344).

The line of argument taken throughout this chapter has followed from the premise that human nature is explained only in relation to Christ. Our knowledge of ourselves as human beings is finally explicable only by Christ's humanity and, in particular, his relatedness to God through the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, in regard to the individual pursuit of self-knowledge, self and its self-consciousness come into clearest focus only when perceived through the eyes of Christ. He is the lens through which we see ourselves as we are and as God calls us to be. And his is the image to which we become conformed through active participation in his nature through perichoretic union with him. Thus, relatedness to God-in-Christ, to each other, to self, and to the world is covenantal: in submission to Jesus as Lord, out of love for his person and gratitude for his atoning work, human beings come to image Christ and fulfill the *telos* of the covenantal *imago*. As ensuing chapters will make increasingly clear, God's Christiform calling to believers entails their contingent, analogous correspondence to each other such that they too become mirrors for others. More than this, human correspondence that fulfills its covenantal bearing seeks to fulfill its ethical calling. As self and others relate to one another agapically in Christ, his presence and grace provide the means by which they

may become instruments of a dialogical and transformative knowledge of self.

CHAPTER 3

CHRIST AND THE HUMAN SELF-IN-RELATION:
ELUCIDATING THE SUBJECT OF SELF-
KNOWLEDGE

Not surprisingly, perhaps, Christian thought regarding the self has struggled

against the same sort of oppositional—i.e., dualist—thinking as that encountered within

ancient and modern Christologies. Considering the close kinship between Christology

and anthropology disclosed in the doctrine of the *imago dei*, we should hardly expect the

self—its nature and its very existence—to avoid similar controversy.[1] As we shall see,

the contribution of modern and postmodern perspectives, though ultimately lacking the

explanatory power of a robustly Christian approach to self-knowledge, nevertheless offer

some corrective to the shortcomings of ancient and medieval paradigms. Whereas, the

latter, largely dependent on Augustinian anthropology, located the self in the soul; the

former came to view the self less as a formal constituent than as a functional or, more

precisely, relational construct (see, e.g., Harter, 2015).[2] This shift in Christian thinking

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[1] When discussions concerning the nature and existence of the soul (which I do not equate with the self) are factored in, controversy only multiplies. I have intentionally avoided the use of "soul" except in reference, along with "mind," to the metaphysical (i.e., nonphysical) aspects of human nature. The question of whether the human mind/soul is a metaphysical "substance" may bear significantly on ethical concerns (Moreland & Rae, 2000). However, I can see no compelling reason to equate self and soul for the sake of positing a constitutive (i.e., ontological) basis for the existence of self.

[2] Defining the self is notoriously complex and contestable. The present discussion in no way attempts to comprehensively trace the history of post/modern debate on the subject, but rather to suggest a third way—one that is epistemologically grounded in the person and work of Christ. But by way of illustration of the postmodern shift toward an understanding of the self as construct, theory, or psychological form, Goethals and Strauss (1991) cite the early philosophical psychologies of Wilhelm Wundt, William James, and the sociological contribution of Horton Cooley. In particular, James (1961) stressed the knowability of the empirical, phenomenal self—the *me* as I appear to myself—over and against the experientially transcendent self—the *I* who self-perceives. According to Goethals and Strauss (1991), "James's discussion of the *me*, and its constituent parts, the material me, the social me, and the spiritual me, and in particular, his treatment of self-esteem and the multiplicity of social selves, remain [*sic*] highly influential 100 years later" (p. 2). In postmodern psychology, James's I-self has largely dropped out of view leading Vitz & Felch (2006) to sound an alarm. What is necessary, they argue, is an understanding of selfhood that can withstand the onslaught of postmodern deconstructionism.

regarding the self has frequently been identified as a consequence (cause?) of the philosophical "turn to relationality" (Grenz, 2001; cf. Shults, 2003). The evidence of a shift outlined in Chapter 1 to a relational theanthropology can be discerned to varying degrees in the writings of Calvin and Kierkegaard, and especially in Bonhoeffer and Barth. Their questioning of constitutive frameworks for the *imago dei* correlates with a contemporaneous shift taking place in philosophical discourse. Nevertheless, as noted in Chapter Two, a covenantal theanthropology, for all its merits, cannot be divorced from its constitutive foundation without seriously undermining its christological bearing or its coherence with a biblical understanding of the *imago dei*. Contemporary thought regarding the image, therefore, overcorrects the premodern metaphysical formulations if it attempts to dispense with them altogether. Christian anthropology on the other hand, when it has been sufficiently grounded in a christological framework, may more easily bear the tension of this dialectic.

Augustine (2012c) confessed that his highest aspiration was to know God and himself.[3] That such "double" knowledge is even possible follows from Christology. Nevertheless, in advance of traversing the conceptual and disciplinary gap between Christology and psychology—broadly conceived as the study of human inter/subjectivity—an additional observation must be made concerning the challenges of disciplinary rapprochement.[4] Such a gap is not surprising. In the first place, the Scriptures

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[3]"God and the soul, that is what I desire to know [*Deum et animam scire cupio*]" (Augustine, 2012c, I.vii; p. 539). Like Aristotle before him, Augustine regards relationships as secondary to knowledge, rather than the inverse. When Reason, his intrasubjective dialogue partner, inquires about his regard for others, he replies, "[I desire] that together and concordantly we might inquire out God and our souls. For so, whichever first discovers aught, easily introduces his companions into it" (I.xx; p. 544). Conscious of his former struggles with concupiscence, he denounces any relationship that Reason suggests might potentially "impede" him in his "inquiries." In this, he also betrays a rationalistic tendency in his thinking (Stock, 2010).

[4]I refer here to attempts to delimit the Christian care of persons by excluding as either unbiblical or unscientific approaches which allow for transdisciplinary dialogue or which pit "theology" and "science" against each other. Although most perspectives allow for some discourse between theological and psychological domains, there are outliers on both sides of the spectrum that eschew efforts at disciplinary intersectionality and dialogue (see E. L. Johnson, 2010b; cf. Hunsinger, 1995).

establish, and orthodox Christian belief maintains, that God is transcendent, standing far above the created order (1 Kgs 8:27). His glory reaches farther beyond the realm of human existence than which human thinking could ever aspire (Isa 55:9). Having considered the Lord's majesty and glory, the Psalmist can only shake his head: "What is humanity?" (Ps 8:4) by comparison. As Barth (2010) helpfully reminds us, the divine mind and nature can only be brought down to earth, so to speak, by the exercise of divine initiative—never by human ambition or effort. With the rise of Kantian epistemology, however, rational, systematic inquiry into the nature of the triune God and the incarnate Son who perfectly reveals him became unjustifiably and unbiblically sequestered from the human sciences to the detriment of both.[5] The objectification of theology which speaks to the knowledge of God—and the secularization of psychology—the knowledge of the phenomenal self—have arisen in modern discourse as a result of this epistemological dichotomy (cf. Diller, 2014).

To no small degree, Christian thinking has followed this dualistic trajectory. Clearly, the theological and anthropological disciplines cannot be collapsed into a single theanthropological compendium without erasing vital distinctions and caveats. The two domains into which they speak are irresolvably disjunct. Yet, in light of the biblical doctrines of the image of God, the incarnation of Christ, and the gospel of reconciliation, Christians can hardly dispense with the important work of transdisciplinary study and dialogue while claiming to uphold the revelation of God granted us in his word/Word. In Christ, the two have become one, "indivisibly, inseparably," yet "inconfusedly, unchangeably." In other words, what is required is an epistemological framework rooted in God's self-disclosure in the person and work of Jesus Christ, who is the image of God and of humanity: he alone reveals true God and discloses self truly. Only in Christ are the

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[5]Kuyper (1968) avers, "[I]t only weakens the position of theology to prosecute her studies as though she stood alone" (p. 619).

mysteries of God *and of self* clearly revealed (cf. Col 2:3). This framework, rooted as it is

in the doctrine of the *imago dei* christologically understood, must strive to preserve a

dialectical tension that resists any impulse to either antithesize or conflate the disciplines

it endeavors to relate.[6] Though perennially vulnerable to charges of—and lapses into—

contradiction on the one hand, and overly facile, "weak" integration on the other (see E.

L. Johnson, 2011), Christians must regard these challenges as inherent in such complex

yet consequential intellectual undertakings.

Epistemologically grounded in the Scriptures and the historic teachings of

Christianity, Christian psychology commends the study of the self as an aspect of human

personhood, and growth in self-knowledge as a necessary element of psychotherapeutic

remediation and psychospiritual edification (E. L. Johnson, 2007, 2017; see Maier &

Monroe, 2001; Roberts & Watson, 2010).[7] Christian psychology rejects the notion that

modernism somehow invented the care and cure of the human self, yet acknowledges the

reality that this particular field of concern has now come to be dominated by post/modern

thought (Holifield, 1983; see Cushman, 1995). As such, secular ideas about the self

provide both a foil and an interlocutor for Christian thinking. On the one hand, there will

undoubtedly be frequent occasions of disharmony between modern psychology and

Christian approaches to the self and its care. Yet, with a Reformed understanding of

God's common grace at work in the human quest for truth and meaning, we may expect

to find instances of concordance as well (Van Til, 1969, 2015).[8] In either case, the

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[6]When lacking the proper christological balance, the Kierkegaardian/Barthian "infinite qualitative distinction" can foster the dichotomization of theology and anthropology. So, on the one hand, Neoorthodox pastoral theologian Hunsinger (1995) rightly argues, "[T]heology and psychology represent material that cannot be integrated into a unified whole. They are logically diverse; they have different aims, subject matters, methods, and linguistic conventions. They do not exist on the same level." Yet, due to her neglect of the implications of Christology, she leaps too quickly to the conclusion that "as language and thought worlds, they are not to be integrated with one another *in any systematic way*" (p. 6, my emphasis).

[7]Along these lines, Roberts and Watson (2010) argue for the need for a "psychology that accurately describes the psychological nature of human beings as understood according to historic Christianity" (p. 155).

[8]Christian approaches to knowledge must never aver the incapacity of the unredeemed for

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Christian psychologist will acknowledge and worship God as the Author of the truth as well as the shared human perspective from which it may be discerned (Rom 1:20). In other words, Christian psychology is an exercise in theological anthropology that endeavors to perceive human nature and normativity through the lens of revelation, yet with a willingness to listen in on conversations taking place outside the church, albeit with biblically attuned ears. As a complement to Reformed pastoral theology, Christian psychology endeavors to bridge the gap between the epistemological domains of God and the self, working by God's grace toward the reconciliation of the seemingly irreconcilable.

Self-in-Relation: The Subject of Self-Knowledge

By way of prolegomena to a Christian psychology of the knowledge of self, it must first be adumbrated christologically as the relational—i.e., covenantal—subject of self-knowledge. Crucially, self must be defined prior to any discussion of what any particular human self can or should know of itself. Agnosticism regarding the existence and "form" of the human self should be regarded by Christian anthropology as tantamount to its theological equivalent. Calvin (2008) certainly instructs us on this point: if the knowledge of God comes to us in Christ, then surely self-knowledge is possible, if not, as Calvin implied, inevitable, as the mutual, reciprocal entailment of the former.[9] What distinguishes the present study from other possible Christian approaches to the self and self-knowledge is its christological basis. In order to speak meaningfully of Christian self-knowledge, the self must first be defined in christological terms, in the first place to distinguish it from other, disparate perspectives, but also to rescue it from the radical

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accurate observation and ratiocination (see Van Til, 1980).

[9]If Calvin's truism holds, then to whatever degree one pole of human "double" knowledge may be impaired by mental deficiency or the noetic effects of the fall, the other will also be impaired. In other words, if I cannot know one, I cannot know the other.

contingency to which it has been subjected in turn by modernist naturalistic positivism and postmodern antirealism. What Christology offers is epistemological access to the self and its dipolar, perichoretic self-knowing, expressly and uniquely as self is delivered from estrangement from Other/others. The Spirit works to bring us to God's own knowledge of himself exocentrically—from the outside in, so to speak. In doing so, he supplies the means by which self-estrangement, the autocentric or intrasubjective basis for dissociation and self-deception, can be resolved. Moreover, the benefits of Christ must be applied along the three axes of human relatedness—that of self to God, to others, and, reflexively, to itself. Herein lies Christology's most direct contact with human psychology. If dissociation and self-deception are understood in covenantal terms as ethicospiritual consequences of the fall, then reconciliation—that blessed christological theme—must surely supply their cure. Finally, it may also be noted that the christological doctrine of reconciliation impels us to work at repairing the epistemological breach that has set contemporary theology and psychology at loggerheads.[10]

Diverse Perspectives on the Self

The self, as an object of Christian theological, anthropological, and philosophical inquiry, has recently come under intense interdisciplinary scrutiny (see McMinn & Phillips, 2001; Turner, 2008; van Huyssteen & Wiebe, 2011; Vitz & Felch, 2006). The impetus for this renewed quest for the self appears to stem from a number of secular influences and oppositions. As with Christology, a diversity of Christian perspectives on the self have arisen as various modern and postmodern priorities have shaped its articulation. On the one hand, considerable pressure has mounted from modern philosophy and psychology to define the self strictly in evolutionary terms as a cultural, cognitive, or even cellular "achievement."[11] Any Christian response should stress the

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[10]Cf. Loder & Neidhardt, 1992; Shults, 2008.

[11]Self- and other-recognition does indeed take place at the level of biomolecular and

degree to which developmental or achievement models account for biblical and psychological data, yet without upending the primacy of the former over the latter (see Beck & Demarest, 2005; Delitzsch, 1885; E. L. Johnson, 2007; Roberts, 2001; Talbot, 1997). Kierkegaard (1980), for instance, viewed the self as an ethical achievement while eschewing any basis for its contingency other than that of the individual's standing before God (see Evans, 2002). On the other hand, postmodern critiques of the modern unitary self press for a Christian response; phenomenological approaches, as we might expect, tend to emphasize multiplicity and fragmentation (see Vitz & Felch, 2006). Whatever remains of the modern self following its deconstruction by the ironically certain uncertainty of postmodernism can hardly be labeled unitary. While most Christian responses to the idea of a multiplicity of selves emphasize the normativity and eschatological bearing of a unitary self (McFadyen, 1990; Thiselton, 1995; White, 1996), others have suggested a reappraisal of this position (see Turner, 2008; Woodhead, 1999). In the face of such strong secular oppositions, Christian perspectives on the self and self-knowledge have struggled at times to find their footing.

Secular Competitors of the Christian Self

Inarguably, the ancient and venerable notion of a unitary, persistent self "located" in the metaphysical substance of the soul has been in decline in secular thought for some time (Martin & Barresi, 2008; Solomon, 1988; cf. Beck & Demarest, 2005; Cooper, 2000). Indeed, secular perspectives on human nature generally and the self in particular have largely shifted away from ontological narratives toward empirical and phenomenological models, the latter being largely dominated by naturalist and positivist priorities (see Goethals & Strauss, 1991). Among the many unforeseen consequences of

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immunological interactions (López-Larrea, 2012). However, any supposed warrant for determining from this finding an evolutionary basis for human self-consciousness is clearly a function of worldview and plausibility structures, not of empirical science *per se* (see P. E. Johnson, 1993).

the Copernican and Kantian revolutions, humanity seems to have experienced a series of identity crises, out of which grew compensatory compulsions to master both the cosmos without and the human psyche within. But as medieval cosmologies fell, so too would their ancient theological foundations come to be discarded. As religious contexts gradually faded from view, a resultant decoupling of self from soul would eventually take place.[12] Theology, it was believed, was unable to provide sufficient certainty in the face of modern angst. Surely, science could be better trusted to bring our anxiety to heel. So it happened that out of the chaos of this epochal upheaval the modern "world-mastering rational self" would emerge (Grenz, 2001, p. 67). In this sense the Enlightenment should be viewed as a self-styled work of intellectual and psychological palingenesis—humanity's deliverance out of the primordial waters of premodern ignorance and fear from whence it had finally emerged (cf. Macquarrie, 2003).

Though Descartes and Locke may have laid the philosophical groundwork for the modern self, it would eventually come to acquire near-divine status in the writings of Kant, the subject of knowledge having been elevated by Kantian epistemology to a state of utter autonomy (Martin & Barresi, 2008; C. Taylor, 1989). In tracing the development of modernity's "transcendental pretence," Solomon (1988) acknowledges Kant a seminal role in establishing the supremacy and universality of individual human experience (p. 40). Expanding on this theme, Grenz (2001) argues,

> Kant's epistemology transformed the knowing process into a relationship between the autonomous self and the world waiting to be known through the creative power of the active mind. . . . Rather than viewing the self as one of several entities in the world, Kant's thinking self in a sense "creates" the world—that is, the world of its

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[12]Modern Christian ethicists like Moreland & Rae (2000) often reify the premodern model of the soul-as-self in the interests of preserving a metaphysical basis for personhood. How can we defend the rights of the unborn, the mentally infirm or terminally ill, they ask, if personhood is not grounded in "substance"? Furthermore, if, as postmodern perspectives insist, self is a developmental construct, a cognitive achievement, or a neurobiological epiphenomenon, what becomes of the human person after the death of the body? Notably, Christian models of the self rooted in evolutionary frameworks often cavalierly dismiss or ignore such concerns (see, e.g., Shults, 2003). As demonstrated in Chapter 2, without some sort of ontological anchor, notions of person, self, and personal identity become vulnerable to a radical contingency, the ethical and theological consequences of which are immense (see Cooper, 2000).

own knowledge. (p. 76)

Michener (2007) identifies the "two major characteristics" of the Kantian self in terms of the "all-encompassing" purview of its knowledge and its "right to project from the subjective structures of one's mind to general truth claims on the nature of humanity" (p. 22). By such means, all of reality could be defined as a constellation of epistemic objects that should be placed under the hegemony of the knowing human subject. Thus, the human self came to be defined exclusively in terms of self-consciousness, "as a replacement for the notion of the soul, which had fallen on hard times" (Martin & Barresi, 2008, p. 297).

Under a Kantian rubric, the final shift of self from metaphysical substance to strictly subjective reality was, perhaps, inevitable. Regarding self-knowledge Kant would claim, "I have no *knowledge* of myself as I am, but merely as I appear to myself" (Kant, 2007, p. 169; emphasis in original). To be clear, this is not any postmodern agnosticism regarding the existence of self; rather, Kantian epistemology places the object in itself, in this case the knowing self, outside the bounds of direct observation in order to prioritize the subjectivity of knowledge (Bird, 2006). If self cannot know or experience itself (or God) directly, the epistemological priority necessarily shifts toward the subjective end of knowing essentially permitting the knower to define reality on strictly phenomenological grounds. Perception or consciousness of self (and God) now encompasses the totality of our epistemic access. Moreover, any potential disparity between the "noumenal" self and its "phenomenal" appraisal is moot. The former—self-as-it-truly-is—cannot be known; now, self-as-it-appears-to-me is all in all. And under a phenomenological rubric, revelation is vanquished; observation is now king. Knowledge comes through rational, empirical scrutiny and analysis. Observations and conclusions regarding the self may now be systematized and universalized in the interests of "science," so-called. Thus, as Grenz (2001) explains, "Kant's self did not merely know itself. Rather, in knowing itself it supposed that it knew all selves, as well as the structure of any and every possible self"

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(p. 77). Kant's "radically anthropocentric" (C. Taylor, 1989, p. 366) conception of self

and its knowledge can be summed up in his "motto of enlightenment:" "*Sapere aude*

[Dare to be wise]! Have courage to use your *own* understanding!" (Kant, 1991, p. 54,

emphasis in original). In stark terms, following from Kant, we are who we believe

ourselves to be.

Predictably, the Kantian self would eventually fall into disrepute with the rise

of postmodernism. In the twentieth century, psychological theorists have largely followed

William James in conceiving of the self as an aggregate of multiple empirical "selves"

(Goethals & Strauss, 1991).[13] James differentiated the self along Kantian lines with the

empirically transcendent I-self—or "pure ego"—on the one hand and numerous

phenomenal me-selves—as discrete expressions of an "empirical ego"—on the other

(James, 1961, p. 43). Recognizing the innumerable exocentric influences that contribute

to the formation of these me-selves, he outlined several ways in which they interact

hierarchically and conflictually within various social contexts (pp. 53ff.). James's

phenomenal me-self, unlike his I-self, was not a static reality, but a dynamic one

influenced and shaped intersubjectively over the course of one's life. Yet, as Harter

(2015) explains, James' multiple self model took on a different cast as the underlying

assumptions of modernism came increasingly under question:

> [James'] characterization of *multiple Me-selves* represented the reality of self
> development, including the challenges that such multiplicity provoked. The field
> began to shift toward an increasing zeal for models depicting how the self varied
> across situations and relational contexts. . . . Postmodernism had clear and definite
> implications for how the self would now be conceptualized. The self shifted to an
> arbitrarily or socially constructed identity (rather than a personally crafted self). (p.
> 5, author's emphasis)

So, the Kantian thesis of reflexive self-knowledge and self-construction had to be

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[13]Martin & Barrisi (2008) note that, as early as John Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding,* "self" had been conceived of as a "momentary entity" rather than "a temporally extended one" (p. 144). James (1961) would argue something similar in his discussion of the human subject's constantly changing "stream of consciousness" (pp. 18).

abandoned. Self-mastery, postmodernism would rightly claim, is a sham. Postmodernism had called into question humanity's ability to master anything, let alone the illusive and ineffable self. Interestingly, on James' own terms the empirical self is often a mess of conflicts and irrationality. From the vantage point of postmodernism, however, James' unitary I-self could no longer be sustained either. Having decoupled the self from the soul, and discarding the link between the phenomenal and the experientially transcendent aspects of personhood, the human self would become wholly contingent (Vitz & Felch, 2006).

By the mid-nineteenth century philosophical doubts had arisen as to the ability of the modern self to truly know itself (see Ricoeur, 1977). The events of the first half of the twentieth century, especially the extent to which humanity had witnessed its own inhumanity in two world wars, appear to have further crystallized this skepticism regarding the rationality and knowability of the human self (Martin & Barresi, 2008; Solomon, 1988; cf. Ryle, 1949). Kant's belief that his noumenal self could never truly be known would eventually culminate in a deep postmodern suspicion that anything could be known in itself. The epistemic objects most vulnerable to this skepticism were those the Christian Scriptures are most concerned to disclose: God, self, and others. Perhaps, they would argue, our first-person perspective fatally undermines any hope of epistemic access, hermeneutical veridicality, or ethical normativity. "Can the self ever encounter the other," postmodern philosophers would muse, "or do reason and interpretation alike ultimately result in self-absorption?" (Vanhoozer, 1998, p. 383).

Having perceived the overweening ambition of modernist conceptions of the self and intent on dethroning regnant hegemonies, postmodern thinkers eventually came to express deep reservations about a unitary self. Indeed, postmodern critics of the modern self have opposed it on both philosophical (Metzinger, 2009; Siderits, 2016) and psychological (Cushman, 1995; Gergen, 1991) grounds, eventually leading Solomon (1988) to determine that the modern self "has now disintegrated into nothingness" (p.

126). Echoing this theme, Barresi & Martin (2011) conclude,

> [T]he unified self, if indeed there ever was such a thing, has receded from view. Those who seek it today in both the philosophical and scientific literatures soon discover that none but the carefully initiated can wade into the waters of theoretical accounts of the self without soon drowning in a sea of symbols, technical distinctions, and empirical results, the end result of which is that the notion of the unified self has faded from view. (p. 52)

Following Descartes and Kant, modernity had defined the self in terms of rationality, the essence of which is expressed, above all, in *human* reason (see Harter, 2015). Yet, the reality of our postmodern experience of self is that it is often anything but rational and reasonable. Beset on so many sides, the modern self, as Vitz & Felch (2006) have forcefully argued, is now in crisis.

Modern and postmodern approaches seek to define and delineate the self from a variety of vantage points, whether phenomenological, narratival, semantic, or philosophical.[14] Having renounced any putative theological warrant, however, contemporary understandings of the self have been left on uneasy footing. Once anthropology was decoupled from theology, over time, the idea of a unitary, persistent self gave ground to a multiplicity of models pointing out the various cultural, developmental, evolutionary, and religious influences to which subjectivity itself may been subjected. In what may be regarded as a predictable result,

> The contemporary self has become destablised, both theoretically and experientially, as modernity's individualism continues to retreat from the postmodern world. . . . Whereas the unity of the experiencing subject has always been philosophically problematic, a broad consensus suggests that the self's existential predicament became increasingly precarious as local communities and their idiosyncratic customs and traditions gave way to the globalised society. . . . As the traditional sources of identity crumbled away, a novel and distinctive kind of identity emerged characterised by its multiplicity, mobility, ephemerality and superficiality. (Turner, 2008, p. 2)

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[14]Neisser (1997) summarizes modern and postmodern vantage points in clear enough terms: "If we are in search of the self, we can look either inward or outward." A modern perspective on the self looks "inward," focusing on "private experience, on mental representations, on the self-concept." Postmodern perspectives, if they do not deconstruct the self altogether, look instead at "outward" influences: "to see the self as embedded in its environment, ecologically and socially situated in relation to other objects and persons" (p. 19).

From the perspective of Christianity, it might be argued that modernity had set out to construct a self that amounted to an anthropological Tower of Babel by which humanity might finally attain to the status of divinity. Seeing our hubris, God, in his infinite wisdom, has cast the modern mind into a sea of confusion and a plurality of postmodern perspectives. Having rejected any theological basis in favor of philosophical, psychological, or evolutionary frameworks, the secular self has foundered for want of an epistemic anchor by which it might be rescued from fatal contingency. In the final analysis, what we can say about humanity must follow our conclusions about humanity's Creator: "If God is dead," political philosopher Stephen Clark (1989) rightly concludes, "so also is the Self" (p. 37).

A Christological Perspective on the Self

As we should expect, a solution to the impasse between modern and postmodern perspectives on the self comes to us, as it were, *from above*. The two poles of secular thought on the self could not be further apart, yet they should both be viewed as expressions of what Martin Kähler has called the "confused self-understanding human beings have when left to their own resources" (cited in Pannenberg, 1985, p. 92). The humanist assumptions of modernity had resulted in an unfounded optimism regarding the self. In its most egregious excess, modernist anthropology failed to account for the sinful, fallen condition of humanity cut off from life and fellowship with God. The postmodern conclusion that self is often unstable, multiplicitous, and contextually contingent— inferences which, admittedly, follow from observation—only confirms this. In other words, as Christians, we should expect phenomenological approaches to self to reveal deep and persistent divides in our sense and experiences of self (McFadyen, 1990; Turner, 2008; Woodhead, 1999). On the other hand, the postmodern rejection of a persistent, unitary self grounded in objective reality amounts to an overreaction in the extreme (cf. Megill, 1985). After all, as even the most ardent philosophical antirealist will

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acknowledge, "in an interesting sense" selves are "phenomenological 'everyday objects'" (Metzinger, 2011, p. 281).

In many ways, it seems that the failure of the promise of modernity triggered the wholesale collapse of any confidence in the foundations of Western civilization, the unitary self being no exception.[15] The resultant fear and confusion stirred up by the disintegration of modern notions of the self may also be seen as a fulfilment of Kierkegaard's prophetic insistence that attempts to ground the self in anything other than "the power that established it" would only lead to despair (Kierkegaard, 1980, p. 14). Numerous defenses of the self have, in fact, been mounted by Christian writers advocating expressly theological perspectives. Interacting with both modern and postmodern thinkers, Thiselton (1995), for one, argues for a philosophical reappraisal of postmodern eulogizing for the self on the basis of Christian truth claims. In his sweeping survey of the philosophical and psychological history of the self, Grenz (2001) offers a trinitarian basis for the self grounded in the *imago dei*. Jensen (2012) has demonstrated one among a myriad of ways that Christology may be fruitfully employed in support of a Christian view of the human self.

As modern and postmodern perspectives grapple with each other for narratival primacy, Christian theanthropology must proffer a perspective on the human self that is grounded in the dogma of the *imago dei*, the divine design for which has been perfectly fulfilled in the person and work of Jesus Christ. As established in the previous chapter, the basis for any Christian psychology of self-knowledge should include an account of the self christologically understood.[16] The approach taken throughout the rest of this

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[15]Some postmodern Christian approaches have suggested that "the" modern self is itself a historical, narratival construct (see Turner, 2008; Woodhead, 1999).

[16]Johnson (2007) notes that postmodern pluralism has, perhaps ironically, played a part in fomenting the development of a robustly Christian psychology. The fall of "the modern ideal of a generic, all-encompassing psychology to which all open-minded, rational parties can agree" may be perceived as a boon for Christian perspectives as it opens the door to a renewed dialogue (p. 255).

chapter presumes the epistemological and anthropological primacy of the Christ event—

that is, the sum of God's revelation in and through the incarnation and the reconciling

work of Jesus Christ. Indeed, if Christ is to be taken at his word, there can be no better

place to search for epistemological "treasure" than Christology, if we are to rightly

apprehend the existence and meaning of the human self (see Col 2:3; cf. Matt 13:44).

Toward a Surer Foundation. The provenance of the Christian unitary "inner"

self—the objective I who reflexively perceives self as a discernible object of personal

reflection and contemplation—is typically traced back to Augustine (Cary, 2003; see also

Grenz, 2001; LaCugna, 1991; C. Taylor, 1989). Turner (2008), suggesting the degree of

contingency regarding the self with which he is comfortable, goes so far as to dub

Augustine "the creator of the inner self" (p. 1). More likely, Augustine should be credited

with synthesizing and crystallizing philosophical and psychological ideas about human

subjectivity that he had received from biblical and Greek thinkers.[17] In noting the early

Father's seminal influence on Western notions of the self, LaCugna (1991) avers,

> Largely due to the influence of the introspective psychology of Augustine and his
> heirs, we in the West today think of a person as a "self" who may be further defined
> as an individual center of consciousness, a free, intentional subject, one who knows
> and is known, loves and is loved, an individual identity, a unique personality
> endowed with certain rights, a moral agent, someone who experiences, weighs,
> decides, and acts. (p. 250)

Yet, crucially, it was what Plotinus said about the "soul" that informed Augustine's

understanding of the self (Rist, 1996).[18] In grounding self in a Christian metaphysics

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[17]Neoplatonists following Plotinus are sometimes credited with the idea of an "inner space" within which the "soul" or true seat of being ostensibly resides (Cary, 2003). According to such narratives, Augustine is primarily responsible for establishing the Western assumption that this inner space is "private" or personal (p. 5). Yet, as will be shown, the biblical writers had been operating with a well-developed sense of the inward aspect of human existence for some time (see Cooper, 2000). The psalmist declares in parallel construction, "Bless Yahweh, my soul, and all my inner parts [כָּל־קְרָבַי] his holy name!" (Ps 103:1, my translation). Isaiah, in referencing his inner, emotional turmoil, employs a term, קִרְבִּי (lit. "my entrails"; "my inmost self," ESV), that the translators of the LXX have rendered τὰ ἐντός μου (lit. "that which is *within me*"). Paul refers a number of times to his own "inner man" (ἔσω ἄνθρωπον; Rom 7:22; 2 Cor 4:16; Eph 3:16). Perhaps, in light of this, it would be more accurate to affirm Augustine's role in synthesizing biblical and Hellenist notions of human subjectivity for subsequent Christian thinkers (so, Rist, 1996).

[18]Plotinus sounds at times remarkably biblical in his description of the "soul" as the life-animating substance behind all material reality: "Let every soul [ψυχή] recall, then, at the outset the truth

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conditioned by Neoplatonism, Augustinian anthropology succeeded in substantializing the self, thus establishing it as an ontological—and epistemological—entity. For a millennium thereafter, theories of the self granted it cogency and rationality by linking it metaphysically and rhetorically to the human soul, which, understood Christianly, was entailed by the constitutive *imago*. Therein arose the confidence that *the self is the soul* or, allowing for the Cartesian nuance, *the self is the mind*.[19] Furthermore, by grounding self in the "substance" of the mind/soul, it became possible to read "self" into biblical texts retrojectively.[20] The two became inseparable and interchangeable both ontologically and hermeneutically (cf. Zimmermann, 2004).

The union of "self" and "soul" would go essentially unquestioned until the uneasy union of Platonic and Aristotelian frameworks maintained throughout the high Middle Ages was finally ruptured in a series of tectonic clashes to which history would eventually refer in explicitly palingenetic terms—i.e., Renaissance (see Barresi & Martin, 2011). Although, two centuries later, Descartes still held to a dualistic understanding of human nature, he would nonetheless seek to elevate "the reasoning subject as the

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that [S]oul is the author of all living things, that it has breathed the life into them all, whatever is nourished by earth and sea, all the creatures of the air, the divine stars in the sky; it is the maker of the sun; itself formed and ordered this vast heaven and conducts all that rhythmic motion; and it is a principle [φύσις] distinct from all these to which it gives law and movement and life, and it must of necessity be more honourable than they" (*Ennead* V.i.2). Yet, what places Plotinus wholly outside any biblical cosmology is his supposition that every "soul" shares a common, derivative existence with the "Soul" of divine being: "for they gather or dissolve as [S]oul brings them life or abandons them, but [S]oul, since it never can abandon itself, is of eternal being" (V.i.2; cf. IV.iii.9). According to Caluori (2015), Plotinus employs "soul" as a species of "hypostasis" allowing him to determine that the divine Soul "is his soul" (p. 4). Clearly, this is problematic from a Christian standpoint. Orthodox Christology would eventually offer much greater clarity of terms and referents, distinguishing soul/mind from person/self—a clarity that Christian anthropology would do well to imitate.

[19]LaCugna (1991) further argues that "in many respects," Descartes was "a good Augustinian" (p. 250). His rationalistic approach to the self, capsulized in his *cogito ergo sum*, would become the bedrock of modern anthropology. Counter to Augustine, however, Descartes reverses the order of epistemological priority from one of (divine) objectivity to that of (human) subjectivity. Truth, even that which is ultimate and divine, must be searched out and discovered by and within the human subject—the ego or "I." In this way, as Charles Taylor (1989) notes, "Descartes gives Augustinian inwardness a radical twist and takes it in a quite new direction, which has also been epoch-making" (p. 143).

[20]Contemporary English translations have nearly universally followed this trend, rendering Hebrew and Greek references to individual subjectivity with terms like "inner being" and "self."

beginning point for knowledge and reflection" (Grenz, 2001, p. 70).[21] In doing so, he

basically recapitulated Plato's notion of an autonomous, self-sufficient self. With a

certainty borne of humanistic zeal, Descartes would write to a friend, "[N]othing can be

in me, that is to say, in my mind, of which I am not aware," a supposition which "follows

from the fact that the soul is distinct from the body and its essence is to think" (cited in

Hatfield, 2014, p. 336). In reifying Plato, Descartes had "freed . . . the soul from its

Aristotelian accretions" (Martin & Barresi, p. 126). Yet, his attempt to reground the

self/soul in Platonic metaphysics would eventually prove the undoing of this pairing.

Indeed, Descartes' radically dichotomist anthropology would eventually play a seminal

role in fomenting the split between soul and self:

> Descartes's main contributions to theorizing about the self and personal identity
> were, first, to lend the tremendous weight of his authority to a Platonic view of the
> self, which would eventually be recognized as scientifically useless, and, second, to
> introduce the idea of the reflexive nature of consciousness. . . . In a larger sense,
> however, he championed the new mechanistic view of nature that in the hands of
> others would eventually undo even his own theories of the self. (Martin & Barresi,
> 2008, p. 131)

Moreover, as a result of the rift between the natural and supernatural worlds, a great

epistemological chasm would open up leading to the bifurcation of empirical and

theological approaches to knowledge (see Diller, 2014). Over time, this divide would

widen into a dichotomy of competing plausibility structures, "scientific" and "religious"

frameworks eventually becoming irreconcilably estranged from each other. What became

of Christian articulations of the self would come to depend on one's epistemological

point of departure—whether *from above* (theological) or *from below* (anthropological).

If, on the other hand, as Calvin held, the knowledge of self is inextricably

linked to the knowledge of God, then the human self can never be finally established—

whether ontologically, epistemologically, or axiologically—apart from its

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[21]In allowing rationality to serve as the supreme faculty of the mind/soul, Descartes reified
Augustine. Nevertheless, in his modernist optimism, he elevated the potential of autonomous human
achievement far beyond Augustine's estimation (C. Taylor, 1989).

theological/christological basis. This would mean, then, that strictly philosophical approaches to the self cannot, whether as putative descendants of Plato or Descartes, supply their own warrant. So, Ricoeur (1995), for example, emphasizes the hermeneutical import of a self constituted in its interdependence with others. The ethical implications inherent in the formation of one's "narrative identity" exist for the French philosopher in a dialectical relation of "selfhood" and "sameness"—that is, in the self's being-in-relation-to-other—over time (see pp. 113ff). Though in this respect Ricoeur's framework of the self bears a striking resemblance to a covenantal model of the self, it nonetheless fails to establish its own basis, leading to yet another foundation-less—i.e., humanist—anthropology. In other words, Ricoeur seeks to construct a philosophical framework for selfhood *ex nihilo*, as it were, eschewing as "cryptophilosophical" any potential theological (or, presumably, christological) foundation.[22] As Ricoeur himself confesses, his "culturally contingent symbolic network" should be understood to stand as an "heir to the philosophies of the [Cartesian] cogito and as continuing their self-foundational claim" (p. 25; cf. O'Donovan, 1994; Topping, 2007). In the end, Ricoeur's approach to self-knowledge demonstrates a close affinity with Descartes'—and, as it happens, Plato's—in that neither grounds the existence of self in the *imago dei*, nor certainly the knowledge of self upon one's union with Christ.

Philosophical perspectives such as Ricoeur's fail to link the self to—and thus to ground it upon—any reality beyond the realm of human (inter)subjectivity. To be clear, no such perspective, whether ostensibly Christian or not, can see past its own self-imposed epistemic unipolarity.[23] Along these lines, Dooyeweerd (1984) rightly decries "all attempts . . . to bring about an inner synthesis between the Christian faith and a

[22]This critique of Ricoeur should not be taken as a dismissal of the vital contribution he has made as a Christian philosophical ethicist.

[23]The same is true when applied at the psychospiritual order of discourse: self can never finally displace its own barriers to self-knowledge apart from the knowledge of God-in-Christ. Our autonomous human reason will always fail us.

philosophy which is rooted in the self-sufficiency of human reason"; and hastens to add, "From a Christian point of view, the whole attitude of philosophical thought which proclaims the self-sufficiency of the latter, turns out to be unacceptable, because it withdraws human thought from the divine revelation in Christ Jesus" (p. v). What is needed is an exocentric perspective on the human self rooted in the self-revelation of the triune God. While strictly philosophical approaches may make salutary contributions to a Christian psychology of self-knowledge, Christology, as we should expect, offers a more secure epistemological base upon which we may build (see Bartholomew & Goheen, 2013; cf. Isa 28:16). On the other hand, since Descartes,

> Western philosophy has impeded the natural human desire for self-knowledge by getting wrong both the knowing subject and the quality of knowledge itself. Conceiving the knowing subject as isolated consciousness and knowledge as rational facts or eternal truths of universal reason has created an illusion of self-knowledge in which we invent ourselves by chasing after psychic fantasies. (Zimmermann, 2004, p. 297)

Thanks be to God that he has granted us in the Word-made-flesh a surer foundation upon which to construct a Christian theanthropology of self and a psychology of self-knowledge. Along these lines, Barth, Pannenberg, and, especially, Bonhoeffer have laid much of the necessary christological and anthropological groundwork.

The christological contributions of Barth, Pannenberg, and Bonhoeffer.

Although Barth was keen to move away from the rarified metaphysics of medieval scholasticism seeking instead to establish personhood in functional or relational terms, he nevertheless insisted that anthropological inquiry first be grounded upon a christological foundation. Indeed, every anthropological problem, Barth (2010) argued, should first be examined theanthropologically through the person and work of Christ:

> The nature of the man Jesus alone is the key to the problem of human nature. This man is man. As certainly as God's relation to sinful man is properly and primarily His relation to this man alone, and a relation to the rest of mankind only in Him and through Him, He alone is primarily and properly man. . . . If we rightly consider the special difficulty of a theological anthropology, there can be no question of any other point of departure. (III/2, pp. 43–44)

In Barthian thought the human self is conceived in Christo-Trinitarian terms as the "I am" of a tripolar dynamic relationality that presumes the "Thou art" of God and of other (see Oh, 2006; Webster, 1995; cf. Horton, 2005). Together these three—self, Other, and others—serve as counterweights preserving the believing self's dialectical being-in-relation "following the pattern of" the *perichoresis* of Christ's own relatedness to God and other (Oh, 2006, p. 104).[24]

Within a christological framework, self may be understood as the subjective pole of a Spirit-mediated multipolar intersubjectivity that incorporates the individual's relatedness to God, to other human beings, and, reflexively, to self. On the one hand, an overemphasis on the pole of self leads—as it did in the fall and as modernist thinking only perpetuates—to individualism, autonomy, and estrangement from Other/others. On the other hand, balance can also be lost in favor of a radically contingent, heteronomous self taken up in a self-less existential limbo, ultimately estranged from itself. Taken to their logical conclusion, postmodern and Buddhist conceptions clearly lead in this self-annihilating direction (see Biderman, 2008). In order to grasp at the requisite epistemological and axiological balance, as Barth insists, the basis of personhood must be located in the one who alone embodies the covenantal *imago* and instantiates self along its two image-bearing axes. Berkouwer (1962) concurs,

> It is clear that Barth's basing anthropology on Christology derives from the idea that we cannot understand "man" apart from his relation to God. In our opinion, this position is unassailable; man cannot be known with a true and reliable knowledge if he is abstracted from this relation to God. Man would then be, from a Scriptural viewpoint, nothing but an abstraction. (p. 93)

As Barth concludes, we know who we are as human beings as we come, with others, into agapic communion with Christ. This is the case since Christ relates himself to God and to others, uniquely yet paradigmatically, within a perfect dialectical balance of particularity

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[24]Bakhtin (1993) illustrates the proper ethicospiritual balance between self and others in his description of the "architectonic" self (see Emerson, 2006). In Chapter Five the ethical implications of the covenantal self will be applied to pastoral and psychotherapeutic caregiving.

and relationality (cf. Ricoeur's "selfhood" and "sameness"), of freedom and responsiveness. In other words, Christ is ὁ υἱός ὁ μονογενής τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου (see John 3:14–18). He alone discloses to us both God and ourselves.

Alternatively, self can also be understood, as Pannenberg (1985) suggests, as the reflexive center of a dialectically conceived "exocentric" personhood. Self, for Pannenberg, is caught up in "a conflict between basic factors in the structure of human existence," namely, our "centralized organization" as discrete, embodied selves and our other-instantiated "exocentricity" (p. 84). At the most fundamental level, Pannenberg defines exocentricity as "being present to what is other than the self" (p. 85). Evidently, what he has in mind is the dynamic interplay by which selfhood is constituted in relationship to other (see McFadyen, 1990; see also Shults, 2003, pp. 132ff). Human beings, having been created in the image of the triune God, come to selfhood through "the twofold reference of human self-consciousness that corresponds to the tension between centrality and exocentricity" (Pannenberg, 1985, p. 104). In other words, self-knowledge comes to be in human beings due to a dialectical individuated relationality—a knowing oneself in relation to other—that defines yet simultaneously threatens self's equanimity, its centrality. In language at times redolent of Freud, Pannenberg suggests that, in order to maintain its own equilibrium while simultaneously avoiding domination of other, self must embrace the "contradiction" of its own dialectical constitution (p. 86).

Pannenberg, like Barth, conceives of exocentric personhood in trinitarian terms. Yet, he also holds God's self-revelation in the person and work of the incarnate Christ to be the supreme historical marker of this exocentric personeity (Pannenberg, 1994). Moreover, he finds that believers may proleptically appropriate this distinctly eschatological dynamic only in and through our Spirit-mediated participation with Christ. Humanity's exocentric "final destiny" has been "manifested already in Jesus Christ and in which believers share already through the power of the Spirit, who is already effecting the eschatological reality of the new man in them" (p. 220). Turner (2008), in

summarizing Pannenberg's diachronic perspective, concludes, "[H]is eschatological grounding of the image means that personhood is conceived as perpetually in a process of becoming" (p. 132). We are granted personhood, and therefore selfhood, having been created as persons in the image of God; yet, selfhood, as an expression of personhood, bears an eschatological *telos*.

Bonhoeffer's contribution to a Christian understanding of self stands above even Barth's and Pannenberg's in its dependence on an expressly christological anthropology. Indeed, Bonhoeffer's understanding of the person of Christ has been called the "conceptual center" of his entire theological program (DeJonge, 2012, p. 85). For Bonhoeffer, who preserves and recapitulates many of Luther's theological priorities, "Christology is not just one element of theology, but that which provides the content and distinctiveness of all theology" (Barker, 2015, p. 19). Bonhoeffer's Christology may be further distinguished from its Barthian counterpart by reason of its Lutheran emphasis on the humiliation of Christ and his identification with sinful human beings (Bradbury, 2011). Along these lines, Godsey (1987) concludes,

> Barth tended to emphasize the divinity of Jesus; Jesus Christ is the 'Royal Man' whose power is the decisive thing. . . . Bonhoeffer, on the other hand, stresses the hiddenness of divinity in the humiliated One; for him Jesus Christ is the man for others, the one whose power is shown forth in weakness. (p. 26)

As such, Bonhoeffer would insist that the glorified Christ must never be abstracted theologically or hermeneutically from the crucified Christ. Thus, he reiterates Luther's *theologia crucis* for a modern age (Barker, 2015). The crucified Christ, Bonhoeffer maintains, demonstrates God's gracious inclination toward sinful humanity: "[W]e can have the Exalted One only as the Crucified One. The resurrection of Christ does not get us around the stumbling block. Even the Risen One remains a stumbling block for us. If it were not so, he would not be for us" (Bonhoeffer, 2009, p. 359).

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For Bonhoeffer, the human self[25] can only be understood in strictly binary terms as being either "in Adam" or "in Christ" (Bonhoeffer, 1996). Although he does identify self as the generic relational intersection of "I" and "You"—what he terms "social basic-relations" (Bonhoeffer, 1998, pp. 34)—Bonhoeffer identifies a crucial distinction in the self of believing and unbelieving persons arising from their standing respective to Christ. Following Luther, the self of all who stand "in Adam" is *curvum in se*, curved in on itself. This fallen, "incurved self" is "cut off from self-understanding" and "opaque to itself" (Gregor, 2013, p. 63). Only in Christ can the self be redeemed from its pathological reflexivity:

> [O]n its own, the I [self] cannot move beyond itself. It is imprisoned in itself, it sees only itself, even when it sees another, even when it wants to see God. It understands itself out of itself, which really means, however, that it basically does not understand itself. Indeed it does not understand itself until this I has been encountered and overwhelmed in its existence by an other. The I believes itself free and is captive; it has all power and has only itself as a vassal. (Bonhoeffer, 1996, pp. 45–46)

Bonhoeffer held God's revelation in Christ and the believing self's faith in Christ to be, respectively, the fulcrum and lever by which God brings the incurved, fallen self into union with Christ thereby reorienting it according to its proper standing before God. In coming to Christ, the believing self enters into Christ's own communion with God, or what Bonhoeffer referred to as the corporate, ecclesial "humanity of the new Adam" (Bonhoeffer, 1998, p. 142). From the vantage point of Christ's own relatedness to God and others, Bonhoeffer held "true selfhood and self-knowledge" to be possible for us as "the self's gaze [is] redirected" from itself toward "radical otherness" (Zimmermann, 2004, p. 300). This is to say, we come to know ourselves as we see ourselves from the perspective of God-in-Christ.

For the most part, Christian theological anthropology has maintained a distinction between the self and its self-consciousness in opposition to postmodern

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[25]Bonhoeffer's "Dasein" (see Green, 1999).

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attempts to efface it (see McFadyen, 1990; Pannenberg, 1985; White, 1996).[26] This

distinction has historically facilitated the epistemological sequestration of self from an

individual's consciousness of self. Christian theology holds that God is who he is;

whereas, what we know of God is both truncated and subject to error, our limited

consciousness of him being a reflection of our finiteness and fallenness. By way of

anthropological implication, what we know of self should not be conflated with self *in*

se.[27] On this point, Bonhoeffer (1996) is unequivocal: our phenomenological or

psychological apperceptions of self must never be confused with its actuality, "if human

beings are to be seen in light of the unity of God" (p. 102). To be sure,

> [A] psychological concept is unable by nature to convey this unity; . . . human
> beings in their psychology elude self-comprehension. People do not know their
> motives; they do not know fully their sin; they are unable to understand themselves
> on the basis of their own psychic experiences, for they are amenable to any arbitrary
> interpretation. (p. 102)

The human self, for Bonhoeffer, is characterized by unity. On the other hand, human

perception of the phenomenal self's disunity and fragmentation should weigh heavily in

any Christian psychology of self-knowledge, primarily as a sign of human fallenness,

brokenness, and finitude.[28]

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[26]Knowledge of the Jamesian me-self—the phenomenal self or the me-I-can-see—depends on an individual's ability to self-perceive. Observations concerning the phenomenal self may be mundane—I am tall, sitting, thinking—or weighty—I am good, ashamed, hopeful. It should be obvious, however, that my *self* is distinct from my self-*consciousness*. I am sitting; I am conscious that I am sitting. These two statements are not equivalent; consequently, my self-consciousness, self-theory, or self-schema—the metacognitive form(s) that represent me to myself—is *not* equivalent to my *self*. James (2012) reifies this distinction; yet it appears to have dropped out of many postmodern psychologies (see Cushman, 1995; Harter, 2015).

[27]Similar to James's I-self, this self *in se* McFadyen (1990) terms the "transcendental" or "deep" self. "Deep 'self,'" he writes, "is . . . to be conceived of as a unity of or behind the unities represented by a plurality of local 'selves.' Personal identity in a particular relation is not a complete and exhaustive self-presence. Self-identity varies across a range of communication contexts ('I' as 'shifter') whilst maintaining itself in continuity at a level transcending any communication or relation in particular. Selfhood indicates personal organisation, a structured personal identity" (p. 103).

[28]Turner (2011) argues that theological anthropology could permit accounts of a fragmentary self without resorting to the language of either sin or psychopathology. Regrettably, Turner's argument suffers from a dearth of biblical and theological support. Perhaps, a developmentally sensitive Christian psychology could permit the innovation he suggests, if his "ethical and ontological commitments to the singularity, continuity, and particularity of personhood" could be better clarified and defended (p. 134).

Yet, as Bonhoeffer maintains, psychological and phenomenological observation must yield to ontology and teleology lest the Christian self lose its way:

> [U]nity must be sought where human beings have been created, or are created anew, and where this creation both happens to them and is something in which they participate. That oneness must be sought, furthermore, where human beings must know themselves, without interpretation, in clarity and reality. This means they must know that their unity and that of their existence is founded alone in God's Word [that is, the revelation of Christ]. (Bonhoeffer, 1996, p. 102)

What we can know of ourselves will resemble, due to our limitations and sinfulness, what we can know of the God in whose image we have been made. Personal knowledge of self will often be fragmented and erroneous because we are finite and prone to sinful dissociation and self-deception. The fallen self *in se* enters the world estranged from God and, as a result, pathologically limited in its capacity to become whole and unified. Self–other attachments do foster the development of the maturing phenomenal self, yet can never displace the psychotherapeutic primacy of human–divine intersubjectivity uniquely obtained by means of reconciliation of the human person to God-in-Christ. Only in Christ can the human self "achieve" wholeness.

Personhood, Self, and Self-Consciousness

As demonstrated in Chapter Two, personhood is an onto-relational status conferred upon individual human beings by God that is most properly understood as an ethicospiritual articulation of the *imago dei* (Barth, 2010; Berkouwer, 1962; McFadyen, 1990; Pannenberg, 1985). As such, personhood cannot be reduced to either a constitutive (metaphysical) or covenantal (relational) basis, though clearly ontology logically (and developmentally) precedes personhood's axiological *telos*. Put plainly, we are persons whether or not we choose to be. Nevertheless, we are constituted by God as persons made in his image in order to fulfill our covenantal destiny of becoming genuine, God-imaging persons. Ontology precedes, yet yields to, teleology (Bonhoeffer, 1996). To speak of self, on the other hand, is to posit the personal status and experience of *particular*—i.e., individual—personhood (Evans, 2002; Kierkegaard, 1980; McFadyen, 1990; Vitz &

Felch, 2006; see also Harré, 1998). In other words, all who bear the image of God are persons in at least a minimal sense. On the other hand, *I* alone embodies, experiences, and expresses personhood as *self*, all other persons being subjectively defined as *other(s)*. *I* alone actualizes selfhood.[29] Simultaneously, persons also bear an intersubjective status—*I* is a *Thou* respective to the selfhood of *other* (Barth, 2010; Bonhoeffer, 1998; Ricoeur, 1995). Within a covenantal framework, epistemic and ethical considerations relate dialectically: *self* images God in agapic relation to *other*. Indeed, it is difficult to see how *self* makes any epistemological or ethical sense apart from *other*. This dialectical and dialogical perspective on self has alternately been articulated by Christian theologians as the "covenantal self" (see Horton, 2006, p. 201), the self as "relational substance" (Lowery, 2006, p. 278), and the "communing self" (Stratton, 2006, p. 247).

Selfhood, as an enactment and expression of covenantal personhood, should be understood covenantally, which is to say, christologically (Horton, 2005). Therefore, the self should not be understood to be an exclusively subjective—whether phenomenological, psychological, or semantic—reality.[30] Yet, strictly speaking, neither is this deep self *in se* equivalent to "soul" (contra Moreland & Rae, 2000; cf. Cooper, 2000).[31] To the contrary, selfhood for human beings is constituted as an existential subset of human personhood in the relation of two irreducible, dialectically conjoined poles: the objectively (divinely) conferred "Thou art" actualized archetypally at creation and reiterated antitypally in human procreation and relationality; and the subjectively

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[29]And thus, personhood as well (see McFadyen, 1990).

[30]As predicted by Bonhoeffer, postmodern perspectives on the self, such as Harter's (2015), founder due to overreliance on phenomenology.

[31]Although Horton (2005) helpfully outlines numerous distinctives of a covenantal Christology, he nevertheless concludes somewhat haphazardly, "The soul/spirit/intellect is the true self" (p. 91). Cooper (2000) employs the standard dualist vocabulary, yet with considerable nuance. To be clear, referring to the pastoral care of individuals as "soul care" should not, in the final analysis, be regarded as problematic. Clearly, the biblical writers' metonymic usage of "soul" (along with "heart," "mind," and other sundry terms) for the inner life and constitution of humans licenses such language. The concern in the present context is to more precisely identify the self as an onto-relational entity—a concern that the uncritical use of constitutive language, unavoidably, depreciates.

appropriated "I am" that develops over time as an ethicospiritual expression of personal agency—a self-conscious being-in-relation to God and others in the world. Crucially, however, selfhood in the covenantal sense is not "achieved" apart from the individual's Spirit-mediated incorporation into Christ.

Along these lines, Evans (2002), following Kierkegaard closely, employs the descriptor "minimal" to describe the basic selfhood possessed by every human being (p. 77). He proceeds to point out the telic aspects of selfhood, implicating its developmental and ethical implications:

> [T]here is a tremendous difference between what we could call the minimal self, who is a "bit of a subject," and the responsible self who has a formed character. Nevertheless, even this minimal self must in some sense *be*; if it were nothing at all then there would be nothing to become—or fail to become. (p. 77)

Perhaps, by way of parabolic illustration, self may be considered an onto-relational seed planted by God in need of nourishment and agapic care—it grows best by means of life-sustaining inputs and interactions with its environment. Yet, self can never bear "fruit that will last" apart from its having been grafted onto the vine that is Christ (see John 15:16; cf. Rom 11:16). Alternatively, self is the union of God's creative design and projective purpose to raise up a son in his own image. Yet, due to its estrangement from God brought on by sin, self must first be "born again" or "adopted" by the will of God through union with Christ (see John 3:3; 1 John 3:1; Rom 8:15; Gal 4:5). The interactions most obviously and directly bearing implications for the development of the human self and its self-consciousness entail the nurturing environment of the child situated in the midst of a loving family. Eventually, however, familial nurture and care must give way to the supremely consequential relationship of a believing self to God-in-Christ. Though we are conceived as image-bearing selves capable of self-consciousness, our self-consciousness is truncated and skewed by pathological reflexivity. We become whole, mature selves in the ultimate sense having been granted the ability to self-perceive through eyes conditioned by divine revelation only in proper covenantal relation to God

and others. Moreover, the character of this covenantal relation is indispensably agapic.

By recapitulating the distinctives of Christ's person and nature, a christological distinction between self and soul becomes clear. In Jesus we encounter a divine person who *is* a self—a subject, an "I." Again, the "person" of the Word is eternally constituted as the divine Son in the context of his agapic commitment to be the image of the Father. Yet, as of the incarnation, he is simultaneously a human being who *has* a human mind/soul. If soul is equivalent to self, then the Word took on not only a human nature but a human self in Mary's womb. Clearly, to equate the self with the soul would imply the presence of a duality of selves in Christ—two centers of subjectivity, one divine and one human. This would result in a Nestorian Christ which, as such, is untenable under Chalcedonian orthodoxy. Thus, self is not a formal constituent or capacity rooted in human nature, classically conceived, but of personhood, the latter being established by God in human beings with his conferral upon them of the *imago*. According to a christological model, human selfhood is evidently not contingent on the possession of any physical or metaphysical substance—i.e., soul—but on the onto-relational status of being made in the image of God for agapic communion with him.[32] As human selves, we assume our proper telic trajectory as covenantal image bearers only through our entry into this agapic communion through reconciliation to God in Christ. Viewed from this angle, "the self-sufficient, self-constructing, therapeutic self authored by modern psychology" (Grenz, 2001, p. 86) can be seen for what it is: an idolatrous and ultimately doomed effort to frame human being and becoming as an exclusively human achievement. On the other hand, the divided, multiple "self" of postmodernism unconsciously implicates human fallenness in a way that self-as-soul understandings do

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[32]As stated in Chapter 2, human selfhood is inconceivable apart from metaphysical considerations. How else could human beings "image" the invisible God, whether ontologically or ethically, without the formal constituents of a body-soul composite?

not (cf. Rom 7:14ff).[33]

Nor can a christological ontology of the self support the postmodern notion that either the phenomenal self or one's subjective sense of self—i.e., self-consciousness, self-theory, or self-schema—are equivalent to the self *in se*.[34] Although the divine Son entered the world with a fully constituted *divine* self *in se*, Christ's phenomenal self and his human self-consciousness, like ours, took shape over the course of his early life (see O'Collins, 2009; Rahner, 1966). Barring any neurological damage or psychological deficit, human beings, like Jesus, universally experience the diachronic development of individual identity, agency, and, self-consciousness:

> Through our experience of other persons and the whole world, our self-consciousness and hence our self-identification develop and take a firm shape. Our experience of the world beyond the borders of our bodily self also mediates our conscious sense of our own self and its unity. Thus, we know our personal identities not only in ourselves but also in our relationships. It is especially through our experience of the world that our sense of ourselves grows and changes. (O'Collins, 2009, p. 244)

Christ's self-consciousness *qua* human functioned within the confines and limitations of his human body–soul composite. Clearly, the divine mind/soul of the eternal Son was never so constrained. Yet, as orthodox Christology has maintained since Chalcedon, Christ's humanity could never be subsumed by his divinity and remain humanity, as such. Within the constraints of his body/brain, Jesus' human mind/soul, including his developmentally appropriate capacity for self-awareness, functioned and grew as all human beings do.

Jesus' human psychology was thoroughly normal—even normative—in every

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[33]In other words, a phenomenally or experientially "divided," discontinuous self does not imply any commensurate division in one's soul.

[34]Phenomenological presuppositions presently dominate most modern, and many Christian, understandings of the self. Harter (2015) summarizes the near-universal position of modern psychology that "the self [is] a cognitive construction" (p. 9). This is consistent with a Kantian epistemology (as expanded upon by William James as others) which places the self, like God, beyond the bounds of human reason. Yet, it carries James's dipolar understanding of the self as a dialectic of I-self and me-self one step further. The phenomenal self or me-self *is* the postmodern self.

way, sin excepted (Heb 2:17; cf. 4:15). Therefore, while Jesus' subjective center—his experientially transcendent self or "I"—persists as an expression of his divine Personhood rather than his human nature, his human experience of himself and his human self-consciousness do not.[35] Jesus' self *in se*, as an aspect of his divine Personhood, must remain immune to charges of mutability; yet his phenomenal, empirical self and his human self-consciousness nevertheless developed and grew over time beginning, presumably, in utero. This is the case for all other human *beings*,[36] like Jesus, despite their being, unlike Jesus, merely human *persons*.[37] This is not to suggest that the human self *in se* does not, in fact, change in the course of time. Minimally, fallen human beings experience an onto-relational transformation at regeneration in their renewal by God's Spirit according to the covenantal *imago* (Bonhoeffer, 1998; see John 3:8; Rom 8:9).[38] Palingenesis implicates every aspect of our being. Yet, it is the phenomenal self that develops and grows as an extension of this deeper self *in se*. In relation to others, Christ before all others, the phenomenal self of believers is being progressively conformed to the image of the One who has once for all time reconciled

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[35]An additional problem with the contemporary psychological emphasis on the phenomenal self and postmodern adumbrations of self-as-self-consciousness can be discerned in the phenomena of self-deception. If self is identical with one's self-schema—a psychological construct intersubjectively arising from human self-consciousness—then self-deception becomes a logical contradiction. I am who I believe myself to be, though I may be aware of only a portion of my self-concept at any given moment. On the other hand, if what I believe or know about myself does not correspond to reality, then self is not equivalent to self-theory, self-schema, or self-concept. In fact, the discrepancy between one's phenomenal self and one's self-theory can sometimes be quite extreme requiring exocentric intervention. I need others' help to draw attention to the ways in which I have dissociated aspects of myself from awareness and, with selective data, made avowals considering myself that are, unbeknownst to me, false (cf. Neisser, 1997, pp. 30ff.).

[36]The one exception to this seems to be humanity's first representatives. It is interesting to reflect on the implications of God's having introduced Adam and Eve into the world as mature agents, rather than as infants. They appear, at least in the creation narrative, to possess adult agency without having passed through earlier developmental stages.

[37]This is clearly a fine distinction, but one that is necessary in order to maintain a conceptual link to Chalcedoninan orthodoxy. "Person" in contemporary parlance has lost its semantic connection to classical Christology.

[38]Additionally, the existence and immortality of the human self is contingent, whereas Christ's is not.

self *in se* to God (see 2 Cor 4:16; Eph 3:16; Col 3:10).[39] This renewal amounts to much more than a mere modification of formal constituent—i.e., soul—and it implicates much more than a shift in inter/subjective self-perception; it is rooted in the palingenetic work of God. The believing self is, in a comprehensive, eschatological sense, a "new creation" (2 Cor 5:17) having been objectively justified, subjectively sanctified, and intersubjectively reconciled to God-in-Christ.

Three Axioms of the Covenantal Christian Self

By way of summary of the preceding discussion and introduction to a Christian psychology of self-knowledge, three apothegmatic priorities may now be adduced regarding the nature of the self, the subject of Christian self-knowledge.

The onto-relational dialectic of self's being and becoming. The self or knowing subject of Christian self-knowledge, as an expression of the *imago dei*, is reducible neither to a constitutive or covenantal basis. Rather, it is a dialectical synthesis of these two bases most meaningfully articulated within a christological framework. While selfhood, as such, is not a possession but a status, it nevertheless bears a distinctly substantial character despite its being independent of metaphysical considerations.[40] As Evans (2002) concludes, "The self is an ethical task, not a fixed entity, but that task is itself part of the self's ontological givenness" (p. 81). Individual human beings bear their particular status as selves inherently due to their divinely endowed image-bearing capacity and calling. Yet, in the most comprehensive sense, selfhood can be "achieved" only through the active participation of particular selves in covenantal communion with

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[39]Paul stresses the reality of this regenerated mode of being with his language of the "old" and "new self [ἄνθρωπος]" (Rom 6:6; Eph 4:22, 24; Col 3:9–10).

[40]I.e., the human self is existentially situated within creation as a psychosomatic unity; yet, according to historic Christian teaching on the afterlife, God preserves the existence of the self, by some mysterious means, following the death of the body (Cooper, 2000).

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the triune God and with other human beings through their union with Jesus Christ. In other words, selfhood is both gift and invitation, at once conferral and calling, its ultimate contingency being located in the divine will to create and redeem human persons bearing his own covenantal character.

Since the fall, individual human beings instantiate selfhood in a truncated sense, having become fatally *curvum in se* due to the presence and influence of sin. Though all humans now possess a status and dignity as image bearers in its formal, constitutive sense, we are born estranged from God and cut off from the possibility of becoming fully human according to the covenantal *telos* of the *imago*. As such, the fallen human self is curved in upon itself, fragmented, and in need of repair. In spite of this, a covenantal disposition is indeed "hard-wired" into human nature motivating us to form attachments, whether "healthy" or pathological, in service to the formation of the self. Due to its primal estrangement from God, the human self can become truly whole neither autonomously nor in the context of a merely horizontal relationality. Furthermore, secondary instances of estrangement—i.e., relational trauma—may result in the malformation and further fragmentation of the phenomenal self as well as the obfuscation of its nature and form from present awareness. Only with the advent of the new birth do human beings assume their proper orientation as covenantal image bearers and obtain the promise of God's eschatological intention to utterly reverse and repair over time the damage done to self and its dissociated self-awareness.

The perichoretic means of covenantal self-knowing. The covenantal self of the believer may come to accurately self-perceive, primarily, through perichoretic union with Christ, and, secondarily, instrumentally, through perceiving the Christiform image in others. In both the covenantal union of self and Christ as well as self and others, the perichoretic movement of the Holy Spirit is programmatic to this dynamic. The Spirit alone reveals what cannot otherwise be seen and known. Thus, self-knowledge can only

be obtained by relational means, never strictly reflexively. Like a dog chasing its tail, the autonomous self can never reach the object of its own self-reflection. On the other hand, in the context of agapic relationality, dialogical self-reflection may yield a perspective that the self is incapable of coming to autonomously. The estranged self, cut off as it is from the life and knowledge of the one true God, is pathologically self-blind and self-deceived: "When it reflects upon itself, the human spirit stares into an abyss of potentiality without meaning" (Loder, 1998, p. 340). The fallen human self can never come to itself by direct approach as it is "ever seeing but never perceiving" (Luke 8:10). Only the intimate, perichoretic presence of Christ can provide the needed perspective. As Zimmermann (2004) rightly avers, "[W]e gain self-knowledge by losing all pretensions to self-understanding. Self-knowledge is not possessed but given as a gift" (p. 303). No "gain" of merely unipolar self-reflection can ever be trusted. But by gazing into the mirror of Other/others, self can be perceived and known as it truly is by the indwelling, mediating Spirit of God.

The agapic *telos* of covenantal self-knowledge. Third and finally, the *telos* of covenantal self-knowledge is love—that is, the simultaneously self-denying yet self-regarding, agapic concern for the good of Other/others epitomized in the person and work of Jesus Christ. Though Christ is a divine person, he became a human being and now perfectly fulfills humanity's covenantal commission to image God. As a human being, he came to know himself at every stage of his human development by means of his developmentally appropriate relatedness to God his Father, supremely, but also to others and to the world around him. In coming to know himself, he simultaneously came to apprehend the proper sequence of his cruciform destiny: he would first be abased and abandoned at the cross, left to suffer and die on behalf of sinful humanity, and only subsequently would he be raised to life and exalted to glory. Christ's commitment to the cross fulfilled the *telos* of his having come to know his unique identity as the Word-

made-flesh. Only as flesh could he die. Only as a human being could he come to a human knowledge of his destiny to die on behalf of his fellow humanity. Thus, Jesus' human self-knowledge was never an end in itself, but rather the means by which he came to know and love both God and other. His covenantal knowledge of self, moreover, now redounds corporately within every member of his Christiform people. So, Bonhoeffer (2001) writes,

> We [Believers] are to be like Christ because we have already been shaped into the image of Christ. Only because we bear Christ's image already can Christ be the "example" whom we follow. Only because he himself already lives his true life in us can we "walk just as he walked" (1 John 2:6), "act as he acted" (John 13:15), "love as he loved" (Eph. 5:2; John 13:34; 15:12), "forgive as he forgave" (Col. 3:13), "have the same mind that was in Jesus Christ" (Phil. 2:5), follow the example he left for us (1 Peter 2:21), and lose our lives for the sake of our brothers and sisters, just as he lost his life for our sake (1 John 3:16). (p. 287)

Christ's human growth in self-knowledge parallels and paradigmatizes the covenantal dynamic whereby believers come to knowledge of self in relation to God and others, primarily within the body of Christ. The eternal life Christ offers to the world entails the re-entry of human beings into a covenantal dynamic lost at the fall—fellowship with God and others wherein self *in se* is restored and (re)formed in union with Christ. Human beings experience this eternal life, in part, as a perichoretic knowing and being known by God and, in the context of Spirit-enabled ecclesial life, by fellow believers. Eternal life, for believers, is more than a state of mind—a status or mode of self-consciousness; it is fundamentally a rebirth or regeneration at an onto-relational level. Nevertheless, a vital transformation of believers' phenomenal selves takes place as believers appropriate, over time and at successively deeper levels, the psychological benefits of their union with Christ. The mental life of believers—including our thoughts and our self-consciousness—comes into conformity with that of Christ (Rom 12:2; E. L. Johnson, 2017). Increasingly, their self- and Other/other-understandings come to image the very "mind of Christ" (1 Cor 2:16; cf. Phil 2:5). Furthermore, like Jesus, this self-consciousness-transforming interaction with God, others, and creation is mediated to us

through the inescapable reality of our embodied existence to the end that we love God and love other mutually and perichoretically.

Toward a Christian Psychology of the Covenantal Self-in-Relation

Epistemic systems, as a generic category, should not be denigrated as mere inventions of the modern mind. If anything, the impulse to organize knowledge into discrete domains—whether theological, anthropological, or otherwise—should more properly be viewed as the fruit of two cosmic realities: the orderly nature of the divine mind that has been imprinted by means of the *imago* upon human nature; and the corroboration of the divine mind discoverable by human beings within his self-revelation. In other words, by the grace of God we have been granted epistemic access to the mind of God—his perception and determinations regarding, primarily, himself, human beings, and the created order—in his word/Word (Barth, 2010; Kuyper, 1968; Van Til, 1969). What we find therein, though presently subject to the limitations of our noetic fallenness and finiteness, Reformational/Augustinian epistemology has ever held to be sufficiently comprehensive for the formulation of human systems of knowledge regarding, minimally, that which is necessary for human redemption and for the living out of our faith in the present age (2 Tim 3:16). Though asystematic in its presentation, God's revelation speaks authoritatively and definitively to the nature and meaning of those realities most apposite to its fundamental telic orientation: directing human beings to the reconciliation God offers through Jesus Christ. In the Scriptures and through the person and work of Christ, believers come to know him and, *mutatis mutandis*, themselves as well. As demonstrated throughout Christian history, divine revelation is not resistant to systematization; on the contrary, the knowledge of God revealed in his word/Word is wholly compatible with our God-given impulse to organize and systematize. If it were not so, then all the efforts of everyone from Irenaeus to Augustine and Calvin to Barth have been hopelessly misguided and ill-fated.

The Bible and the Knowable Self

The task of evangelical Christian *theology* has ever been to rightly divide—i.e., systematize—the word of truth *about God* (cf. 2 Tim 2:15)—who he is, what he is like, his aims and motives, his will and his ways. What evangelical Christian *psychology* attempts is the secondary, contingent task of systematizing Christian dogma—discoverable in and determined by the Scriptures and the person and work of Christ—regarding human beings. Christian psychology, therefore, takes seriously Calvin's supposition that the knowledge of God and self are reciprocal and mutually entailing. If neither task is possible for human beings without the other, though these two epistemic objects are of infinitely disparate grandeur and worth, then neither can they be exclusive of each other. Indeed, to sequester or marginalize inquiry into the nature and worth of the human self is tantamount to its theological inverse since, as Augustine, Calvin, Bonhoeffer, *et alia*, have advised, self-blindness invariably blinds the self to God. Moreover, these two domains of knowledge—of God and the self—are implicated above all others in God's cardinal *telos* for the Bible: his reconciliation of himself to his particular and corporate people, the fulfillment of which agenda will redound in his praise and glory for all eternity (see Phil 2:5ff.; Rev 5:9ff.). What Christian theology attempts must not, therefore, be dissociated from Christian psychology lest the epistemic aims of both be fatally undermined and dichotomized. In the final analysis, we have ample warrant for the discipline of Christian psychology both from epistemological implications of Christology, as well as the doctrine of reconciliation at the very heart of the Scriptures. As with Christian theology, attempts to systematize biblical teaching on the self and self-knowledge should be regarded as successful to the degree with which they comport and cohere with these fundamental doctrines.

What the Bible reveals about individual human beings bears significant epistemic weight in the development of a Christian system of knowledge about the self and its self-knowledge. What we can know of particular selves—including the "me" at

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the center of self-knowledge—follows as an implication of the self-knowledge to which the biblical writers themselves, at times, aspire. Yet, an initial survey of the relevant texts reveals a curious dichotomy fundamental to this quest. Jeremiah, for example, offers a dour assessment of the self's ability to know itself: "the heart"—that psychospiritual organ at the center of biblical anthropology—"is devious" and "perverse," and, as such, it cannot be known (Jer 17:9, NRSV; cf. 10:14; 14:18). Yet, Jesus implies that some degree of self-knowledge must precede discipleship: "[T]ake the log out of your own eye," he counsels, "and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye" (Matt 7:5). What these two passages minimally demonstrate is the provisional nature of any human claim of self-knowledge. Very likely, Jeremiah's intent is to call into question the self-perception of all whose hearts have turned away from God (cf. Jer 17:5). Since Paul implicates all humanity in having sinned and fallen from God, none of us can presume to have overcome this tendency for self-obfuscation (Rom 3:10ff). Presumably, Jeremiah would affirm that, whether any particular self knows itself veridically depends on the degree to which the individual's self-knowledge accords with God's own knowledge of the individual (cf. Jer 3:15). And Jesus's admonition implies the persistent potential for self-blindness and self-deception, even after conversion (Badgett, in press).

Determining God's knowledge of self is certainly problematic. But this ought not utterly confound us since a similar dichotomy stands at the heart of our claims at theological knowledge (see Frame, 1987; Marshall, 1999). On the one hand, the Bible firmly situates the divine mind and nature beyond the reach of human reason and comprehension. God's ways and his thoughts are not like ours (Isa 55:8). The greatness of his splendor is indeed beyond our ability to fathom (Ps 145:3), moving the Apostle to confess, "Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!" (Rom 11:33).[41] Yet,

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[41]Cf. Job 42:1–6; Pss 139:6; 17–18; 147:5; Isa 57:15; 1 Cor 2:10–11; 1 Tim 6:13–16.

paradoxically, the Bible also affirms the knowability of God *in part*.[42] Knowing God,

Jesus affirms, is tantamount to "eternal life" (John 17:3). Tellingly, God's eschatological

agenda includes supplying human beings with "the knowledge of the LORD as the waters

cover the sea" (Isa 11:9; cf. Hab 2:14). Some knowledge of God, however feeble and

faint, is indispensable for salvation (see Luke 1:77; 2 Cor 2:14). Presently, we may, with

Moses, see only the train of his glory (Exod 33:23); with Job, we perceive only the

"outskirts" of his ways (Job 26:14); and, as Paul avers, we peer through the glass dimly

(1 Cor 13:12). But, if the Scriptures are true, then human beings can reasonably claim

mediate knowledge as well as consciousness of God through the working of his Spirit so

long as it accords with the self-revelation of his word/Word. Following from this

inference, the same must also be true of the knowledge of self.

The Phenomenal Self in Scripture

So oft-repeated is the refrain identifying Augustine as the "creator" (Turner,

2008, p. 1) or "inventor" of the inner self (Cary, 2003; cf. Grenz, 2001; LaCugna, 1991;

C. Taylor, 1989) that it begs questioning.[43] Furthermore, if Augustine's notions of

interiority and personal identity arise solely out of his appropriation of Neoplatonic

idealism, they might also be questioned on strictly philosophical grounds.[44] Grenz (2001),

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[42]See 2 Cor 2:14; Eph 1:17; 4:13; Phil 1:9; Col 1:9; 10; 2:2; 3; 3:10; 2 Pet 1:2; 3; 8; 2:20; 3:18; 1 John 2:20.

[43]Cary (2003) contends that Augustine's invention amounts to a Christian mingling of Plotinus and the Bible wherein he conceives of the self as "an inner space where God is present" (p. 31). Charles Taylor (1989) avoids speaking in such stark terms: "It is probable that in every language there are resources for self-reference and descriptions of reflexive thought, action, attitude. . . . But this is not at all the same as making 'self' into a noun, preceded by a definite or indefinite article, speaking of 'the' self, or 'a' self. This reflects something important which is peculiar to our modern sense of agency" (p. 113). Taylor here evinces an inclination to view the self—that is, the individual's personal onto-relational identity or that which in human beings is representative of idiosyncratic personhood—as a mere conceptual or semantic reality to which language and cognition may point, but which may have no ontological basis.

[44]I have endeavored to show that the weakness in Augustine's anthropology is his overreliance on Neoplatonic categories in two key areas: first, his appropriation of an overly dichotomist constitutional perspective on the *imago*; and, second, his eudaimonist ethics. When these are softened, I argue, a picture emerges that better accords with Scripture. In spite of these excesses, Augustine's thinking provides a superb ancillary to the development of a contemporary Christian psychology.

writing from a Christian perspective, recapitulates this historical trope with minimal

nuance:

> The self as we know it today is characterized by interiority—that is, the distinction between 'inside' and 'outside'—together with a sense of personal identity as a unified being. Viewed from this perspective, the self is a modern invention. Yet the stage was set for the emergence of the self much earlier. More particularly, the genesis of the concept lies in the turn inward that began in earnest with Augustine and was augmented by Boethius. (p. 60)

The modern self, it would seem, has its "genesis" in the inwardness of Augustine, and to

a lesser extent Boethius. From this, the conclusion might reasonably follow that the study

of the human self has no epistemological basis within the biblical testimony. If so,

Christian orthopraxy respective to the care of human beings might justifiably reject the

self and self-knowledge as alien concepts. From this we might then be tempted to

disengage from the searching out of "the self" as a strictly post-canonical invention.

"Modern self" would be inescapably redundant. Perhaps, like "Trinity," the self could be

induced theologically from the biblical message, but it would nevertheless require

considerable rethinking. It might also call into question the use of "self" and "inmost

being" in many contemporary English translations.

Nevertheless, the putative merit of these familiar theses regarding the

provenance of the self must be evaluated lest too hasty a judgment be made. Whether

Augustine's appropriation of Neoplatonism led to the "creation" of an inner self which

modernism then canonized and systematized is false if the Bible itself provided his

primary resources.[45] Patently, the burden of proof cannot be satisfied simply by re-

reading Augustine whose writings, without question, are steeped in biblical language and

allusions. We might find that passages of Scripture containing references to the inner life

of human beings suggest something like a proto-self and an implicit psychology (or

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[45]The modern self is a creation of modern Western thinking. But the question posed here is whether its "genesis" is to be found in Augustine, or whether Augustine got it from the Bible. I argue the latter, though plainly the "modern self" is, by definition, not to be found in the Scriptures.

psychologies) that Augustine and later writers were then able to expand upon. Therefore, we must return to the Bible itself with the relevant queries ready at hand. Do the biblical writers, for instance, imply an awareness of the existence of an individualized interior life, even if they do not pursue a deeper self-awareness than did Augustine? Do they engage at times in reflection upon and disclosure of certain psychic dynamics that suggest their identification of an "inner" self functioning as the discrete subjective pole in a multipolar relationality with God and others? Furthermore, does the apparent presumptive normativity of a unified self underlie biblical anthropological perspectives, however rudimentary or asystemic those perspectives may be? If any or all of these questions may be answered, even provisionally, in the affirmative, then contemporary assertions that the self is an extra-canonical "creation" of Augustinian (or Cartesian, or Jamesian, etc.) origin should be reexamined.[46] Furthermore, if suggestions of the self and its reflexive phenomenological counterpart, the empirical self, may be discerned within the Scriptures, it would be difficult to argue that Christians ought to avoid either the scientific systemization of knowledge regarding the human self, or the personal quest for dialogical self-knowledge in relation to God and others.

It bears stating that contemporary English translations of the Bible reflect at least some minimal dependence on an Augustinian notion of the self, evident in their use of the terms, "self" and "inmost being." In many instances, these usages occur in translations whose committees we might expect to be resistant to the influence of modernity or who are otherwise philosophically committed to formal equivalency. So, while the presence of such language may indicate the pervasiveness with which modern terms and concepts have come to dominate Western thinking in ways incommensurate

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[46]To be clear, Trinity is a post-canonical concept; but its epistemological basis in found in the Scriptures, not later writers. The same is true, I argue, with the self. Indeed, Baumeister (1999) argues from a secular perspective that human experience forms the basis of selfhood and observes, "The fact that everyone can use the term 'self' with such ease and familiarity suggests that the concept of selfhood is rooted in some simple universal human experience" (p. 1). Of course, post/modern Western conceptions of the inner, psychological self are a creation of modernity.

with authorial intent, it may also be that the use of "self" may follow from the plain meaning of the contexts, independent of any anachronistic imposition by modern translators upon the original writers' intended meaning(s). Significant Christian scholarship has contributed tremendous insight into the biblical writers' use of terms and concepts. Consideration of these contributions alongside a careful exegetical examination of relevant Old and New Testament contexts is, therefore, in order. Suggestion in the Bible of an inner, phenomenal self as an everyday object of awareness and reflection could supply defeaters for the contemporary impulse to credit Augustine with its "genesis."

Dialectical constitution. The most faithful readings of Scripture have demonstrated that human beings are constituted as a dialectical unity of inner and outer essences (Cooper, 2000; Hoekema, 1994; Wolff, 1974).[47] Despite the limitations of such terms, "body" and "soul" have typically been identified as the metaphysical domains that together compose the embodied and relational existence of human beings. Due to concerns that these terms might have come to reflect a Platonic dualism, significant exegetical, theological, and philosophical effort has been spent demonstrating the validity of a constitutional psychosomatic unity—that is, a unity of *psychē* and *sōma*. The two coinhere in one essential and phenomenological whole for the duration of bodily existence. From this, Cooper (2000), concerned with the Bible's testimony regarding life after death, determines, "Human persons [are] psychophysical unities during life"; only "at death" are they "dichotomized" (p. 195; cf. Robinson, 1952, p. 14). Similarly, Hoekema (1994) concludes that human beings ought not to be conceived of "as consisting of distinct and sometimes separable 'parts,' which are then abstracted from the whole"; rather, "man must be seen in his unity" (p. 203). Nevertheless, although there is a

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[47]Cf. the effort to engage philosophically, scientifically, and theologically with recent challenges to this thesis in, e.g., Crisp, Porter, & Elshof (2016).

oneness to human being, we cannot fail to hold a clear picture of "duality" in humanity's inner and outer existence (see Berkouwer, 1962; Cortez, 2008; Hoekema, 1994).[48] Our embodied existence, in other words, can only be rightly conceived in terms of a dialectic: as Cooper (2000) avers, "Only . . . [a] 'holistic dualism' will tell the whole story" (p. 164).

Inner life in the Old Testament. While a philosophical or theological synthesis of the relevant biblical data reveals a dialectical constitution, clearly, the biblical writers are more concerned with the phenomenological world of everyday life (Anderson, 1982; Hoekema, 1994). Anthropological terminology, then, often functions synecdochically and transposably. In Hebrew, *nephesh*, *rūach*, and *lēb*, for instance, often seem to have the same referent and frequently imply the whole person rather than discrete formal or psychological faculties (A. R. Johnson, 2006; Wolff, 1974).[49] Indeed, even anatomical references may directly correlate with the inner life of human beings. In sum, as Robinson (1952) explains, "all words pertaining to the life and constitution" of human beings can function, at different times, interchangeably:

> The parts of the body are thought of, not primarily from the point of view of their difference from, and interrelation with, other parts, but as signifying or stressing different aspects of the whole man in relation to God. From the standpoint of analytic psychology and physiology the usage of the Old Testament is chaotic: it is the nightmare of the anatomist when any part can stand at any moment for the whole. (p. 16)

The psalmist's *nephesh*. References to the psychospiritual dynamics of human beings abound throughout the Old Testament. The Psalms, in particular, contain

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[48]Reformed objections to the term "dualism" tend to automatically assume, and then reject, the Platonic/Cartesian sense of the word. Cooper (2000) has helpfully shown that this is unnecessary: "[T]he term does not automatically entail a Platonic or Cartesian dualism of essentially different substances. It does not necessarily require adoption of Aristotelian form–matter or Kantian noumenal–phenomenal categories. . . . It does not require viewing body and soul as self-contained, independently functioning entities, at least not during earthly life. These are the sorts of unbiblical dualisms which theologians are rightly worried about" (p. 164).

[49]Unlike Greek (σῶμα), ancient Hebrew has no term for the whole body (Robinson, 1952).

numerous indications of the active reflection of their authors' on personal mental and emotional states. In several of these instances, there are suggestions of an inner "self," though clearly not of the modern variety. By way of example, the psalmist inquires in Psalm 42, "Why are you cast down, O my *nephesh* [נַפְשִׁי], and why are you in turmoil within me?" (vv. 5a, 11a). The term employed here, commonly translated "my soul," is one of many anthropological terms employed as a referent for the whole person (Wolff, 1974; see Waltke, 1980).[50] Evidently, the psalmist is not diagnosing any physiological state or medical condition; this is no sore throat. Rather, he, *himself*, is distressed. He refers to his "downcast" *nephesh*, perhaps in a way similar to the contemporary reference to a "heavy heart." Whereas, it may seem that not the psalmist but his *nephesh* is "downcast"; this is so that self-as-subject may assume the role of counselor or concerned bystander observing self-as-object's own emotional turmoil. In order to accomplish this rhetorical maneuver, the psalmist synecdochizes and personifies a formal constituent, his *nephesh*, as a psychological "space" for dramatic effect (see Ryken, 1993, p. 342). By means of a poetic apostrophe, he inquires after his own depressed and disturbed condition. But, to be clear, he is reflecting on the psychospiritual roots of his own anguished emotional state. And it appears, moreover, that he believes prayer and apostrophic self-talk may lead to a favorable psychotherapeutic outcome (vv. 5b, 11b).

Though for reasons he does not appear to fully understand, the psalmist is grieving over his sense of distance from God, whether geographically, metaphorically, or both (Goldingay, 2007; Schaefer, 2001). Employing vivid poetic imagery, he describes

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[50]In his seminal study of Old Testament anthropology, Wolff (1974) concludes, "Today we are coming to the conclusion that it is only in a very few passages that the translation 'soul' corresponds to the meaning of *nepeš*" (p. 10). Schwarz (2013) identifies a significant reason "soul" can be a "misleading" gloss: "When the 'I' becomes synonymous with *nefesh*, it shows that humans do not have a *nefesh* but as living beings they are a *nefesh*" (pp. 6–7). The psalmist's *nephesh*, in other words, is him*self*. This accords with Waltke (1980) who holds that "in some contexts *nepesh* is best rendered by 'person,' 'self,' or more simply by the personal pronoun" (p. 590). Depending on the context, A. R. Johnson (2006), suggests that *nephesh* may be understood as "a *pathetic* [i.e., in the sense of deeply emotional] periphrasis for . . . a pronoun" (p. 18, author's emphasis).

the present activity of his *nephesh*: it "pants" (v. 1), and it "thirsts" to be near God again

(v. 2). His *nephesh*, moreover, is being "poured out," as are his tears, over this traumatic

separation (vv. 3–4). In other words, the psalmist has directly linked the unseen activity

of his *nephesh* with his emotional distress, which, notably, has been triggered by a

troubling relational dynamic. He perceives a distance between himself and God whose

presence he directly associates with "the house of God" in Jerusalem (v. 4). "God is in

the temple," Goldingay (2007) asserts, "and the problem is that the suppliant cannot get

there. There was no problem about God's location; the problem lay in the suppliant's

location" (p. 24). "[A]lienated from God" due to an imposed separation, his grief is acute

(Schaefer, 2001, p. 109).

In this context, *nephesh* can best be understood as a reference to an

individual's center of subjectivity—the seat and source of human emotional and spiritual

life (Schaefer, 2001; see A. R. Johnson, 2006; Waltke, 1980). More specifically, as Wolff

(1974) avers, in Psalm 42, *nephesh* denotes "the self of the needy life, thirsting with

desire" (p. 25). The psalmist's *nephesh*, not entirely unlike Descartes' "soul" or James'

"I-self," bears his unique personal identity.[51] Yet, with the added allusions to its somatic

and relational aspects, *nephesh* in this case should be taken to refer to his whole person,

that is, his embodied, covenantal self (Goldingay, 2007).[52] Moreover, what he discerns

about his phenomenal "self" is instructive: a reflexive analysis of his *nephesh* has

revealed something of watery "abyss" (תְּהוֹם; v. 7)—unfathomable and inscrutable as the

deep waters, raging and threatening to overwhelm him (Schökel, 1976, p. 7).[53] Like

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[51]Kaiser & Lohse (1981) observe that *nephesh* can also refer to that which remains of human persons after the death of the body (see, e.g., Ps 49:15).

[52]In vv. 1, 2, Goldingay (2007) glosses נַפְשִׁי with "my whole person" before reverting to the standard translation, "my soul," in subsequent verses.

[53]Water metaphors predominate in Psalms 42 and 43 (Schökel, 1976). Notably, the Hebrew for "cast down" (יחשׁ; lit. "to dissolve") and "[to be] in turmoil" (המה; lit. "to be turbulent") can both bear metaphorical meanings having to do with water (Koehler & Baumgartner, 2002). Schökel (1976) rejects a strictly naturalistic interpretation of תְּהוֹם as "old-fashioned" (cf. NET), preferring instead to see the "two contrasting images of water" as central to a highly subjectivist interpretation of these psalms. The life-

God's ways, it would seem, the psalmist's *nephesh* is to a certain degree inscrutable (cf. Ps 19:12; Jer 17:9). Yet, though he seems not to fully understand his distress, he does list a number of circumstantial triggers, all of which have served to compound his sense that God has "forgotten" him (vv. 9–10).

In his classic treatise on Psalm 42:11, Puritan pastoral theologian Richard Sibbes (1658) discerns an underlying psychopathology of sin in the writer's self-disclosure. He determines that the psalmist's disquiet is the result of some sin-borne interruption in his fellowship with God.[54] Though the writer discloses no such personal lapse in the present context, Sibbes links what he holds to King David's "unruly passion" with either "the guilt of those two foul sins of murder and adultery" (cf. Ps 51:4), or else, if "not these actual sins," then "the sin of his nature, the root itself" (p. 124; cf. Ps 51:5). The psalmist, he concludes, carries "a nature . . . subject to break out continually upon any occasion," one that exists within every regenerate person "from the remainder of old Adam within" (pp. 124–125). Working out from his exegetical prejudice, Sibbes offers a psychological model of the self in which psychospiritual distress is exclusively linked to sin:

> [W]e must conceive in a godly man, a double self, one which must be denied, the other which must deny. . . . It is a good trial of a man's condition to know what he esteems to be himself. A godly man counts the inner man, the sanctified part, to be himself, whereby he stands in relation to Christ. . . . That which most troubles a good man in all troubles is himself, so far as he is unsubdued. (pp. 102–103)

Sibbes, in other words, discerns a phenomenologically bifurcated self in the writer. His diagnosis for this "double self" is to bring that which is "unsubdued" into right "relation to Christ."

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giving "streams of water" (v. 1) have become, for the psalmist, a torrential "roar of waterfalls" (v. 7) indicating "a dramatic tension in the soul" (p. 7).

[54]In similar fashion to Sibbes, Augustine (2012a) correlates and applies the psalmist's emotional distress to his own experience of conviction: "Is it [Augustine's *nephesh*] disquieted on account of God? It is on my own account it is disquieted. By the Unchangeable it was revived; it is by the changeable it is disquieted. I know that the righteousness of God remaineth; whether my own will remain stedfast [*sic*], I know not" (p. 135).

We may justifiably question whether sufficient textual warrant exists for the conclusion that the psalmist's distress stems from sin. Certainly, whether we concur with Sibbes that some specific sin or even a general sinful nature lie at the root of "all troubles" in human beings remains to be seen. Might we not just as easily conclude that the writer, in this case, is desperately homesick?[55] Having suffered the persecution of "adversaries" who, with their taunts, inflict "a deadly wound in my bones," he has clearly become discouraged (v. 10). Since the psalmist does not specify any sinful act or disposition, Sibbes' inclination (along with Augustine, 2012a) to credit him with such may, in fact, reveal more about the degree to which a Stoic regard for emotion had influenced his anthropology (cf. Elliott, 2006; Roberts, 2007). His suggestion that the human self must be "subdued" certainly comports with a non-cognitive theory of emotion (see Strongman, 2003). Irrespective of its source, whether due to sin or some other, morally benign cause, the psalmist's lament reveals a profound acuity of self-perception. Though he recognizes various instrumental triggers—his enemies' persecution and the veiled presence of God—he nonetheless looks inward for the cause of his psychological unrest. He exhorts his *nephesh*, "Hope in God; for I shall again praise him" (vv. 5b, 11b), deploying an essentially dialogical means of buoying his flagging spirit. By looking ahead to the reunion with God and with the people of God that likely awaits him in Jerusalem, he encourages himself with confidence in God's coming deliverance to press on. Inarguably, his hope for psychospiritual rest and satisfaction arises exclusively from his anticipation of appearing before God (see v. 2; cf. Ps 4:8). His suffering, in other words, has arisen due to a relational breech—"the torment of isolation" (Wolff, 1974, p. 218)—he longs to see restored. Whether this fellowship has been interrupted due to sin or

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[55]So, Wolff (1974): "In Pss. 42/43 the speaker is one who has been carried away into a foreign land. In his forsakenness he misses particularly the services of the congregation. When in his loneliness he 'thirsts' for God, this means in concrete terms that he longs to take part once more in the pilgrimages to the sanctuary, in order there to find the assurance of the God who is his joy" (p. 218).

geography, the suppliant's "self" depends for its wellbeing on his perceived proximity to Israel's God.

Lēb and _qereb_ and the inner self. In Jeremiah 4:14 two additional anatomical terms carry similarly clear psychospiritual connotations. In the midst of an extended pronunciation of pending judgment, the prophet utters the following plea, "Jerusalem, wash your heart [לִבֵּךְ] clean of wickedness so that you may be saved. How long shall your evil schemes lodge within you [בְּקִרְבֵּךְ; lit. in your inner parts]?" (NRSV). While _lēb_ has a clear anatomical referent—the heart—_qereb_ is a more generic term signifying the internal organs, bowels, or, perhaps, "the cavity for the inner organs" (Wolff, 1974, p. 63). In the present passage, however, the two are employed essentially synonymously as the seat of sinful human motivations. The latter is typically rendered with a second-person pronoun, "you," in English translations, demonstrating its clear connection with the whole person. Evidently, Jeremiah does not believe the inhabitants of Jerusalem should interpret his plea concretely. Evil schemes do not become "lodged" within the viscera. Moreover, the washing of the heart that he exhorts comes through repentance. The prophet is calling the people of God to turn from their sinful ways and to seek the Lord's salvation.

Although they can also denote a concrete, anatomical referent, terms such as _nephesh_, _lēb_ and _qereb_ may often, justifiably, be interpreted as forerunners of the modern self. Anderson (1982), for instance, calls _lēb_, "the center of the subjective self" (p. 211). As the present context demonstrates, _qereb_ may serve interchangeably. In either case, the writer identifies an internal locus and assigns it metonymic significance. In other instances we find similar rhetorical connections between internal organs and psychospiritual states: Jeremiah's "liver" is "poured out" in grief (Lam 2:11); Asaph's "heart" became "embittered" (Ps 73:21); the king's "kidneys" rejoice over the wisdom of his son (Prov 23:17). For the ancient Hebrew poetic writers generally, "the inside of the body . . . is of less interest anatomically and physiologically than psychologically"

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(Wolff, 1974, p. 63).

Semitic anthropology may have been functionally holistic, but evidently Hebrew writers possessed the linguistic means for referring to the inner and outer aspects of personhood using metaphor. As Cooper (2000) points out, the first human being was composed of a combination of "dust" and "life-breath," the latter having come directly from the out-breathing of God (p. 48; see Gen 2:7; cf. Job 32:8; Isa 42:5). The Lord searches the inner aspects of the embodied self (Prov 20:27; Ps 139:23). On the other hand, that which is physical or substantial in human nature concerns God significantly less (1 Sam 16:7), except as an extension of covenantal personhood—one's being-in-relation to God, to others, and to creation. Finally, depending on the individual's orientation respective to God, good or evil deeds will arise out of the inner, psychological self.[56] Crucially, however, the distance between the ontological dualism of Platonism and the "functional holism" of Semitic anthropology is nevertheless quite vast (Cooper, 2000, p. 47; see also Robinson, 1952).

New Testament interiority and the Spirit of God. When Old Testament references to anthropological constitution suggest a distinction between human beings' inner and outer existence, it is frequently subtle. By using anatomic metaphors for the immaterial aspect of human beings or representing it functionally,[57] Semitic idiomatic reference to personal subjectivity tends to stress the holistic embodied nature of the self. Nevertheless, as the foregoing discussion of anthropological terms indicates, subjectivity is often depicted as an internal reality—an inward extension of the psychospiritual and relational aspects of personal being. In the New Testament, by contrast, perspectives on

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[56]See Job 1:5; Pss 10:13; 14:1; 28:3; 55:15; 78:18; 85:8; 125:4; Eccl 9:3; Jer 5:24; 32:40; Ezek 14:3; Zeph 1:12.

[57]As in the Semitic usage of non-anatomical referents for the person such as *rūach* (spirit) or *neshama* (breath).

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inner and outer existence are generally more pronounced.[58] This may, in fact, be due to the expanded anthropological vocabulary available in Koine Greek (see Robinson, 1952). In any event, in numerous passages throughout these first-century Christian texts, writers display an implicit awareness of and sensitivity to subjective interiority as a universal experience attendant to individual human existence.

If, as Grenz (2001) concludes, contemporary notions of self are distinguished only by their emphasis on "interiority—that is, the distinction between 'inside' and 'outside'—together with a sense of personal identity as a unified being" (p. 60), we should expect little to no suggestion of personal, interior "space" in the teachings of Christ.[59] It would be historically anachronistic to expect such a concept. Yet, this is exactly what we find in a few key texts. In John 14, for example, woven into Jesus' discourse to his disciples on the eve of his crucifixion he makes several telling remarks. After affirming the perichoretic union the Son has with the Father (vv. 10–11), Jesus describes a similar union in which believers will also participate with the coming of the Holy Spirit (see Köstenberger & Swain, 2008, p. 146). The "Spirit of truth abides with you," Jesus confirms, "and he will be in you" (v. 17). In typical Johannine fashion, the referent of divinity shifts with little to no warning: "I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you." Evidently, "the Spirit of truth" will be identical to "the Spirit of Christ"

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[58]Calvin (2008) held that body and soul (or spirit) are distinct substances in the, mostly, Platonic sense. Some modern theologians maintain this position for various reasons (Beck & Demarest, 2005; Moreland & Rae, 2000). But, Ladd (1993) concludes that, from the perspective of New Testament anthropology, "body, soul, and spirit are not different, separable faculties of man but different ways of viewing the whole man" (p. 457). Cooper (2000) concurs adding, "Synecdoche is a common occurrence in the New Testament, as it is in the Old. Often anthropological part-terms are plausibly interpreted as referring to the person as a whole. They might even be translated properly as personal pronouns" (p. 97). So, for example, Jesus warns his disciples not to fear those who can "kill the body but not the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matt 10:28). Jesus is not suggesting a dichotomy of substance but of orientation, which is to say, "an ethical-religious antithesis" (Cooper, 2000, p. 99). A faulty interpretation of this passage might conclude that God cares more about "soul" than "body." To the contrary, Jesus simply means that believers should be less concerned with pleasing their fellow human beings than God. Whereas that former can "kill the body but not the soul," the latter can condemn whole persons—"*both* soul and body"— eternally.

[59]Grenz's limited qualification of the modern self may be the source of the confusion about whether Augustine can reasonably be credited with its genesis (cf. C. Taylor, 1989).

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(see Ferguson, 1997). "On that day," Jesus continues, "you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you (ἐν ὑμῖν; vv. 18, 20).[60] When one of his disciples inquires as to the manner in which Jesus will be present with his disciples yet unseen by the world (v. 22), Jesus responds, "If anyone [ἐάν τις] loves me, he will keep my word; and my father will love him [αὐτὸν], and we will come to him [αὐτὸν] and make our abode with him [παρ' αὐτῷ]" (v. 23, NASB).[61] In other words, the world will not see Jesus because he will only "manifest" himself within the internal "abode" of individual believers (Michaels, 2010).[62] This cannot be a reference to the parousia, since Jesus indicates here that he will only be "seen" by believers (Keener, 2010; Michaels, 2010; contra Carson, 1990; cf. 1 John 2:28; 3:2).[63] Rather, the event Jesus predicts in this passage—the outpouring of the Spirit—would occur not long after his resurrection (cf. John 20:22).[64] And the coming union of believers with the Spirit will mean that Christ "dwells *in* them, not merely *with* them" (Ferguson, 1997, p. 71, author's emphasis).[65]

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[60]While the plural, ἐν ὑμῖν, might plausibly be translated "among you" or "in your midst" (cf. ἐντὸς ὑμῶν in Luke 17:21), the whole thrust of the passage suggests that Jesus means "within each of you individually."

[61]The NRSV corporatizes its rendering of the pronouns in this verse ("they/them"), rather than accurately translating the singular pronouns found in the Greek text. Carson (1990) clarifies that the Spirit indwells "the person who so loves and obeys Jesus" (p. 504).

[62]Should the verb for "manifest" (ESV, ASV, RSV), ἐμφανίζω, be alternately translated "disclose/reveal/show" (NIV, NET, NRSV, HCSB, NASB), thereby reducing any potential mystical overtones (cf. the various glosses offered in Danker [2001])? It would seem that Judas (not Iscariot) sought clarification on Jesus' meaning (v. 22): How would Jesus limit his appearing to just his followers and not the whole world? In other words, what did Jesus mean when he said, ἐμφανίσω . . . ἐμαυτόν? Jesus' answer to him is noteworthy: he promises to come, with the Father, to the individual believer and "we will make our home in him" (v. 23). In other words, Jesus exegetes his own use of ἐμφανίζω with very concrete language: believers will "know" him because he will be "in" them (v. 17). This certainly suggests much more than that he will grant insight as to his identity or, even, special epistemic access to saving faith. More than this, the triune God will "manifest" himself by taking up residence within human individuals in much the same way Israel's God dwelt formerly in the tabernacle/temple (cf. John 2:19, 21; 1 Cor 3:16; 6:19; 2 Cor 6:16). Any ostensibly mystical overtones, therefore, appear to be present in the original text (see Keener, 2010, p. 975; Michaels, 2010, p. 787).

[63]Carson (1990) collapses the timeframe of the Son's appearing to the disciples into a single eschatological parousia that is nonetheless "inaugurated" with his postresurrection appearances (pp. 502ff.). Unlike Carson, Keener (2010) does not dissociate Jesus' appearing from his "continuing presence among his community" (p. 975).

[64]Evidently, Jesus' Spirit will dwell *within* believers in some way analogous to his having dwelt bodily *alongside* his disciples during his earthly ministry (v. 25; Michaels, 2010, pf. 790ff.).

[65]So, Keener (2010): "[H]ere Jesus may play . . . on the image of a new temple or the

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Jesus indicates that the indwelling Spirit, sent from the Father and breathed out by the Son, will dwell within believers. But where? In what manner of "space" does the Spirit take up residence? In a second illustrative passage recording the glorified Christ's to the church at Laodicea (Rev 3:14–22), we encounter similar language. Having become "lukewarm" (v. 16), the believers in Laodicea are instructed by the exalted Lord in the appropriate means of repentance:

> Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent. Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone [ἐάν τις] hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him [εἰσελεύσομαι πρὸς αὐτὸν] and eat with him, and he with me (vv. 19–20).[66]

Apparently, Jesus intends that their repentance should include allowing him back into their midst. Yet, as in John 14, he especially seeks entrance into *individual* believers, as well as the broader community.[67] Once again, we may reasonably ask where Christ, by means of his Spirit, dwells within individual believers. If there is no interior "space" assumed by these passages, whether literal or metaphorical,[68] then where has Christ taken up residence? Where do believers "eat" with him and him with them? How can such

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eschatological promise of God dwelling among his people. . . . But whereas most of the biblical promises and early Jewish images about the Shekinah applied to Israel as a whole, Jesus' promise applies to the experience of individual believers. Effectively, Jesus' hearers may have envisioned the Jerusalem temple . . . dwelling in the believer" (p. 976).

[66]A common enough verb, εἰσέρχομαι, can simply mean come in or go out—of a building (Luke 19:7), a crowd of people (Acts 19:30), or the kingdom of God (Mark 10:23). Notably, it is used to describe the action of Satan on Judas when the latter received bread handed to him by Jesus (John 13:27). According to Danker (2001), it can also refer to "transcendent and moral–spiritual phenomena," i.e., the "spiritual coming of God" (p. 394).

[67]One can only imagine the perpetual frustration and discouragement individual Christians would suffer if Christ's presence could be excluded by, say, apathetic or unconverted church members. Any suggestion that Christ only dwells "among" and not "within" might imply this possibility. The NRSV's avoidance of singular pronouns in John 14:23 is, therefore, problematic. The "best" exegetical alterative, according to Mounce (1997), is to view such references as "personal and present rather than ecclesiastical and eschatological" (p. 114).

[68]By *literal* space I do not mean *physical*. The question is whether Christ through the Spirit *actually* resides "within" believers or merely intends that they take comfort from his metaphorical (i.e., non-actual) "presence." In other words, should we only *imagine* him to be so near to us that there is in fact no separation between us? Of course, a metaphorical indwelling would bring small comfort, but it would still suggest that the New Testament writers were operating with a tacit understanding of an interiorized and unique personal identity. On the other hand, if the triune God has truly taken up residence within (and among) each and every believer through the perichoretic presence of the Spirit, then a unique, interior "space" is *real*—irrespective of our ignorance regarding its nature or composition.

passages be understood without granting that their writers understood themselves individually and particularly to be vessels of God's presence? Moreover, if human beings are vessels,[69] as the apostle Paul maintains (see Rom 9:21–23; 1 Tim 1:20–21; cf. 2 Cor 6:16), does this not also suggest an psychospiritual interstice wherein the presence of God may come to dwell within us?

Paul's use of self language. In turning now to Paul, we encounter some of the most compelling evidence for a pre-Augustinian, canonical sensitivity to an "inner" self (see Chamblin, 1993). Indeed, of all the New Testament writers, Paul affords the greatest attention to psychological matters (Beck, 2002; Theissen, 1987). Before proceeding with observations on Paul's view of the self, however, a word of caution is in order. Modern theologians have wrestled mightily in determining what Paul knew or believed about the self (see Becker, 1993; Bultmann, 2007; Conzelmann, 1974; Gundry, 2005; Käsemann, 1971; Stendahl, 1963).[70] At the root of much of the debate stands the hermeneutical concern to read and apply Paul appropriately. So, Dunn (2006), for example, warns of the "danger" of bringing our "unexamined presuppositions about how the person is constituted and read them into what Paul says" (p. 53). We must resist the temptation, therefore, to anachronistically project contemporary anthropological notions into Paul's first-century thinking (see Stendahl, 1963). The Scriptures, after all, are the word of God; they must be permitted to direct our thinking even as we faithfully seek understanding (Vanhoozer, 1998). So, great care must be exercised in drawing anthropological and

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[69]In his rebuke of Pharisaical spirituality, Jesus explicitly references an inner/outer ethicospiritual distinction in human beings using the metaphors of a cup (i.e., vessel) and a tomb (Matt 23:25–28; Luke 11:39–41).

[70]Axton (2015) discerns three basic perspectives on the Pauline view of the self and its relation to itself (or reductively to the "body," $\sigma\tilde{\omega}\mu\alpha$), to others, and to God. These three perspectives Axton associates, respectively, with Bultmann (2007), Käsemann (1971), and Becker (1993), each of whom emphasizes one of the three relations over against the others. Axton rightly discerns that "the three positions are not so much opposed as different facets of a capacity that sets man simultaneously into communication and confrontation with himself (Bultmann), others (Käsemann) and God (Becker)" (p. 159n13). His conclusion is amenable with my own thesis regarding the onto-relational, embodied human self.

psychological implications from the apostle's writings.[71]

　　While disagreements abound regarding any putatively Pauline perspective, notably, all modern writers agree that Paul *has* a perspective on the self, albeit one that is rudimentary and asystematic. Arguably, this conclusion is inescapable. Self language, after all, abounds in Paul.[72] As Jewett (1971) notes, Paul's use of terminology is often polemical rather than systematic. In other words, when he appears to employ Hellenistic anthropological conceptions, he is actually reformulating and redefining them according to a Semitic framework. So, in Paul,

> [O]ne finds the reflections of a single gnostic conception of the "inner man" as the pneumatic core of a person, enabled by its divine nature to receive and comprehend the divine wisdom, but held in bondage by the material body. Since Paul must reshape this concept to meet the requirements of his argument, . . . he does not arrive at a single clear definition [of the self]. (p. 460)

Nevertheless, in speaking of human beings, Paul "always employs the grammar of persons: the 'I,' the self, the core person" (Cooper, 2000). Notably, he does so with minimally dualist overtones: "If Paul is a dualist," Cooper concludes, "he is strictly speaking a self–body, person–body, or ego–body dualist, not a soul–body dualist" (p. 156).[73] Murray (1968) holds that Paul's inner self amounts to "that which is most determinative in his personality . . . what is central in will and affection" (p. 257). Gaffin (2013) concurs adding that Paul's "'inner self' or 'heart' has in view who I am at the core of my being, in my *pre-functional* disposition" (p. 63, author's emphasis). Yet, crucially,

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[71]I am optimistic, along with Osborne (2006), at the "possibility of delineating the author's intended meaning and then recontextualizing that meaning for the contemporary context" (p. 498). To this end, I will employ Chamblin's (1993) basic "two step" hermeneutic for reading Paul. The first step is "to make him and his writings rather than ourselves the center of gravity. That is, . . . we must make an effort to enter into his world and discern his perspective on reality." The second, then, "is to share Paul's experience of reality" (p. 33). When it comes to the Scriptures, this deceptively complex hermeneutical maneuver can only be accomplished with divine aid and assistance.

[72]I assume Pauline authorship for the thirteen epistles that bear his name and that have historically been attributed to him.

[73]Cooper (2000), in defending a minimalist dualist anthropology, charges Calvin with "philosophical prejudice" in his uncritical appropriation of Augustine's Platonist reading of Paul (p. 95; cf. Calvin, 2008, pp. 104ff.).

Paul holds that God's reconciliation of persons to himself, though limited for the present

age to the inner aspects of the self, will be applied to whole persons in the age to come:

> [W]hat is now true of the Christian as inner self is not (yet) true *for* the outer self.
> However, for the present, that is, until Christ returns, that is true only *within* the
> outer self. It is true only in the outer self for which the inner self is inner. . . . [W]hat
> is true for believers is not yet true *for* their bodies, but for now, until death and
> looking toward the future resurrection of the body, it is true only *in* the body. (pp.
> 63–64)

Paul's inner self, in other words, amounts to the subjective center of human

personhood—the locus of psychological function and ethicospiritual agency. At no point

does Paul suggest, as Augustine later would, that the inner self is equivalent to any

metaphysical substance (i.e., soul). The self cannot be entailed within a strictly

constitutive framework. Yet, neither is the self a construct or form of the mind; it exists

independently of any consciousness or awareness we may possess.

The Nature of the Pauline "Inner Self"

Although Paul employs the language of an "inner self" (ἔσω ἄνθρωπον) in

several places (2 Cor 4:16; Eph 3:16; Rom 7:22), one of them is particularly noteworthy.

According to Romans 7:7ff, the apostle has discovered a confounding dichotomy in his

own "inner self" (v. 22), his consternation having, at some point, reached a fevered pitch

(see v. 24).[74] He explains this schism in terms of his subjective sense of himself: "I do not

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[74]A historically and culturally sensitive review of the various interpretations of Paul's "I" in
this passage will, no doubt, reveal a correlation between interpreters' respective readings of this passage
and their perspectives on human nature. To wit, Augustine and the early Reformers, with their dim view of
human ability, held that Paul's "I" refers not merely to Jews under the law of Moses but to all people,
himself before all others (cf. 1 Tim 1:15; see Packer, 1999). Modern exegetes, on the other hand, have
increasingly tended toward a more optimistic reading of the passage, arguing the "I" in Paul's discussion is
either retrospective—referring to his experience pre-conversion—or rhetorical—in reference to the
condition of all "under the Law" or all "in Adam" (see, e.g., Bultmann, 2007; Fee, 2009; Witherington,
2005). Moo (1996) rightly concludes that exegesis alone cannot determine the referent of Paul's "I" with
absolute certainty, though he nonetheless reifies the retrospective/rhetorical reading. Schreiner (1998), on
the other hand, determines that "the arguments are so finely balanced" between the various perspectives
that the best option is to conclude that "Paul does not intend to distinguish between believers from
unbelievers in this text" (p. 390; see also Seifrid, 1992, pp. 226–244). In other words, he holds that Paul
intends in this passage to personalize the universal human experience of double-mindedness respective to
the "good" commands of God, and then proceeds to direct believers to the freedom from condemnation
under the law and enslavement to the flesh offered through perichoretic union with Christ (see Rom 8:1ff.).

understand my own actions," he confesses bleakly (v. 15). Paul further reports his past renunciation of sinful concupiscence in the interests of desiring only that which God's law pronounces to be "holy and righteous and good" (v. 11). Nevertheless, he acknowledges that the command[75] has elicited within him "all kinds of covetousness" (v. 8).[76] The underlying cause of this internal contradiction cannot be found in Paul's thinking about the law—he holds it to be good—or his avowals and intentions concerning the law—he has determined to do what is good. He, therefore, deduces from the discrepancy between intent and outcome that some other "law" must be at work within his "members" (v. 23)—that is, in his "flesh" (σάρξ, v. 25)—preventing him from making a simple, conscious decision to do the good he desires to do. While in his "mind" (νοῦς), Paul desires to subject himself to the "law of God" (νόμος θεοῦ), in his "flesh" he remains intractably bound to this second, persistent tendency he identifies as the "law of sin" (νόμος ἁμαρτίας).[77] Paul's internal conflict, moreover, has resulted in tremendous psychological distress (v. 24). In coming to terms with this nomic conflict within himself, Paul discovers that his "I" is far better equipped to manage and overcome sinful desires with the help of Christ's Spirit (8:4).

Paul's ultimate paraenetic aim in Romans 7 is to point believers toward the reality of life lived in and through the power of Spirit (Fee, 2009). Apart from the

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[75]The verbal stem, חמד, employed in the Mosaic prohibition, "You shall not covet [לֹא תַחְמֹד]" (Exod 20:17) is also found in the description of the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden as "desirable for making one wise [וְנֶחְמָד . . . לְהַשְׂכִּיל]" (Gen 3:6). Since the concupiscence of humanity's first parents *preceded* their fall, it seems unlikely that Paul holds believers to be immune in the present age from this tendency (along these lines, note Paul's conditional statement in Rom 8:9). Witherington (2005) observes the double allusion in Romans 7, yet rejects any connection with Paul's ongoing experience of inner conflict following conversion, opting instead for a strictly rhetorical reading of the passage.

[76]Moo (1996) notes a "qualitative nuance" in Paul's use of "all kinds of covetousness [πᾶσαν ἐπιθυμίαν]" that likely includes the sinful desire of every manner of object upon which human beings might cast their gaze (p. 436). All such desire is the legacy of the first fall into illicit concupiscence in the garden (cf. Jas 1:14–15).

[77]Cf. Col 3:18 where Paul refers to the "fleshly mind" (τοῦ νοὸς τῆς σαρκὸς) of the individual who boasts of visions or encounters with angels. As has already been mentioned, Paul employs anthropological referents asystematically.

supervening influence of the Spirit, Paul warns, individual human beings are incapable of accessing and exercising control over certain aspects of the inner self.[78] This dissociated facet of his inner self Paul refers to as "sin" due to its incorrigibility respective to the good law of God (v. 17). By referencing sinful desire—covetousness—he likely implicates humanity's pre-Fall lapse into autonomous ambition and self-sufficiency (Gen 3:6; cf. 1 Tim 2:14). It was unrequited concupiscence that led to estrangement from God in the first place. Paul observes that this inclination has not wholly disappeared from every aspect or facet of his inner self. In other words, there are times when *he*—that is the self he wills not to be (cf. Kierkegaard, 1980)—desires what he knows he ought not. The pervasive and consistent inability of Paul's "I" to fare better than his first parents suggests a universal human tendency toward autonomy, which, for unbelievers, only serves to compound the breach in the image bearer's relationship to God. With believers, on the other hand, sinful desire does not suggest any deficiency in the presence or potency of the Spirit; rather, its stubborn presence must stem from lingering divisions in the phenomenal self—or its psychological working out in the believer's self-consciousness—that must be repaired in and through the believer's active participation in the sanctifying work of Christ.

  That redeemed individuals all too often observe contradictions in personal cognition, affection, and volition is, arguably, self-evident (Packer, 1999). Paul's personal reflections along these lines are instructive. In verse 17, for example, he differentiates his true "I"—the self who loves the law of God—from the one who sins

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[78]Remarkably, Fee (2009) determines against all internal evidence that "within Paul's argumentation [in Rom 7—8] there is no hint of an internal struggle within the believer's heart" (p. 821). He comes to this conclusion by presuming that the Pauline dichotomy between σάρξ and πνεῦμα can be imposed without qualification on the two basic human constituencies—the regenerate and the unregenerate—in spite of, and in apparent contradiction to, Paul's already/not yet vision of the believer's inaugurated but still to be consummated life in Christ. Fee presumes from this, "It is not possible, therefore, that from Paul's perspective such a Spirit person would be . . . unable to do the good she or he wants to do" (p. 822). The inescapable logical consequence of Fee's exegetical pre-commitment is his inference that Paul "may not have addressed the issue of [believers'] personal struggle with sin" (p. 822n41).

against his express desires and commitments: "[I]f I do what I don't want, . . . it is no longer me doing it, but sin that lives in me" (vv. 16–17, NET). According to Murray (1968), here Paul "appears to dissociate his own self from the sin committed" (p. 263). In other words, it is not that Paul is unaware or unconscious of his sinful behavior (Schreiner, 1998), but rather of the source within himself from which it issues forth. In the apostle's own judgment, his inner self is "split" (Dunn, 1988, p. 388).[79] He is able to draw this psychological inference on the basis of the dichotomy in his thinking and acting from moment to moment. Though he has resolved himself to living wholly unto God, there are times when errant thoughts, desires, and behaviors belie this commitment. Paul concludes that some aspect of himself which he cannot see, and of which he has no firsthand knowledge, is nevertheless active in him (cf. Ps 19:12). As the flickering of starlight suggests the gravitational interference of unseen celestial bodies, so Paul's constancy and devotion to the good remain intractably curtailed by some internal dynamic—"sin"—the source of which he ascribes to the "flesh."

By referencing the split in his redeemed self, Paul affirms the diachronic, eschatological bearing of salvation. Packer (1999) confirms that all Christians, for the duration of the present age, will "have a two-sided experience" characterized by the influence of two internal powers, "the uplifting of the Spirit and the downdrag of sin" (p. 78; see Owen, 2006). This "unabolished antinomy" in the believer Delitzsch (1885) effects a "moral separation" (p. 418) between the eschatological wholeness of the self *in se* and the phenomenal self that persists in a state of internal conflict and division.[80]

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[79]Dunn (1988) further determines that the reason for the split in Paul's "I" is that every redeemed self "belongs to [two] epochs at the same time," namely, "the era of the flesh and the era of the Spirit" (p. 388).

[80]Sin "lives within [οἰκοῦσα]" (7:17) the sin-estranged person and rules uncontested, as a "law" unto itself (v. 23). By way of contrast, Paul says that the Spirit of God "lives in [οἰκεῖ]" (8:9) the one who has been reconciled to Christ, thus abolishing the "law of sin" and ratifying the "law of the Spirit" (8:2). Nevertheless, although sin's authority has been overthrown in the eschatological sense, believers can still "quench" (1 Thess 5:19) and "grieve" (Eph 4:30) the Holy Spirit. When the Christian sins, he or she is "in the flesh [ἐν σαρκὶ]"; only by operating "in the Spirit [ἐν πνεύματι]" can believers eschew the influence of "the flesh" and avoid falling back under a rule of law that no longer applies to them (Rom 8:9, 12–13).

Again, there is no suggestion of any deficiency in God's holiness or his ability to strengthen the believer against the influence of sin. On the contrary, the notion of antinomy explicates the complex inner workings of the divided self—one that is eschatologically whole in Christ, yet presently conflicted and divided. Believers are nevertheless being made whole in their phenomenal resemblance to Christ by the ongoing co-operative agency of self and Spirit. Moreover, by referring in this passage to his remaining sin as not-me, Paul can, in a sense, "dissociate himself from the disowned, but nonetheless overpowering, dynamics of lawlessness" stubbornly remaining in his inner being (Lake, 2005, p. 468). Like a recalcitrant child, Paul's "flesh" simply will not submit to the rule of his "mind," though by this statement Paul does not seek to exonerate himself. In grasping at Paul's meaning, Calvin (1995) determines, "This is not the entreaty of a man who is excusing himself, as if he were blameless. . . . It is a declaration of the extent of the disagreement between his spiritual affection and his flesh" (p. 151). In other words, Paul has identified a split in his self, some part of which has yet to be fully reconciled to Christ, despite his conscious and authentic commitment to the will of God. This part he designates with the polemical pejorative "flesh."[81] The solution to this impasse in his schizoid self, the apostle concludes, can never arise autocentrically; his self is, left to its own devices, "wretched"[82] and ethically impotent. Deliverance, Paul concludes, can only come *from above*.

Either way, believers will continue to struggle, as Paul suggests, in their attempts to bring the *whole self* under the rule of the "law of the Spirit."

[81]In his letter to the Colossians, Paul even more graphically illustrates the putting off of the "flesh" with an allusion to circumcision (2:11–13). There he speaks of regeneration as the removal of "the foreskin of your flesh" ([ἡ] ἀκροβυστία τῆς σαρκὸς ὑμῶν, v. 13) suggesting the once-for-all redemptive act of Christ by which believers, through faith, have been made whole and clean by God (O'Brien, 2000). Yet, again, Paul's pastoral aim in this passage, indeed the whole epistle, is to call believers to continue to live in light of the salvific work of God by persevering in faith (v. 6; Moo, 2008). If the flesh were already wholly "put off," it is curious why Paul should exhort believers to "put to death what is earthly *in you*" (3:5; lit. your earthly parts; τὰ μέλη τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς). Evidently, there are "parts" that, although eschatologically accounted for by God's grace, may yet need to be integrated into the believer's otherwise whole self.

[82]The Greek word for "blessed" (μακάριος; cf. Pennington [2017], pp. 42ff.), Danker (2001) cites as an antonym for "wretched" (ταλαίπωρος).

Paul's depiction in Romans 7 of the "inner self" as an internal opposition of allegiances—"mind" and "flesh"—in need of a covenantal means of spiritual transformation and psychotherapeutic relief should in no way be seen as an attempt by the apostle to promulgate a formalized or systematized psychology (Chamblin, 1993; Roberts, 2001). Nevertheless, we should reject as unfounded any inference that the apostle held only inconsistent or ill-conceived views, whether theological or psychological.[83] As Roberts (2001) concludes,

> [The writings of Paul] are about God and they are about the human self, but they are not systematic in the ways that we expect modern theology and modern psychology to be. On the other hand, Paul's comments about God and about the human self can both be systematized: one can expound them as a complex and consistent view (p. 161).

Minimally, what Paul observes in himself, and what he implicates in all of humanity, is an ongoing internal conflict brought about by the influence of sin to which we are pathologically and inescapably subject apart from our willing submission to the influence of Christ's Spirit (see Rom 8:10; cf. Jas 4:1). In other words, at any given moment, Paul's "I" may be operating either in an Adamic mode of autonomous self-sufficiency or in a Christic mode of perichoretic mutuality respective to the Spirit. Paul indicates, "I myself [αὐτὸς ἐγὼ]," which is to say, his inner self, is "enslaved [δουλεύω] to the law of God *with the mind*," yet, simultaneously, paradoxically, "[enslaved] to the law of sin *with the flesh*" (7:25).[84] What determines the mode in which "I" operates is, for Paul, whether "I"

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[83]Jewett (1971) notes Paul's tendency to employ anthropological terminology inconsistently and unsystematically throughout his letters. Nevertheless, Harding (2016) helpfully reminds us regarding Paul's occasional lack of terminological consistency, "While recognizing that Paul's letters are not systematic theology, this does *not* entail that he did not possess consistent ideas" (p. 22, author's emphasis).

[84]As Cooper (2000) explains, "When such terms are used in opposition, as flesh against spirit, they do not necessarily indicate different substances or structural constituents of humankind" (p. 103). Thus, to determine that the believer possesses two literal, rather than metaphorical, selves—one old and one new—or two natures—one of "flesh" and one of "spirit"—carries Paul's rhetorical dichotomy too far (*pace* Roberts, 2001). Rather, for the duration of the present age believers have one split self that, in contrast to the wholly estranged self of the unbeliever, can operate within an Adamic or Christic mode at any given moment. (It is likely, in fact, that believers' every thought and action entails some mixture of both modes.) Nevertheless, the regenerate have a *single* nature that has been renewed through union with Christ and that is being renewed through their active participation in that Spirit-mediated union (see Col 3:10).

permits "not I, but Christ" to enable and empower "my" choosing (8:2; cf. Gal 2:20).[85]

As the subsequent passage makes clear (Rom 8:1ff), Paul has found that a more salutary ethical outcome (along with its concomitant psychotherapeutic benefit), can be obtained by the believer's immediate and ongoing commitment to move in step, as it were, with the Spirit of Christ (v. 4; see Packer, 1999). This happy state of intersubjective mutuality with respect to Christ's Spirit has resulted for Paul in "life and peace" (v. 6). Clearly, though believers are continually at risk of operating "according to the flesh"—which is to say, autocentrically, *curvum in se*—their union with Christ has resulted in their eschatological deliverance from congenital autonomy and estrangement. For the duration of the present age, they may operate in accordance with the mind and will of God's Spirit. All those who "live by the Spirit" may experience an anticipatory victory over "the flesh" as the outworking of their final eschatological reconciliation to God in Christ (v. 5). In doing so, they exemplify a new Christic humanity defined and empowered by access to intimate interpersonal communion with God. Crucially, reconciliation does not mean that believers have somehow become autonomous selves now capable of standing on their own, as it were. Rather, as perichoretically indwelt selves, their newfound thinking, desiring, and choosing can occur only in active accession to the supervening presence of the divine Christ.

Furthermore, the ramifications of the self's reconciliation to Christ include the repair, through the integration of self with the actively penetrating Spirit of God, of intrapersonal fragmentation and dissociation. In Christ, we become not only holy but whole, just as he is whole (cf. Heb 10:14). The human self that is truly united with Christ's self cannot remain forever schizoid, or else it would call into question the doctrine of reconciliation. And, evidently, Paul held that Christ is working to bring

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[85]Clearly, Paul considers that the unbeliever has no access to this second mode of being when it comes to obedience to and love for God's good law (Chamblin, 1993).

human persons into conformity with his own image (Rom 8:29; 12:2; cf. 1 Pet 1:14–16). Christiformity, the Spirit-enabled, diachronic work of Christ in the life of the believer, operates at both an ethical as well as a psychological level.[86] "Spiritual change," according to Roberts (2001), "is a *kind* of psychological change, namely psychological change brought about by . . . the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer" (p. 163; author's emphasis). Regarding God's role in bringing about ethical and psychological change, Chamblin (1993) concludes, "For Paul . . . the Spirit's work is vital; persons cannot be made whole without it" (p. 98). In other words, the Pauline doctrine of union with Christ may not be reduced to a mere status or even an ethical determinant. Union with Christ signifies that, through the Spirit's working, Christ and the believing self now persist—mysteriously, ineffably—in a state of onto-relational unity, yet without destroying the personal idiosyncratic identities of either (see Col 1:27). What this demands of the believer is nothing less than a full and mature agentic dedication to participation in and submission to the mind and will of the God–man (E. L. Johnson, 2017; see also, Fitzpatrick, 2013; Payne, 1995; cf. Campbell, 2012).

Conclusion

As early as the first century, Christian inquiry into the nature and form of the center of human subjectivity had, it would seem, already begun to take place. Though fairly rudimentary, psychological insight found in the Pauline oeuvre demonstrate the warrant for, and necessity of, a Christian understanding of the covenantal self and its limited, divided self-consciousness (see Chamblin, 1993; Roberts, 2001). Furthermore, what Paul observes in himself—his thoughts, his behavior—supplies ample justification for the development of a Christian psychology of self-knowledge. Like Augustine, Paul engages in introspection and reflection on the nature of the self in relation to God (see

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[86]Due to the nature our embodied existence, psychological transformation, over time, effects change at the neurobiological level as well (E. L. Johnson, 2017; see Siegel, 2012).

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Beck, 2002). Unlike Augustine, Paul does not identify his "inner man" with the soul, but with the covenantally embodied whole person who, having been united to Christ, now shares corporately in the life of the Spirit along with all other believers. Historically, Augustine's inward quest may have laid the groundwork for modern (and postmodern) conclusions about the self; but he can hardly be solely credited with its genesis.[87] Extant canonical reflections, perhaps best labeled as "seeds of the self," as in the inner aspects and experiences of individual human persons, date from as early as ancient poetry of Israel's chief lyricists.

In modern and postmodern expressions of Western Christianity, understandings of the self have taken an expressly non-Pauline turn toward autonomy on the one hand and heteronomy on the other (cf. Stendahl, 1963). As we should expect, neither modernist autocentricity nor postmodern exocentricity can offer the proper onto-relational balance for the Christian covenantal self. Christian psychology, assuming it entails the biblical testimony regarding the self, aims at the systematization of human knowledge regarding the subjective center of human personhood. Crucially, however, Christian *self*-knowledge does not entail systematization, in the scientific sense, but rather *communion*. Not merely with the mind/intellect or the soul/spirit, but only with the whole person relationally conceived and agapically oriented toward God and others does self-knowledge obtain. As with Paul, so in the whole of Scripture, "Until the whole person is affected true knowledge has not occurred—whether one is speaking of knowing oneself, knowing other people, or knowing God" (Chamblin, 1993, p. 49). Communion with God, with others, and even with self remain beyond the grasp of the autonomous, schizoid self of fallen human beings. Only by means of Christ's active mediatorial influence working along each relational axis can we come to know ourselves as God

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[87]Grenz (2001) rightly identifies the origins of modern *philosophical* notions concerning the self with Augustine's writings. The dichotomization of philosophical and theological approaches to the self, however, reflects a very modern, and very un-Augustinian, modus operandi.

intends.

CHAPTER 4

BARRIERS TO SELF-KNOWLEDGE:
SIN, PSYCHOPATHOLOGY, AND THE
PHENOMENAL SELF-IN-RELATION

In arriving via Christology at a definition of the self—one that is ontologically grounded yet ethically contingent upon right relationship to God and others—we essentially bypass a quarter-millennium of philosophical and psychological handwringing over the matter. As it turns out, modern philosophical inquiry has advanced very little since Hume's (1746) failed attempt to locate the self within any real or metaphorical internal "space." The reasons for this should, by now, be clear: human beings have an ineradicable sense of particular selfhood—a *me*-ness that is experientially linked to the phenomenal realities attendant to whole persons, both *psyche* and *soma*. Yet, that sense is dependent on correspondence to others more so than any exclusive possession or trait (McFadyen, 1990). Augustine's inward quest centered on the soul as the seat of subjectivity leading to modernist perspectives on the self as a solely internal reality (Grenz, 2001; C. Taylor, 1989). Modernist anthropology may, in fact, have unwittingly reified Descartes in searching out the self in the mind; whereas, postmodern psychology "locates" the self, not in any formal constituent, but in an individual's relationally conceived sense of self (Harter, 2015). Yet, *me*-ness cannot be reduced to any formal constituent, attribute, or psychological construct without effacing some aspect of its ethical status and bearing. As biblical anthropology demonstrates, it is the whole person, covenantally conceived, upon whom the *imago dei* has been conferred and with whom the triune God has pursued agapic, perichoretic communion. The ethical bearing of human selfhood, and therefore self-knowledge, is not merely inward, or even inward and upward, but rather inward, upward and outward. And the phenomenal aspects of the self,

including its developmentally construed sense of idiosyncrasy, all serve the ethical

bearing of covenantal selfhood—an eschatological *becoming* implicated by the image of

God and inaugurated through reconciliation to God-in-Christ.

By differentiating between the self *in se* and its phenomenal being-in-relation

to God and to others, it becomes possible to escape the epistemological cul-de-sac of

post/modernist philosophical anthropology (see Bonhoeffer, 1996, 1998).[1] This appears

to have been the primary concern of William James (1961, 2012) whose distinction of I-

self and me-self, or self-as-subject and self-as-object, greatly contributed, along with

others, to the birth of contemporary self and social psychologies (Goethals & Strauss,

1991; Harter, 2015). *Some* aspects of ourselves are indeed knowable, though only God's

knowledge of the human person will ever be exhaustive. Moreover, in consideration of

Scripture, a Christian approach to self-knowledge will emphasize not merely knowing

self-as-it-is, but self-as-it-ought-to-be in light of the person and work of Christ. When

considered christologically, the self is both an ontological given and an ethical

imperative. Selfhood, therefore, is an expression or extension of covenantal personhood.

Like Christ, all human beings possess both an image bearing status and, consequently,

selfhood, yet we fulfill the ethical imperative of that status only in proper relation to God

and to others.

Unlike Christ, human beings enter the world estranged from God and

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[1]Harré (1998), in reiterating Hume's paradox, argues, "[The self] is not visible to a phenomenological scrutinizing of one's own subjectivity. . . . It is not available to private introspection, . . . [nor to] public inspection. . . . The self I seek is the self that seeks, so it seems that it is impossible to make introspective contact with myself" (p. 81, cf. also Ryle, 1949). Nor, indeed, should we expect any better outcome from the absurdly reductive quest to locate the self within the brain—a fact atheist apologist Daniel Dennett (1991) only confirms: "Searching for the self can be somewhat like [this]. You enter the brain through the eye, march up the optic nerve, round and round in the cortex, looking behind every neuron, and then, before you know it, you emerge into daylight on the spike of a motor nerve impulse, scratching your head and wondering where the self is" (p. 355). Yet, unless one grants Dennett's physicalist cosmology, such a search can hardly be deemed rigorous (or scientifically sound). A non-existent self, in fact, becomes a tautology in such a truncated epistemological framework. As it happens, venerable philosophical arguments against linking self and "soul" seem to have prefigured more recent—and similarly misguided—attempts to link self and brain (see Neisser, 1997). Nevertheless, as demonstrated in the previous chapter, the self will not be so easily dispatched.

congenitally *curvum in se*. We need a mediator to reconcile us to the Father—a reconciliation the Savior obtained for us once for all at the cross (Heb 10:10). Christ's invitation to true personhood assumes a requisite knowledge of God, self, and others that only comes in the context of agapic relationality (cf. McFadyen, 1990). Notwithstanding humanity's hereditary self-blindness, God enables believers to embody and enact the covenantal *telos* of personhood in the perichoretic relation of self to Christ and, empowered by Christ's Spirit, to others. Paul's observations regarding the ethical impotence of his autonomous inner self—his divided, discontinuous ἔσω ἄνθρωπον (Rom 7:22; cf. 2 Cor 4:16; Eph 3:16)—dramatically illustrate this point (cf. Theissen, 1987).

Only by means of the believer's union with Christ does the human self enter the proper relational dynamic of Christiform personhood (Rom 8:1ff.). Aided by a "mirror" of the word/Word, self may, in fact, come to accurately self-perceive if only and always through the eyes of Other/others. Yet, the covenantal self-in-relation is faced with mutually reinforcing ethical and psychogenic barriers to self-knowledge. Self-knowledge, even among believers, will continue to remain limited by human finitude and prone to error due to remaining sin. Furthermore, barriers to self-knowledge may also arise from a host of psychopathologies to which the fallen human self is susceptible. Therefore, the two primary impediments to veridical knowledge of self—sin and psychopathology—are best understood when considered dialogically. Inasmuch as these barriers may be located in contraventions of the covenantal self-in-relation—which is to say, lapses in agapic inter/subjectivity—their remediation lies in repairing such breeches. The implications of God's agenda of reconciliation through the person and work of Christ entail the displacement of all relationally induced barriers to self-knowledge. It is to the task of identifying these ethical and psychogenic barriers to self-knowledge that we shall, in short order, turn.

Christology and Interdisciplinary Discourse

The gospel of the incarnate Word demonstrates that God has not willed for humanity to stand silent before him for all time (see Rom 8:15). To the contrary, the Word was made flesh precisely in order to reverse the estrangement between God and humanity that our sin had created—to remove the infinite interstice our rebellion had precipitated. Christ, in his person and work, reveals the divine initiative to bring about rapprochement between divinity and humanity, the resumption of agapic fellowship and discourse (Bonhoeffer, 2005). Though humanity's sin and rebellion will continue to threaten this fellowship until the end of the present age, the people of God are called to bear witness to his reconciling work in their own commitment to incarnational communion and dialogue (König, 1989). Orthodox Christology discloses the mystery of God's eternal design—the joining of divinity and humanity in the person of Christ in order to bring about a universal reconciliation (Col 1:20; Barth, 2010). At a disciplinary level, this means Christian theology will contribute to the constitution of other disciplines to the degree that it is intrinsically appropriate;[2] and conversely, Christian theology should also listen to and learn from the natural and, especially, human sciences biblically understood (Clark, 2010; Johnson, 2010; cf. Hunsinger, 1995). The implications of orthodox Christology should be clear: what God has joined together in the person and work of Christ, neither Christian theology nor Christian anthropology proper should seek to separate (cf. Matt 19:6).[3]

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[2]So, e.g., philosophy more so than the human sciences, and the human sciences more so than the natural sciences.

[3]Hunsinger (1995), in applying a Barthian theanthropology to the question of transdisciplinary dialogue, draws the opposite inference: "[T]heology and psychology represent material that cannot be integrated into a unified whole" (p. 6). And yet, seemingly she contradicts this premise immediately thereafter: "Both perspectives are fully a part of the pastoral counselor, that is, they are integrated into the *person*" (p. 6, emphasis in original). It seems to me that Hunsinger has rightly objected the overly facile and ill-considered use to which "integration" language is too often applied. Yet, in observing that there are, in fact, justifiable uses of the term, Hunsinger undermines the strength of her argument. If material from two disciplines *can* be integrated in the person of the pastoral counselor, what then is the final reason for saying the two *cannot* be integrated? Perhaps better to say, as I have sought to argue, that, analogous with the natures of Christ, the two disciplines remain in some sense unmixed and unconfused, yet they nevertheless cohere inseparably, indivisibly in one epistemic whole (as they certainly must in the mind of

Christian Psychology as Dialogue

In the context of any interdisciplinary dialogue, an exchange of roles must eventually take place wherein speaker becomes listener, and teacher becomes learner (see Bakhtin, 1986; Williams, 2001). Consequently, when considering the nature of the self and its knowledge, theology should be permitted to speak first; yet, dialogue suggests that consideration be paid to psychology, which concerns itself with the creaturely existence of human beings and their phenomenal aspects (see D. F. Ford, 2007). Although psychology, as with all the human disciplines, should yield the place of primacy to theology in a Christian scheme of things, it must still be given opportunity to reply constructively.[4] As Clark (2010) explains, "In such a dialogue, theology can, within certain parameters, properly speak to science, and science can, within proper limits, rightly address theology" (p. 284; cf. Hiebert, 2008).[5] To which we may add, by looking to Christ—whose person and work bear both ontological and epistemological implications—we may better grasp the imprimatur for a Christian commitment to the principal of transdisciplinary discourse.

God). Consequently, the two disciplines may interact discursively through transdisciplinary dialogue, a fact Barthian scholar Daniel J. Price (2002) recognizes—and for which Hunsinger commends him (see pp. 45ff.)!

[4]Following Barth, Christology is properly foundational to anthropology. The dialectical relationship between theology and anthropology is hierarchical—the former being first, therefore, among equals.

[5]It may be natural to question whether the principal of dialogue between theological and anthropological disciplines undermines the doctrines of Scripture's authority and sufficiency. Clark (2010) deftly answers this concern: "Suppose a scientific idea gains so much warrant that as a community of theologians, we agree it is necessary to alter some theological belief. That does not necessarily mean that science has superseded Scripture. More precisely, we place a particular scientific idea or theory into conversation with a particular theological tradition, model, or doctrine. That is, we bring *interpretations of Scripture*—theology—into conversation with *interpretations of nature*—science. So, we do not allow science to supersede the Bible itself. We allow it to override *interpretations* of the Bible. . . . [T]heology is a human interpretation of the Bible. Science, therefore, can rightly speak to theology" (p. 286, author's emphasis). In contemporary parlance, "science" has become synonymous with phenomenological observation, rational analysis of empirical data, and the systematization of findings. A Kuyperian definition of science, by way of contrast, does not dichotomize the "data" found in revelation from that observable in creation (Kuyper, 1968; cf. Bartholomew, 2017). Reformed epistemology, following Augustine, has traditionally regarded both as valid sources of knowledge (Van Til, 1969). Evidently, Clark (2010) has yielded to the modern idiomatic dichotomization of "theology" and "science." I avoid such usage, preferring instead to speak of theological and anthropological "sciences," respectively (see McGrath, 2006).

As a branch of Christian inquiry, Christian psychology distinguishes itself from modern psychology in its metadisciplinary commitment to the epistemological primacy of the word/Word of God and the principal of dialogue between the divine and human sciences (E. L. Johnson, 2007; Roberts, 1993; cf. Kuyper, 1968). This dialogue demands that "Christians speak in their own voice from the strength of their own psychology, the psychology inherent in the Bible and Christian tradition, and thus as full participants converse with the reigning psychologies of our day" (Roberts, 1993, p. 13). Christian psychology is, therefore, committed at its philosophical core to the epistemological priorities of an expressly theological anthropology. In other words, although the object of all psychological inquiry is, by definition, the human person, Christian psychology denies any modernist attempt to sequester human being from the appropriate questions and concerns of Christian faith and praxis. Christian theology is right to question the findings of modern psychology due to the latter's disciplinary commitment to epistemological and disciplinary monologism; yet, it would surely be a gospel sin to renounce every Christian effort to engage dialogically with psychological perspectives that regard human beings as the Bible does—created in the image of God for communion with him and with one another in and through the person of Jesus Christ (cf. Wells, 2007).[6] Christian psychology, therefore, extends the implications of reconciliation into the domain of epistemology.

**Modern Psychology and
Monological Discourse**

Modern psychology and psychotherapy, by way of contrast, have increasingly operated with a fundamentally schizoid philosophical and disciplinary "self"-

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[6]Along the same lines, historian E. Brooks Holifield (2005) argues that pastoral theologians "are better served when they live in both [discursive realms], letting each check the imperialistic tendencies of the other, than when they smooth out the differences or assume that religious and psychological concepts merely designate the same reality with different words. Of course the two realms of discourse are not absolutely distinct. If they were, one realm could not in any way illumine the other. But the best illumination often occurs through emphasis on their differences" (p. 355).

understanding. In light of the fall of the self of Platonic/Cartesian dualism and the dearth of any philosophical warrant for its existence, modern psychology has been essentially stripped of its epistemological basis and axiological aim—that is, the care and cure of human beings. After all, if there is no substantial "I" to be found behind the visible, phenomenal "me," who or what then is the object of psychotherapeutic concern? If the self is *merely* an exocentric consequence of the various environmental and contextual dynamics in which human individuals are situated, then surely psychological cure can be reduced to the bare manipulation of those external forces and inputs.[7] Yet, existential and self psychologies, depth psychologies, and other related systems, persist in their presumption of the existence of a subjective center of psychological activity operating within a dialectic of autocentric activity and exocentric responsivity. Human beings, according to much of modern psychology, are more than the sum of their material parts. Not just a collection of biological imperatives or libidinal drives, to the contrary, there is *someone* behind or within—an interpersonal subject who acts and reacts with meaning and purpose, though often at a deeper level than may be directly apperceived or reflexively intuited (see Goethals & Strauss, 1991; Harré, 1998; Neisser, 1997). Yet, these modern psychologies can never supply, at least on their own terms, a sufficient explanation for the existence of this deep-level subjectivity—the *why* and *how* of what we are (cf. Leary, 2004).

What is needed, and what Christian psychology supplies, is a perspective on human beings grounded in divine revelation and which finds its fulfilment and ideal expression in Jesus Christ. Created in the image of the triune God for fellowship with him, we are what we are unto God's glory alone (Johnson, 2017). Furthermore, we

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[7]The rise of behaviorism and, to a lesser extent, cognitive psychology in the twentieth century are strong indicators that such a shift did, in fact, occur (see Jones & Butman, 2011; van Leeuwen, 1982). Behaviorists such as Skinner (1976) and Wolpe (1978) consistently rejected the notion of any subjective center of agency from which human behavior and cognition arise. Whether or not such views ring true with human experience, they nevertheless distinguish themselves by remaining consistent with a modernist epistemology driven exclusively by positivist priorities.

embody this image through covenantal union with and active doxological reply to the God who reveals himself in Christ. Christian psychology, with its rich understanding of persons as created in the image of God and accountable to him, seeks to apprehend the complexities of the human self in both theological and psychological terms. Epistemologically situated at the intersection of divine revelation and human subjectivity, Christian psychology provides a much-needed transdisciplinary bridge between the two. Respective to the antinomy of the covenantal self-in-relation these two discrete yet related perspectives—theology and psychology—have much to offer each other. More than this, when properly related, these two disciplines demonstrate the proper epistemological application of the person and work of the God–man, Jesus Christ. Jesus reconciles God and human beings; thus, in Christ, we may discern the proper relation between theology and psychology.

Inaugurated Eschatology and the Covenantal Self

United to Christ through faith, the covenantal human self assumes a diachronic, eschatological trajectory (Grenz, 2001; Horton, 2005). In order that we might better fulfill our image-bearing mandate, God has granted believers access in Christ to a "treasury" of wisdom and knowledge (Col 2:3), including, among other things, the perichoretic knowledge of God, of self, and of others (Bonhoeffer, 1996, 2001). In other words, he permits us to know even as we are known. To be sure, for the duration of the present age believers know only "in part"; whereas, in the age to come we will know more "fully" (1 Cor 13:12). Both now and in the age to come, human beings fulfill the agapic *telos* of personhood when exercising the gifts of perichoretic knowledge. Furthermore, when believers come mutually, reciprocally to a greater knowledge of God and self, they simultaneously share perichoretically in God's own life and joy (John 17:3).[8]

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[8]Objective or propositional knowledge of God, by way of contrast, offers no such benefit,

In contrast to ancient and modern paradigms, human wellbeing is not, strictly speaking, the primary aim of *Christian* self-knowledge. *Eudaimonia* or wellbeing arises eschatologically as a benefit of a genuinely agapic relationality.[9] Humanity's first parents sought their wellbeing through knowledge, yet, when they sought it autonomously, they fell into sin and death—that is, they fell out of communion with the Source of both. Pursued as an end in itself, human flourishing, like autonomous self-knowledge, is ultimately self-defeating. Yet, Christ offers his own perichoretic knowledge of the Father to fallen, sinful human beings by means of their Spirit-mediated, faith-enacted union with him. The *telos* of Christian self-knowledge is love—for God, for others, and for self. Only conditioned and innervated by love can human beings avoid the snare of autonomy into which Adam and Eve fell, and humanity along with them. Christians need not entirely eschew the pursuit of *eudaimonia* in favor of an agapist ethics; yet, they are nonetheless called model the eschatological conviction of Christ himself "who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame" (Heb 12:2). The joy and rest promised to believers comes not from its direct pursuit, but through their union and conformity to Christ (Luke 9:24).

Inaugurated eschatology suggests a persistent schism in believers' experience of redemption for the duration of the present age (Gaffin, 2013; Schreiner, 2008). What Christ's atoning death has finally purchased on our behalf—reconciliation between God and humanity—believers receive as a simultaneously present and future reality.[10]

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though it certainly obtains in the context of subjective knowledge (i.e., Rahner's nonobjective consciousness). In other words, in coming to know God better we will undoubtedly come to know more *about* God; the inverse, however, is not necessarily true.

[9]New Testament ethics is not eudaimonist but agapic (see Wolterstorff, 2015). The *telos* of Christian ethics is love (Matt 22:37–40; John 15:12ff.); whereas, eschatological wellbeing or "blessedness" arises as an inter/subjective benefit of Christian ethics, rightly applied. A hierarchical dialectic, therefore, best characterizes the relationship between agapist and eudaimonist perspectives. The former entails the latter, but not vice versa.

[10]So, Barth (2010), "The restoration, renewal and fulfilment of the covenant between God and man in the atonement made and revealed in Jesus Christ is complete as man's justification as a covenant-partner and his sanctification to be a covenant-partner, as the establishment and formation of the fellowship between himself and God, just as God's creation was perfect as the beginning of all His ways with the

Whereas, "in Christ," they have been granted "every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places" (Eph 1:3); in another closely related sense, Christians still await the eschatological deliverance of their final "inheritance" (v. 14). Therefore, though they "have died" to sin and their life is presently "hidden with Christ in God" (Col 3:3), believers must still "put to death what is earthly" in them (v. 5). In other words, until the final appearing of Christ, believers will continue to experience an internal opposition of contradictory dynamics (Johnson, 2017). Even after conversion, Christians will struggle with a proneness toward autonomy; they will be inclined toward estrangement from God though they have, in Christ, been reconciled already and granted an everlasting communion with him through the Spirit. Packer (1999), in describing the "frame of 'inaugurated eschatology,'" concludes,

> [T]hrough the Spirit Christians enjoy the firstfruits, foretaste, initial installment, and dawning enjoyment of the life of the new aeon, the kingdom era of redeemed existence, while the old aeon, the era of existence spoiled by sin, continues, and the fullness of new aeon life remains future. The two ages overlap, and Christians are anchored in both, so that language proper to both is appropriate, indeed necessary, for describing their condition theologically. (p. 77)

Consequently, the self of the believing individual will bear characteristics of both the new and old ages. As of the moment of believers' reconciliation to God by faith in Christ, they possess a "'new self'" that "represents what [they] are in Christ instead of what they are in Adam"; yet, this gift demands that they continually "put off the old person and put on the new" (Schreiner, 2008, pp. 31–32; see Eph 4:22–24).

The Relationship between Sin and Self-Knowledge

When paired with a thoroughly biblical understanding of the person and work of Christ, the doctrine of hereditary sin provides an illuminating and compelling hermeneutical framework with respect to the problem of sin (see Goldsworthy, 2010).

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created order. But, like creation, it is not an end but a beginning—complete in itself and as such, but still a beginning" (IV/1, p. 109).

Generally, sin consists of opposition, rather than accession, to the innate God-oriented dynamic of the human self (Barth, 2010; Bavinck, 2006; Calvin, 2008; Edwards, 2009). Hereditary or "original" sin is nothing less than the universal tendency of all those descended from Adam to resist and oppose God (see Rom 5:12; Augustine, 2012b; Owen, 2006; Pascal, 1995; Sanlon, 2014). Notwithstanding the apparent anaphylaxis of modernism, the classical doctrine of original sin has nevertheless been reasonably defended against its detractors (Madueme & Reeves, 2014; McFadyen, 2000; cf. Barth, 2010, IV/1, pp. 478ff.). Evidently, the doctrine strikes a dissonant chord with more favorable estimations of human nature (see, e.g., Williams, 2001). Nonetheless, it possesses tremendous explanatory power with respect to the so-called "problem of evil" (Blocher, 1999), and the inclination of all human beings toward interpersonal evil (see Doriani, 2014; cf. Herman, 2015). The doctrine of original sin is indispensable, in fact, for apprehending the source of this pandemic in human ecology (cf. John 3:19; Rom 3:10ff.). The permutations of human resistance to God are myriad—its devastating effects, pervasive. It insults and effaces the divine image in humanity, deforms the self, disrupts its relations, and inhibits its God-oriented dynamic. Apart from God's work in Christ by which he resists our resistance to him, human beings cannot overcome their sinful inclinations (see Rom 7:15ff.)[11]

Thanks to their union with Christ as effected by the indwelling Spirit believers are redeemed from slavery to sin and reconciled to God (Rom 5:11). Though born estranged, they are adopted by God and granted the means to resist their oppositional defiance (Rom 8:5ff). The happy result of this new state and status is that veridical self-knowledge is possible for the believer actively walking in step with the Spirit.

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[11]The question of hereditary sin's "transmission" has occupied theologians since Augustine suggested a biological basis (i.e., traducianism; Augustine, 2012b; cf. Blocher, 1999). Under a covenantal anthropology no such theory of transmission is necessary. In other words, hereditary sin need not be "located" in any constitutive incapacity if its basis is covenantal. The reason all sin who are descended from Adam may be because, on Adam's account, all in Adam are born estranged from God (see Schreiner, 2008).

Nevertheless, for the duration of the present age, believers' knowledge of self, as with the knowledge of God, will remain limited chiefly by two influences: remaining sin and psychopathology.[12] Though other factors impede growth in self-knowledge, these two will occupy the present discussion.[13] By way of illustration, brain trauma might severely limit one's capacity for knowledge of God and self. Evidently, damage that is rooted in somatic injury is far less responsive to the gospel than are sin and certain forms of psychopathology (Johnson, 2017; Stanford, 2017). Though God-in-Christ is "making all things new" (Rev 21:5), some varieties of biopsychosocial damage will be reversed only in the age to come.

In otherwise mature, response-able agents, sin and psychopathology cultivate and perpetuate self-ignorance. As suggested already, self-blindness amounts to an estrangement from self that inheres in the autonomous self, its vertical and horizontal relational axes having been disrupted by sin. In coming to Christ believers gain access, through Christ, to the gifts of self- and other/Other-knowledge to the extent that love conditions their pursuit. Sin—offense against the covenantal calling of image bearers—in addition to disrupting communion along these two axes, will deprive self of self-knowledge as well. Within a Christological anthropology, psychopathology should be interpreted not simply as deprivations or deformations in an otherwise healthy, autonomous self; rather, it follows as the sequela of estrangement—a consequence of

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[12]Clearly, sin can be construed as a form, indeed the quintessential form, of psychopathology (Johnson, 2017). One reason for distinguishing between them, as I have done here, is the strong connection—both agentically and semantically—between sin and moral culpability. This connection is not necessarily entailed by other forms of psychopathology (see McRay, Yarhouse, & Butman, 2016). It may be that speaking of sin as psychopathology softens distinctions between the two that are best not softened. To avoid confusion on this point, and also so that I might describe the relationship between sin and other forms of psychopathology, I will distinguish between them. Finally, a distinction is also helpful in advance of enumerating in Chapter Five discrete ethical imperatives and pastoral agendas respective to each.

[13]In additional to these two, three further barriers to self-knowledge may be noted: neurological damage (i.e., brain trauma), cognitive or intellectual limitations (due to, say, genetic abnormalities), and, of course, human finiteness. These factors potentially mitigate growth in self-knowledge. Evidently, with our resurrected, glorified bodies we will be subject to far fewer limitations, both physically and cognitively. It is safe to assume, however, that we will never know everything there is to know about either God or ourselves (though cf. 1 Cor 13:12).

humanity's relationally fallen state and status.[14] The self that is cut off from perichoretic communion along the vertical and horizontal axes will suffer the pain of disunion and isolation. Psychopathology, therefore, is often the result of the dislocation of the fallen inner self from its proper onto-relation to God and others.

God's tripersonal nature cannot be disrupted by discord or disunity: the three Persons of the Trinity are *one* (Rom 3:30; Gal 3:20; Jas 2:19; cf. Deut 6:4). To be otherwise would obviate his very divinity. For human persons created in God's image, our sin-induced estrangement from God and other has resulted in the death of our ability to fully image, and thus benefit from, an analogous human being-in-relation. The result is that fallen human beings bear within themselves a corrupted and corrupting nature (Bavinck, 2006). True and lasting communion eludes us. Estrangement, on the other hand, is endemic. This is not to say that human beings are all bad. Yet, every transgression of our intended design—that by which we were to have reflected God's own nature within creation—further effaces the imaging capacity of all those it touches. Arguably, this dynamic is most directly observable in the degree to which developmental factors contribute etiologically to diverse psychopathological conditions (see K. Flanagan & Hall, 2014). In a real sense, we find here clear evidence of how "the sins of the fathers" are visited on successive generations—specifically, as the sequelae of interpersonal evil (see Lev 26:39). The predictable result of this stark reality can be observed in the remarkable depth and variety of psychopathological damage and disarray encountered in human beings.[15] Finally, in terms of the individual self, we may expect

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[14]This is not to say that all psychopathology is related to one's own personal sinfulness (cf. John 9:1ff.). For example, genetic abnormalities and noetic deficiencies, along with cancer and hurricanes, are best understood as consequences of the fall.

[15]There are at least two senses in which psychopathology extends as a consequence of sin. In the first psychopathology arises as the direct result of personal sin, whether my own or as the sequelae left by those who sin against me (see Herman, 2015). In another sense, however, psychopathology arises in many cases not due to any moral fault or interpersonal transgression, but on account of humanity's fallen state. Like the blind man encountered by Jesus' disciples (John 9:1ff.), such individuals suffer from a *disease* of the self or illness of the mind that arises strictly organically. That this sort of suffering exists, like

the severity of its extant pathologies to correlate closely with the degree of adversity and affliction suffered along its horizontal axis.

Perspectives on Sin and the Self

In referring to sin as "the ultimate relational disorder," Johnson (2017) suggests the extent to which sin distorts and damages the self (p. 218). Yet, the connection between sin and the various psychopathologies of the covenantal self-in-relation is decidedly complex. Respective to the knowledge of self, sin and its psychopathological sequelae contribute significant barriers. With characteristic erudition, Barth (2010) enumerates three ways in which sin disrupts the relational axes between self and Other/others. Drawing on Augustine and Calvin, Barth defines sin as "negation," which is to say humanity's "active opposition to the God who actively encounters [us]" (IV/1, p. 142). This negation takes three forms. First, sin most obviously assumes the form of "pride" (p. 143)—a presumption of autonomous stature, a self-seeking that, if left unchecked, leads to rebellion against the divine command (see Isa 14:12ff). Sin arouses in humanity a fatal hubris that knows yet rejects the call to obedience. The second form taken by sin Barth labels "sloth"—the passive tendency toward moral and psychological "disorder" that inverts the call to be active, participatory image-bearers. Out of an internal resistance to the good, human beings come to repose in a willfulness that refuses *not* to fall. We know the good we must do, yet do it not (Jas 4:17; cf. Rom 1:21; 7:16). And finally, sin, according to Barth, takes the form of "falsehood." "[W]e are all incorrigible liars," he confesses. Telling ourselves that we know better than God, we deceive ourselves concerning our own judgments, our faculties of perception, and our personal moral caliber. So, Barth concludes, "Because man and the world live under the dominion of sin, lying to God and deceiving themselves, they live in self-destruction" (p.

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the man's blindness, points us all the way back to the fall as its root cause (Stump, 2012).

144). Evidently, humanity's sin-induced estrangement from God is *not* simply doing the wrong thing. Rather, sin assumes at least three forms, each of which corresponds with three stages through which the self is led to its own destruction.

Rebellion leads to estrangement. Pride arouses an oppositional dynamic which, when consummated in a rebellious act, disrupts communion. Although created for agapic fellowship with the triune God and with each other, every human being has, with the sole exception of Jesus Christ, universally undermined and disrupted that fellowship through sin (Bavinck, 2006; Calvin, 2008; Kierkegaard, 1980). "All have sinned," the apostle avers, "and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom 3:9). What God intended as the pinnacle of his creative effort was that humanity should serve as his visible image—to bear in themselves some measure of his splendor and to reflect it outward (Gen 1:26; Ps 8; Edwards, 2006). Yet, our capacity to fulfill this vocation has ever been linked to obedience: "In the day you eat of it," God had warned the man, "you shall surely die" (Gen 2:17; cf. John 14:15; 1 John 3:4). In spite of his warning, they ate. In their ultimate "act of defiance" (Barth, 2010, IV/1, p. 143) against the God in whose image they had been made, they overthrew any confidence in his trustworthiness. They sought autonomous rule over themselves as well as knowledge through autonomous means.[16] And so, they fell. Evidently, the "death" into which they fell amounted to a state of pathological estrangement—a relational rupture that has had devastating and pandemic repercussions for humanity (Rom 5:12; cf. Calvin, 2008). Since their fall, all who trace their descent from Adam live in a sort of half-life—having the appearance of life, yet living in a perpetual state of spiritual death (see Eph 2:1; Col 2:13).[17]

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[16]The tree they ate bore the fruit of "the knowledge of good and evil." Eve was tempted, in part, when she discerned "that the tree was to be desired to make one wise" (Gen 3:6).

[17]Exegetical attempts to set aside the veracity of the promised penalty—"on the day you eat . . . you will surely die" (Gen 2:17)—represent a misunderstanding of kind of "death" to which God was referring (see Weeks, 2014; Wenham, 1987). If the *imago* is strictly constitutive, then death might be understood exclusively as the cessation of somatic vitality; whereas, the covenantal *imago* strongly suggests a second kind of death, namely, our sin-wrought estrangement from God. The argument that

In light of the biblical account of humanity's fall, it seems that the first man and his wife descended into a truly sub-human existence by reason of their covenant-rupturing act of disobedience. If human persons fulfill their image-bearing vocation only in agapic relationality, then cut off as we are from fellowship with God and each other, we become somehow less than human. The self, rendered ethically impotent by sin, can never autonomously attain to true humanity due to its sin-induced estrangement. Furthermore, the breech affecting their communion with God has had equally dire consequences for human relationality. Upon eating the fruit, Adam and Eve began immediately to exhibit signs of the corruption of their self- and other-understandings. Formerly, they felt no shame, though they were naked (Gen 2:25); afterward, they desperately sought to hide their nakedness (3:7). Clearly, the consequences of human sin bear heavily on the quest for authenticity and intimacy in human relationships. More than this, both the man and his wife attempted to shift blame for wrongdoing, each pointing the finger elsewhere in an effort to evade responsibility (3:12, 13). Their ability to accurately assess blameworthiness had become compromised by defensiveness. Both preferred to search out the speck in another's eye than the plank in their own (cf. Matt 7:3). Thus, their latter state, along with all who are descended from Adam and Eve, came to be characterized by the "fundamental reversal of all relationships" (Bavinck, 2006, p. 126). Sin's ultimate consequence is final, spiritual death, yet it also lies in the present age beneath all forms of human suffering and isolation, whether perceived or actual. As Stump (2012) observes, "The proclivity to moral wrongdoing is enough to guarantee that willed loneliness is common to human beings, affecting relations both among human

Adam and Eve would have interpreted God "literally" begs the question as to whether they could have understood death in *any* sense having never witnessed it. Although he interprets the death Adam and Eve suffered metaphorically, Wenham (1987) nevertheless asserts rightly, "[E]xpulsion from the garden was an even more drastic kind of death" (p. 74). To be sure, Paul is not speaking metaphorically when he declares to the Colossian believers, "And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses" (Col 2:13; see also Eph 2:1, 5). From this we may reasonably conclude that the expiration of the body is but a taste of the everlasting torment brought about by one's final estrangement from God (see Matt 10:28; Rev 20:14–15).

persons and also between human persons and God" (p. 150).

From estrangement to brokenness. Rebellion breaches communion and results in a death that is not physical, yet somehow inflicts upon the self-in-relation an even more profound and enduring injury.[18] The estrangement that follows from the loss of communion inexorably leads to internal fragmentation and dis-integration. In other words, brokenness or intrapersonal disarray is the phenomenal outworking of interpersonal sin. The covenantal basis for this supposition is clear: human beings can only be considered truly human within the context of their Spirit-mediated communion with God. We should expect, therefore, that the fallen, sub-human existence into which we are born will be attended by a diverse array of psychopathologies—malformations of the God-imaging capacities of persons. As a fallen humanity multiplies and fills the earth, so too should we expect to discern a parallel inflation in the intra- and interpersonal infirmities characteristic of corruption (cf. Gen 6:1ff). On top of this, psychospiritual brokenness often compounds the moral incapacity of the self leading to the increased likelihood of the perpetuation of this destructive cycle into the being of the next generation (cf. Rom 1:18ff). Rebellion begets estrangement begets brokenness begets rebellion, and so on *ad infinitum*. Humanity, left to its own devices, cannot help but self-annihilate.

Clearly, interpersonal sin suggests an asymmetrical dynamic wherein perpetrator and victim possess disparate levels of agency. This is to say that brokenness does not always result from one's own sin. In many cases we should expect human beings to bear damage inflicted upon them through the sins of others. This raises a significant etiological consideration: victims of interpersonal sin may bear similar scars to those whose damage might best be described as self-inflicted. Two individuals with

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[18]God has promised to reverse physical death at the return of Christ. All who, due to their rebellion, are finally estranged from him will suffer eternal separation from God (Matt 25:46).

similar psychopathological sequelae may, in fact, have very different etiologies. While one person's struggle may stem from sinful choices, a second individual could potentially wrestle with similar brokenness that has been inflicted by someone else. Moreover, due to the corrupting influence of sin, victims often become perpetrators, further complicating matters.[19] We may presume, therefore, that the relationship between sin and brokenness is complex rather than simple. While it might seem appealing to determine a flat cause and effect between individual sin and subjective brokenness, such a simplistic account can run the risk of compounding the harm victims of interpersonal evil have already endured. On the other hand, modern psychotherapy, with few exceptions, tends to ignore the relationship between sin and psychopathology, preferring instead to medicalize the latter and disqualify the former as "unscientific" (McRay, Yarhouse, & Butman, 2016, p. 95).[20]

In addition to damage inflicted by self and other, a further pathogenic dynamic stems from an individual's personal sense of unworthiness or shame. The self that is cut off from other/Other cannot finally escape the despair such isolation brings. The damage incurred originates reflexively; it is a self-loathing that arises intrasubjectively. Kierkegaard (1980) identified this as a "sickness" of the estranged self:

> A person in despair despairingly wills to be himself. . . . The self that he despairingly wants to be is a self that he is not, . . . that is, he wants to tear his self away from the power that established it. . . . But this is his way of willing to get rid of himself. (p. 20)

Sin is a cancer of the self for which there is no cure but Christ. In its inability to escape

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[19]This is particularly evident in developmental psychopathology. So, Johnson (2017), "[P]oor parental modeling, abuse, and neglect, particularly given how children are often blamed for their mistreatment in such context, shape the pre-agentic volitional capacities in ways that incline them toward patterns of personal sin and vice years before they will make adult decisions for which they will be held responsible as mature personal agents" (pp. 308–309).

[20]A relatively recent reversal of this tendency can be discerned in a number of secular engagements with developmental trauma, chronic childhood sexual abuse, and severe dissociative disorders (Herman, 2015; Howell, 2005; Miller, 2012). The notion of "evil," though defined in strictly humanistic terms, pops up occasionally in this literature.

the weight of its morally and relationally impotent estate, the self that refuses Christ's cure cannot escape the despair such impotence brings. The self, in seeking to purge that which is destroying it, only succeeds in further damaging any good that remains therein. The self that is "healthy and free," on the other hand, is one that "only when, precisely having despaired, . . . rests transparently in God" (p. 30). Again, Stump (2012) helpfully clarifies, "Some people are broken-hearted because of what has happened to them. . . . Some people are broken-hearted over what they have done to themselves or to others. . . . But it is also possible to be broken-hearted just over what one is" (p. 310).

From brokenness to self-deception. The final insult sin inflicts upon human beings is its obfuscation of the root of humanity's predicament. Through sin, we fell; in falling, we died. Along with the sting of estrangement so also came the onset of the torpor of dissociation and self-deceit. With the truth suppressed and forgotten, the lie— that we have not sinned, that nothing in us is amiss—becomes convincing. And, as a result, as a race, we cannot recall how we got here. Like a computer virus introduced into a networked system, so the first lie humans believed has corrupted the meaning-making abilities of the whole of the human race descended from Adam.[21] "You will be like God," the serpent had promised, "knowing good and evil" (Gen. 3:5). And, in a sense, we have become like God, in that we now "create" what is good and true and separate it from all that is evil and false (Bonhoeffer, 2005). Like God, we do not question the uprightness of our judgments or discernment in distinguishing between them. Yet, in order that we might so believe, we must trust in a lie. As the serpent intended from the beginning, our refusal to trust God has led to a fatal error in our ability to know and be known (2 Cor

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[21]Clearly, all truth and meaning is rooted in God; created beings do not "make" meaning in this sense. Yet, as of the fall, human beings are, in fact, meaning-makers in that we are perennially attempting to make sense of ourselves and the world around us. Due to our estrangement from God, however, we perpetually fall under the sway of autocentric and exocentric forces that impinge upon our thinking and reasoning. Theologians often refer to the "noetic effects of sin" in order to explain cognitive distortions respective to self, God, and others (see Moroney, 2000).

4:4). What we sought for the sake of "wisdom" only placed true understanding beyond our reach (cf. 1 Cor 1:20). In summarizing the human predicament, Johnson (2017) concludes,

> Satan's allegation of God's untrustworthiness should be interpreted as the beginning of all human falsehood, including that which runs like a thread through so much human psychopathology, from conscious deception, to overgeneralizations, catastrophization, false core beliefs, false selves, body dysmorphia, gender dysphoria, same-sex attractions, false shame and guilt, defenses and defensiveness, dissociation, the misinterpretations and misrepresentations of others, and the hallucinations and delusions of psychosis. Satan has indeed blinded our minds. (p. 222)

Consequently, all that we *think* we know of God and of ourselves is suspect. Even otherwise "healthy" human individuals are susceptible to critical and systemic misjudgments regarding self. On the other hand, dissociation, defensiveness, shame, and self-deception—the moral failings exhibited archetypally by humanity's first parents— now universally distort our perceptions of God, self, and others.

Sin's Defeat and Eschatological Wholeness

Christ counters and overturns each of these three forms of sin by means of his own active obedience to God, his cruciform work of reconciliation on behalf of sinners, and his gift of the Spirit of truth (see Johnson, 2017). In coming to Christ, all those formerly alienated from God find themselves perichoretically united to the second Person of the Trinity through the indwelling presence of the Spirit (Ferguson, 1997). Whereas in Adam they were reckoned by God as rebellious, suffering under the hereditary estrangement passed on to them, through union with Christ believers come to be reckoned as obedient and faithful children of God (Rom 5:12–21; 2 Cor 5:21; Eph 1:5; Heb 2:10; 1 John 3:1). In this way, persons are made truly new. Reconciliation reverses the self-destructive trajectory initiated by our rebellion. Whereas disobedience led to estrangement, the righteous obedience of Christ now reckoned to the believer brings the self into a state of communion and favor with God. Having been "rooted and grounded in

love" (Eph 3:17), the self now possesses a covenantal stability—a basal wholeness—that works upward and outward, inhibiting sin's corrupting influence and healing the brokenness of interpersonal sin. The self that formerly hid from the truth of its corruption and embraced self-deception as a defense against guilt and shame now possesses the gift of the Spirit of truth. As Jesus promised, only by means of the truth—of who he is and who we are—will we be finally set free from sin's influence (John 8:32).

To be clear, the "location" of God's palingenetic work should not be circumscribed to any single constitutive coordinate (i.e., the believer's mind/soul). Jesus has not purchased redemption and reconciliation for minds or souls, but for whole persons. Neither should we understand renewal as an exclusively psychological reality. If the self is a mere cognitive construct, then what is the ontological basis for palingenesis? Would its "location," then, not be strictly metaphorical (cf. Campbell, 2012)?[22] If, on the other hand, the believing self is truly new, then it is *both* objectively, ontologically new in Christ, yet being made new through active participation in the work of God's Spirit. Paul notes that there are two aspects to the human self—the inner and the outer. The "inner self" of believers "is being renewed day by day," while the "outer self" awaits its full redemption in the coming age (2 Cor 4:16; see also Rom 8:23; 1 Cor 15:53). Crucially, these two aspects of human nature do not correspond with the dichotomy of Aristotelian "substance" and "accident," much less with physical "substance" and metaphysical "form."[23] Neither is the inner self merely a subjective reality. Rather, the bifurcation of

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[22]I conclude from this that Johnson's (2017) identification of "[t]he self" as "the sum total of all the self-representations or self-schemata that a person possesses" is insufficient (p. 431). If self and self-schema are conflated, a logical problem ensues. To wit, I am tall; tallness is, therefore, an attribute of my self. My conception of myself as tall, however, depends on my accurate self-perception in relation to others (i.e., their height relative to mine). Whether I am truly tall cannot be determined by looking at my self-concept, but at my phenomenal self (in this case, my outer self) in relation to others. As stated in the previous chapter, the human self *in se* possesses an onto-relational status conferred by God having created human persons in his image. Consequently, Christiformity is not delimited to the formation of believers' mental life (i.e., their inner self or self-concept), though due to its eschatological frame, it remains for the present age an essentially hidden dynamic (see 2 Cor 4:18; 1 John 3:2).

[23]This is not to say that philosophical theology ought not to attempt, as Aquinas did, to dialogue with Aristotelian metaphysics. My point here is that the Bible may occupy a more prominent role

the eschatological self of the believer by Paul into inner and outer aspects corresponds to the visible and invisible aspects of the human self-in-relation, aspects which Paul evidently holds to be objective existential realities (cf. Col 1:16).

Although redemption is applied unevenly in the present age, both the inner and outer aspects of the self will be finally restored and renewed by the Spirit in the age to come. The present renewal of the inner self as well as the final eschatological renewal of the outer self—i.e., the resurrection of the body—are realities inaugurated by the indwelling presence of the Spirit of God (Ferguson, 1997; Schreiner, 2008; Wright, 2013). That is to say, God's salvation of persons entails the onto-relational transformation of the inner, invisible aspects of the self. For Paul, this transformation is objectively accomplished by God and subjectively appropriated by the believer. The essence of Paul's indicative/imperative formulations imply that God's *fait accompli* in Christ's work on our behalf must be subjectively appropriated. Nevertheless, he assumes that "[a]t the point of conversion," the individual believer experiences regeneration as "an objective *positional* reality" (Fee, 2009, p. 854, author's emphasis). The ethical demands of the new self include believers' active participation in God's salvific agenda—that is, the working out of our salvation "with fear and trembling" (Phil 2:12). Irrevocably, however, God's renewal of the inner self, inasmuch as it stems from reconciliation to God through the believer's Spirit-mediated union with Christ, has already begun.

The process of this renewal, for the period of time between regeneration and either the death of the body or the return of Christ, will include the mitigation and removal of barriers to self-knowledge, whether due to sin or psychopathology. The supervening presence of the Holy Spirit mitigates sin's corrupting influence thus reversing the trajectory of self-destruction outlined above. Perichoretic relationality—that is, intimate communion between self and God, as well as self and other—provides for the

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in informing such conversations than it historically has.

healing of the self and allows for growth in integrative self-knowledge. The "old" autonomous self, due to its sinful opposition to God, was isolated, broken, and self-deceived. Having been reconciled to God, the "new" self of the believer gains access to the implements of grace—psychospiritual healing and veridical self-perception—that Christ offers through the Spirit. Whether the self-consciousness of the believer shifts commensurably from an "old" to "new" perspective depends largely on whether he or she comes to appropriate by faith the full truthfulness of the gospel and its attending promises. Equally, however, believers must come to view the self as it now is—new in Christ—and subjectively grasp at a deep psychological level the ramifications of their objective renewal in Christ (2 Cor 5:17). As Johnson (2017) confirms,

> [U]nion with Christ and all its spiritual blessings are given to all believers equally and immediately upon faith in him, providing essential resources for the building of their new self. The Lord Almighty says who they are now, so they now have the transcendent right—established outside themselves and their limitations—to appropriate their diving calling, including participation in the trinitarian communion and the construction of a new-self self-understanding, and make it the basis of their well-being and healing. (p. 431)

Christian Psychology in Dialogue

As Paul's self-reflection in Rom 7 suggests, not all aspects of self are directly, wholly observable. For this reason self-knowledge cannot be regarded as veridical until it corresponds to God's knowledge of the person. Within a christological framework, the most direct route to veridical self-knowledge is the "mirror" of the word/Word—that is, the disclosure of God mediated to individual human beings by the perichoretic presence of the Spirit of truth informed by Scripture (Calvin, 2008). We can know ourselves truly as we see ourselves through the eyes of Christ. Yet, as suggested in the preceding section, the barriers of sin and psychopathology all too often obstruct and obfuscate even the believing self's gaze. These are the specks and planks that Jesus warned would make it impossible to accurately perceive both self and others (Matt 7:3ff.). Yet, in directing believers to remove these obstructions, Jesus also affirmed the possibility of veridical

perception of self and other. Clearly, some perspective on self is necessary to fulfill Jesus' command to "first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye" (7:5).[24] As Christ suggests and experience bears out, when the believer's ability to self-perceive has been obstructed by the barriers of sin and psychopathology, God may, and often does, employ a third party—an other to serve as his instrument in facilitating the discovery of such barriers. On this point the account of King David and Nathan the prophet is illustrative (2 Sam 12; cf. Kierkegaard, 1991).

Covenantal anthropology commends dialogue as the cardinal principal of human self-knowledge. The triune God is a self-disclosing being of supreme worth and unwavering good. His knowledge of himself is exhaustive and inerrant; all that he reveals of himself is true. Human beings image God through discourse, in turn discovering, reflecting, and celebrating the truth of our being and nature insofar as it conforms to his own (Johnson, 2007). The realities of sin and psychopathology, however, frustrate this semiodiscursive agenda not only by corrupting our imaging capacities but also by warping and skewing the truth of who we are—who we believe ourselves to be. Although the word/Word reveals us truly, believers will nevertheless struggle with an enduring intrapersonal resistance to veridical self-knowledge. The lingering effects of past sins, the ongoing struggle to overcome remaining sin, and the challenges of dealing with brokenness make it likely—if not inescapable—that believers will continue to see through the glass more dimly than they might otherwise (see 1 Cor 13:12). As God's people, Christians possess the very oracles of God (cf. Rom 3:2); yet, considering these barriers to self-knowledge, we are more likely to employ them in searching out the faults of others than in humbly yielding ourselves to his word/Word. We would do well to

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[24]This may be the only occasion when Jesus directs his most severe pejorative, *hypocrite*, at believers (see Pennington, 2017, p. 260).

recall how God rebukes and disciplines his people when they fail to personally and subjectively apply his self-disclosure (see Heb 3:7ff). Moreover, by engaging in dialogical discourse—allowing for the possibility of a prophetic encounter with another—we increase our chances of discovering and removing barriers to self-knowledge.[25] As it happens, the ethical imperative of agapic, covenantal self-knowledge demands no less.

In Dialogue with Modern Perspectives

The subsequent dialogue requires the prefatory caveat that *self* is rarely distinguished from self-consciousness, self-concept, or mind in much modern psychological literature.[26] A great deal of confusion may be avoided by keeping this firmly in mind. Limited as it is by the constraints of a truncated epistemology, though modern psychology speaks of it, it can never, having divested any presumption of a divine Subject, arrive at the center of human subjectivity or, indeed, the ultimate aim of self-knowledge. This is not to say that modern psychology avoids referring to the self; but it does so without the benefit of any theological perspective anchored, so to speak, in divine self-revelation. So, while orthodox Christology informs a biblical anthropology by elucidating the distinction between self *in se*, its phenomenal nature, and accompanying psychological form(s), modern psychology, in contrast, lacks a realist perspective on the human person and its ethical bearing. As a result, *self* is alternately conceived as a subset

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[25]The Reformed doctrine of Scripture's sufficiency is not overturned in the least by the principal of dialogue. No lacuna is here imputed to either the self-disclosure of God or to the hermeneutical enterprise, broadly conceived. To the contrary, the Scriptures are indeed "sufficient" to address every barrier to self-knowledge; yet, evidently *every* believer will continue to struggle with barriers to self-knowledge. The problem does not lie with the Scriptures, but in our ability to "hear" them. I argue that our ability to rightly interpret and subjectively apply the revelation of God is adversely conditioned by two primary barriers to self-knowledge: sin and psychopathology. Modern psychology, as it happens, has spent considerable effort investigating the latter (i.e., the epiphenomena and remediation of various forms of psychopathology). Scripture's sufficiency is hardly impugned by the careful dialogical inspection of these findings.

[26]Vitz (2006) rightly identifies self as "a subset of person" (p. xi), though his proposal for a "transmodern" conception of self seems overly accommodative.

of the mind (Kohut, 1977), a construct of human cognition (Harter, 2015), a narrative

fiction (Harré, 1998), and a "necessary illusion" (Bromberg, 1998, p. 7). In other words,

modern psychology appears intent on maintaining two contradictory propositions: (1) the

self does not exist except as a hermeneutical apparatus—a linguistic convenience or

narratival expression of diachronic inter/subjectivity; and (2) every human person, though

possessing a common (human) nature, nonetheless bears a singular, idiosyncratic

personal identity *that can be veridically known* by oneself and others. Indeed, the latter is

a fundamental assumption of the psychotherapeutic process. Yet, if the former is true—if

the self is a construct, a rhetorical convenience—to what entity does veridical self-

knowledge correspond?[27]

Among the numerous shortcomings of post/modern versions of psychology is

their lack of a biblical perspective on human beings as created by and accountable to God

(see Vitz & Felch, 2006). This deficiency, due in large part to its presuppositional

commitment to empiricism, positivism,[28] and methodological pragmatism, results in

numerous theoretical and therapeutic shortcomings.[29] Nevertheless, despite its

epistemological blindspots and general disciplinary antipathy toward a theistic

worldview, modern psychology and psychotherapy provide an enormous wealth of

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[27]This problem is not solved by Harré's (1998) attempt to delimit the phenomenal self—his "Self 2"—to the personal attributes of individuals (p. 76). This maneuver irretrievably downgrades the individual human being to a constellation of Aristotelian "accidents" of particularity (see Silverman, 2002). Moreover, it fails the test of linguistic sensibility: *I* am *not* my attributes; rather, I *possess* and *evince* attributes. To posit that *I am* my attributes is tantamount to concluding that *self*-consciousness is an illusion. Atheist and Buddhist philosophers might affirm this concession, but a logical contradiction immediately ensues: if *self* does not exist, then *who* or *what* is experiencing the illusion of *self*-consciousness?

[28]Tellingly, from the perspective of modernity the phrase, "scientific empiricism," is regarded as essentially redundant. However, this approach to the "scientific" study of the self is both epistemologically and therapeutically flawed. In contrast, a thoroughgoing Christian worldview rooted in the Scriptures and grounded in a christological paradigm provides the framework needed for any therapeutic model to possess genuine normativity.

[29]For instance, modern psychology provides no clear, agreed-upon definition of a healthy human self, nor even agreement as to whether such a thing as a self exists. Rooted in a resistance to a covenantal (i.e., theological) perspective on human beings, this failure to adequately identify and define the self has led to innumerable second-tier misconstruals.

observational insight into the pathologies of the phenomenal inner self. Faithful Christians may reasonably object to its philosophical commitment to strict empiricism and monological discourse, and yet relish as a gift from God its genuinely helpful contributions (see Jas 1:17). Within a Reformed epistemological framework, following Augustine and exemplified by Kuyper (1968) and Van Til (1961), the discoveries of secular science, if and when they correspond to how things truly are, may be seen as a gift of God's creation grace. So, Johnson (2007) rightly suggests, "[M]odern psychology's accomplishments constitute genuine scientific advances and deserve to be incorporated into a comprehensive Christian understanding of human beings" (p. 211). When grounded in the truth of the word/Word, the Christian pursuit of truth should be able to recognize the work of God's grace in genuine discoveries of secular science, while simultaneously rejecting the perspective from which such discoveries obtain.

The inner self and Freudian metapsychology. Phenomena suggestive of a conflictual inner self have been well-documented in modern psychology and with greater sophistication than at any other earlier point in history (Eagle, 2018; Lingiardi & McWilliams, 2017; McWilliams, 2011). The rise of Freudian psychoanalysis, in particular, would popularize the notion of a conflicted inner self within a conceptual and rhetorical universe (Christian, Eagle, & Wolitzky, 2017; Mitchell & Black, 2016). Furthermore, the mainstreaming of the language of self and self-consciousness appears to have righted an epistemological wrong nearly a quarter-millennium in the making. Kant, after all, had neatly tucked the self out of sight, defining it strictly in subjective terms: since, as the center of subjectivity the self *in se* cannot be directly observed, the phenomenal self, he reasoned, is all that may be known. In this framework, discrepancies between self and self-consciousness become moot: effectively, we are who we believe ourselves to be. In time, however, Freud would articulate and systematize a perspective that effectively (re)substantializes the self, if only conceptually and narratively, in order

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to explain the conflict evident in resistance to veridical self-knowledge.[30] As modern

psychology would increasingly recognize, Kantian anthropology left this resistance

essentially unexplained. The phenomena of dissociation[31] and self-deception, after all,

suggest the presence of divisions within one's self-consciousness: somehow, the mind

"contains" more than it consciously knows, though the precise mechanism of this

disparity eludes us. For Freud and his disciples, a partial answer at least lay in an

ostensibly bifurcated composition of the mind. The conscious and unconscious mind(s)

together, they reasoned, constitute the totality of human consciousness—though the latter

is typically inferred from psychopathological symptoms.

      Fundamental to Freud's system is his metapsychological theory of the

structured psyche and its libidinal drives (S. Freud, 1905, 1923; see Bucci, 1997).[32] In

conceiving of *the* unconscious, Freud assumed that human beings were driven by

repressed animalistic aggression and sexual impulses (see Mitchell & Black, 2016).[33]

Respective to the knowledge of self, Freud's primary contribution is his putative

discovery of unconscious mentation—that is, mental activity occurring outside the

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[30]Following Freud, psychoanalytic thought holds that the self *is* the mind or consciousness and, therefore, a construct (Bromberg, 1998; cf. Harter, 2015). Self- and other-understandings are also constructs, yet confidence is maintained in the accessibility of veridical self-knowledge (cf. Neisser, 1997).

[31]Freud would eventually settle on *repression* rather than *dissociation* to describe the distantiation of awareness from that which is unpleasant and anxiety inducing (Howell, 2005). Freud regarded *repression* in mechanistic terms as an instinctual response to strictly intrapsychic conflict (S. Freud, 1915a); yet, paradoxically, he held that the conscious mind—the ego—represses unconscious material at the behest of the super-ego (S. Freud, 1923, p. 75). *Dissociation*, on the other hand, suggests an interpersonal context for the structuring of awareness (Bromberg, 1998; Fairbairn, 1929; Whitmer, 2001); as such, it need not be entailed with Freud's highly problematic metapsychology.

[32]Freud's thinking shifted considerably over time. Interestingly, Freud came to realize that his early topographical conception of the mind as conscious, unconscious, and preconscious failed to adequately account for the phenomena he was investigating. As Christian (2017) explains, "A problem challenging this model was Freud's growing recognition that not everything that is unconscious is instinctual in nature" (p. 21). Specifically, Freud discovered that the desire to appear morally upright to self and other (the putative function of the superego) suggests the presence of unconscious motives and avowals (see Bachkirova, 2016). As will be shown, however, Freud's shift to a structural account of the self as ego, id, and superego has its own considerable weaknesses, especially as it relates to the phenomenon of self-deception.

[33]Clearly, Freud's perspective on human nature diverges sharply from a christological anthropology in which humankind is created in the image of God (cf. S. Freud, 1927).

individual's present awareness (S. Freud, 1915b; cf. Ellenberger, 1981).[34] A closer

examination of modern psychological history reveals, however, that Freud may have

given currency to concepts previously employed by Pierre Janet, William James, and

others (Ellenberger, 1981; Howell, 2005).[35] As the historical survey of Christian self-

knowledge in Chapter 1 demonstrates, there have long been keen observers of

discrepancies between self and self-consciousness. The apostle Paul, for example, not

only condemned humanity for its suppression of the knowledge of God (Rom 1:18),[36] he

also lamented the conflictual nature of his own inner self (Rom 7:22–23). The idea that

human beings may possess knowledge—of self or Other/others—of which they are

somehow unaware, therefore, need not entail the problematic freight of its association

with Freud.

By way of modern contrast to Freud, the notion of unconscious mentation

plays a significant role in a number of Kierkegaard's (1980, 1981) writings as well. Apart

from the obvious presuppositional dissimilitudes, what chiefly distinguishes Freud from

Kierkegaard may have been the former's willingness to challenge one of the pillars of

modernist orthodoxy from a strictly secular standpoint (see Evans, 1995).[37] By

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[34]That Freud, along with his disciples, considered that he had discovered *the* unconscious is undeniable (Fromm, 1980; Mitchell & Black, 2016); cf. Erdelyi (1985) who notes that, "the problematical systemic Unconscious is abolished by Freud in 1923, becoming the id" (pp. 64–65).

[35]Janet certainly believed, and complained loudly (1925), that Freud had stolen many of his ideas and simply renamed them. So, allegedly, what Janet called the "subconscious" Freud would label the "unconscious"; Janet's "function of reality" became Freud's "reality principle," etc. (Ellenberger, 1981, p. 539).

[36]So, Schreiner (1998): "[A]ll people possess knowledge of God, even though it has been repressed and is not saving" (p. 87); cf. Calvin's (2008) "sense of deity" (p. 9).

[37]Freud (1933) described the unconscious id as a "cauldron full of seething excitations" (p. 73). Evidently, his understanding of human beings was greatly conditioned by his tensional understanding of the relationship between Darwinist naturalism and Hobbesian political theory (Mitchell & Black, 2016). So, "Human beings, in Freud's account, are . . . wired the way Freud and his contemporaries understood animals to be, oriented toward pursuing simple pleasures with ruthless abandon. . . . The project of childhood is socialization, the transformation of the infant, with his or her bestial impulses, into the adult, with his or her complex psychic apparatus and its intricate and elaborate system of checks and barriers channeling those impulses and aims into socially acceptable forms of civilized living" (p. 112). This bears little resemblance to Kierkegaard. Evans (1995) notes a further distinction between Freud's and Kierkegaard's respective perspectives, namely, the latter's view of the "unconscious" as "something I have

questioning the regnant rationalist dogma regarding the intelligibility of human

subjectivity, Freud effectively turned modernist anthropological optimism on its head. As

his close associate and hagiographer Fromm (1980) concludes,

> [His] theory [of the unconscious] was radical because it attacked the last fortress of man's belief in his omnipotence and omniscience, the belief in his conscious thought as an ultimate datum of human experience. Galileo had deprived man of the illusion that the earth was the center of the world, Darwin of the illusion that he was created by God, but nobody had questioned that his conscious thinking was the last datum on which he could rely. Freud deprived man of his pride in his rationality . . . and discovered that . . . most of conscious thought is . . . a mere rationalization of thoughts and desires which we prefer not to be aware of. (pp. 133–134)

For his temerity, Ricoeur (1977) dubbed Freud, along with Marx and Nietzsche, a

"master" in the "school of suspicion" (p. 32). Yet, only by ignoring the Christian

Scriptures, along with a broad spectrum of Christian pastoral writers, can modern

psychology—let alone Freud—be regarded as having discovered humanity's capacity for

subliminal mentation. What Freud did accomplish, and what Christians may rightly

celebrate, was the overthrow of the Cartesian/Kantian self's overweening hubris and its

unwarranted pretense at self-knowledge.

Dynamic psychology and the self-concept. Although in modern psychology a

divided and conflicted self-concept first appears in James (1961, 2012) and shows up

with varying degrees of emphasis in other contemporary theoretical models, it has

become most seminal and paradigmatic within the various related schools of thought

falling under the rubric of psychodynamic psychology (Lingiardi & McWilliams, 2017;

Summers & Barber, 2010). While all dynamic theories of the human self-concept, or ego,

trace their provenance to classical psychoanalysis, most have evolved considerably over

the past century from orthodox Freudian thought (Mitchell & Black, 2016; Safran, 2012).

Since Freud, the inner self of dynamic psychologies has been generally characterized in

terms of the conflictual relationship between an individual's *conscious* and *unconscious*

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formed, and therefore something for which I may be in some ways responsible" (p. 81).

mind, though understandings of these terms and the ostensible reasons for the conflict have moved far beyond a classical understanding (Christian, 2017; Eagle, 2010; Mitchell & Black, 2016). What now remains of Freud's contribution to contemporary psychodynamic psychology bears a resemblance in some respects, yet has largely shed much of what is centrally important in classical psychoanalysis.[38]

Perspectives on the dynamic self. With the waning influence of classical psychoanalysis, a diversity of approaches have arisen in its wake. In addition to classical and contemporary psychoanalytic methods, McWilliams (2011) counts the respective schools of ego psychology (see Blanck & Blanck, 1974; Hartmann, 1965), the object relations tradition (see Fairbairn, 1952; Greenberg & Mitchell, 1983; Guntrip, 1973), self psychology (see Kohut, 1977; Wolf, 1988), and relational psychotherapy (see DeYoung, 2003; Stern, 2010) among its major theoretical branches.[39] Together, these demonstrate the profound contribution to modern psychology and psychotherapy Freud made with his vision of the psychic structures and dynamics of mental life, while simultaneously confirming the inherent instability of his idiosyncratic conceptions of the self. Accordingly, Bucci (1997) describes "psychodynamic psychology . . . as a rigorous and focused attempt to apply the methods of empirical science to the propositions of clinical theory, while abandoning the [Freudian] metapsychological framework" (pp. 50–51).

The "schizoid self." Every psychodynamic school emphasizes, both for

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[38]For example, few contemporary psychoanalytical theorists hold any longer to Freud's biologically conceived drive/instinct theory of the unconscious. Most have shifted toward a relationally structured understanding of the self (see Fisher & Greenberg, 1996; Greenberg & Mitchell, 1983; Aron & Mitchell, 1999; Mitchell, 2000).

[39]Summers & Barber (2010) list six essential features common to all psychodynamic psychotherapies: (1) the use of "exploratory, interpretative, and supportive interventions"; (2) "frequent sessions"; (3) an "emphasis on uncovering painful affects, understanding past painful experiences"; (4) facilitating "emotional experience" and increasing "understanding"; (5) focus on "the therapeutic relationship, including attention to transference and countertransference"; and (6) an openness to "a wide range of techniques" (p. 12).

theoretical and clinical normativity, the "*internal experience*" of the individual (Lingiardi & McWilliams, 2017, p. 6; authors' emphasis). As such, dynamic theories of self tend to stress the fragmented and conflictual nature of self-consciousness as well as the tendency to distance oneself from awareness of that which is unpleasant or anxiety inducing. The terms by which the diverse schools of thought characterize these phenomena sometimes vary. So, for instance, psychoanalytic psychology and its various derivative models often speak in terms of a developmentally split self-consciousness, or "schizoid ego" (see McWilliams, 2011). Regarding the schizoid nature of the human mind, Fairbairn (1952) asserts,

> [E]verybody without exception must be regarded as schizoid. . . . The qualification which confers meaning on the concept is that everything depends upon the mental level which is being considered. The fundamental schizoid phenomenon is the presence of splits in the ego; and it would take a bold man to claim that his ego was so perfectly integrated as to be incapable of revealing any evidence of splitting at the deepest levels, or that such evidence of splitting of the ego could in no circumstances declare itself at more superficial levels, even under conditions of extreme suffering or hardship or deprivation. (pp. 7–8)

In other words, while human beings may pretend to a unitary, contiguous self-awareness reflective of an integrative equanimity, there will likely always be depths of the human psyche that are dissociated from present awareness. These dissociated aspects of the self, in essentially healthy individuals, contribute to the dis-ease of the mind in distressing or disruptive circumstances; whereas, in more seriously disordered minds they can result in severe psychopathology (Bromberg, 1998; Howell, 2005; McWilliams, 2011). Dynamic psychology holds that the self (i.e., self-consciousness) splits in the context of its formative development during childhood.

Defined by the unipolar epistemology of modernity, psychodynamic psychology and psychotherapy presume that the schizoid self-consciousness can be made whole through reflective self-knowledge, though substantial differences have arisen as to the role relationship plays in this process (Aron & Mitchell, 1999; Bromberg, 1998; Eagle, 2013; Mitchell, 2000). For psychoanalytic models adhering to a more classical

conception of the self, knowledge of self is the sole criterion for psychotherapeutic

change. The means of overcoming barriers to self-knowledge is therefore unidimensional.

According to Greenberg & Mitchell (1983),

> [T]he goal of [classical] analysis and its therapeutic action [is] . . . enhancing the power of the ego by increasing its knowledge and its hegemony over the drives. . . . By knowing himself better, a knowledge which includes awareness of and respect for previously disavowed aspects of his personality, the patient will be more able to renounce old, impossible, and frustrating aims and to embrace new ones which are attainable and true to himself. . . . Insight alone is curative. (p. 390)

This theory of personality most closely approximates Freud's concern to identify infantile

and biologically instantiated drives that had become split off and repressed in his patients

(S. Freud, 1923).[40] The impulses of the infant self may serve well enough in early life,

but are considerably less desirable in otherwise mature adults, thus the need to construct

elaborate internal defenses against their expression in either cognition or overt behavior.

As the analyst brings such motives, fantasies, and illicit desires to light, the individual

would come to experience therapeutic growth. In other words, repressed thoughts and

impulses come to be integrated into conscious awareness and resolved over time with the

largely passive influence of the analyst.

Developmental factors. Notably, early psychoanalytic theory held that the

environment played little to no role in the development of the self.[41] Developmental

theories of the dynamic self would eventually stem from innovators' dissatisfaction with

classical conceptions (Karen, 1998). As attachment theorist Bowlby (1988) recalls of his

own psychoanalytic training,

> Anyone who places emphasis on what a child's real experiences may have been . . . was regarded as pitifully naïve. Almost by definition it was assumed that anyone interested in the external world could not be interested in the internal world, indeed

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[40]Freud believed that a split in the self (i.e., self-consciousness) arises due to conflict between the primitive self—Freud's id—and the self-governing ego. The job of the analyst is, therefore, to assist the adult patient in resolving internal conflict through integrative self-understanding.

[41]The exception to this is Freud's understanding of the super-ego, which he held to be a function of socialization.

was almost certainly running away from it. (pp. 48–49)

Early Freudian orthodoxy held that splits in the self-consciousness and the resultant psychological distress were strictly the result of the repression of "the gratification and discharge of sexual instinctual drives as central aspects of adequate functioning" (Eagle, 2013, p. 64). It did not take long, however, for critics of this model to arise from within the field. Notably, their objections to the classical framework grew out of an increasing awareness of the role social-developmental factors play in the growth of individual persons.

Dissatisfied with the lack of explanatory power in Freud's drive theory of the personality and the lingering presumption of autonomous therapeutic action assumed by classical psychoanalysis, an increasing number of mid-century psychodynamic theorists would eventually initiate a major revision in Freud's conceptual schema (Eagle, 2013; Greenberg & Mitchell, 1983; Mitchell & Black, 2016). The principal basis of the shift in psychoanalytical thinking stemmed from a growing appreciation of the seminal influence of early childhood relationships in the formation of personality and character, and the role they continue to play in adults (Karen, 1998; Mitchell, 2000). As a result of this shift toward developmental aspects, so also did discussions of psychotherapeutic means move from autonomous, cognitive factors toward relationality. In their summary of relational psychoanalysis, Greenberg & Mitchell (1983) observe,

> [S]ince it is the quality of early relationships that are seen as developmentally crucial, . . . it is the quality of the analytic relationship that is seen as fundamentally therapeutic. . . . Although the analyst may interpret, may communicate information, it is not the information alone that is understood as producing change. The nature of the relationship that develops around this communication . . . is essential to cure. (p. 391)

The exchange of information—i.e., communication—that occurs in the context of the therapeutic relationship effects a benign, constructive knowing and being-known essential for the remediation of the disordered individual (Stern, 2010). The analyst and patient come to understand each other through the dynamic exchange of deep, empathic relatedness commonly known as *transference* and *countertransference*. As self develops

an abiding interpersonal connectedness with other, adverse childhood experiences of self can be reformulated, resolved, and integrated into adult experience.[42]

By the 1920s, borne out of his work with the extreme psychopathology of schizophrenic patients, Sullivan (1940, 1953) was beginning to posit an interpersonal structuring of the inner self, wherein, he believed, relationally induced anxiety stemming from early childhood experiences contributes to a divided and discontinuous subjectivity in adults. His developmental perspective on the self has come to characterize much of contemporary dynamic psychology (see Mitchell & Black, 2016). In particular, Sullivan believed that the relationship between mother and child critically impacts the development of the self, whether toward a basically whole or schizoid schema. In other words, he "envisioned mind as thoroughly social" (Mitchell & Black, 2016, p. 71) with external experiences—i.e., nurture—providing the primary means by which young selves develop. What distinguishes Sullivan's view of psychopathology from Freud's is his belief that internal splitting develops during childhood as a result, primarily, of "bad" parenting.[43] These splits in consciousness that form in childhood persist as schisms in the child's perception of self. Anxiety serves to mitigate undesirable qualities in the self in order to maintain the good graces of the other. In adulthood, anxiety may continue to generate a compensatory need to bring about resolution for internal conflicts and to stabilize relational bonds.

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[42]Mitchell & Greenberg (1983) unwittingly employ the language of *perichoresis* in describing the relationship of patient and analyst as "transference and countertransference reciprocally generate and interpenetrate each other" (p. 389). Likewise, Pizer (1998) occasionally employs quasi-religious language in descriptive ways: "While engaged in the process of [analysis], the patient experiences his participation in a kind of duet. He uses his voice to render the imperatives and the potentials in his own subjective world and hears the analyst's voice offering other-than-me substance that, in moments of grace, he may find and use to effect transformations in the core of the self" (p. 26). Although devoid of any theological content or reference, such formulations nevertheless accord with the implications of a Christian account of the covenantal self.

[43]Specifically, Sullivan (1953) held that the alternation of anxiety and calm on the part of the mother, corresponding in the child's mind to "bad mother" and "good mother," effectively conditions the child to view him/herself as either "bad me" or "good me" depending on the response of the mother to the child's behavior. Extreme anxiety might result in the dissociation of some aspect of the self—whatever "mother" might disapprove of—as "not me."

Attachment theory. Alongside these developments in psychoanalysis,

Bowlby (1988) contributes another vital component to modern dynamic psychology with

his development of attachment theory. Bowlby's theory of attachment, more so than most

contemporary forms of psychoanalysis, maintains a biological basis for human

relationality that is firmly rooted in evolutionary and ethological theory (Eagle, 2013).[44]

Viewing attachment theory from a psychoanalytical perspective, Eagle determines that it

evinces a tendency to see human social functioning in terms of mechanistic behavioral

systems—something of a "biological instinct theory" of interpersonal relationality (p.

79).[45] Bowlby's (1988) evolutionary bias led him to discern a link between animal and

human attachment patterns. From this he concluded that social relationships are

essentially preprogrammed and develop in predictably linear ways provided the proper

conditions. In "[s]tudy after study," he observes, "healthy, happy, and self-reliant

adolescents and young adults are the products of stable homes in which both parents give

a great deal of time and attention to the children" (p. 5). On the other hand, children who

lack the proper nurturing inputs of a healthy relational context develop insecure patterns

of attachment that persist in adulthood. The onset of psychopathology in adulthood,

again, occurs as the predictable result of lapses in parental efficacy. Respective to self-

knowledge, Ainsworth & Bowlby (1991) argue, "What cannot be communicated to the

[m]other cannot be communicated to the self" (p. 333).

Object relations psychology. According to the theory of object relations, a

child's sense of self develops in relation to his or her primary caregivers—unflatteringly

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[44]Although significant divergences between psychoanalysis and attachment theory persist, the initial "bad blood" between these two schools of thought has begun to dissipate (Fonagy, 2001, p. 1; see H. Steele & Steele, 2017).

[45]Eagle (2013) finds a greater affinity between Bowlby's theory of attachment and Fairbairn's object-relations theory. Fairbairn (1952) would diverge from classic analytical thought in arguing that "libido is primarily object-seeking," rather than pleasure-seeking (p. 149). As Fonagy (2001) suggests, there is a subtle difference between Bowlby and Fairbairn as to whether *attachment*—the child's physical proximity to the caregiver—or *object*—the caregiver him/herself—is the libidinal goal.

known as "objects" (Greenberg & Mitchell, 1983).[46] In what would amount to a major challenge to Freudian orthodoxy, early objects-relations theorists (e.g., Fairbairn, 1952; Klein, 1955) would posit that the child's internal experience of self develops in relation to these external objects. Over time, the child's real and, in many cases, fantasized object-relations are organized internally becoming "important building blocks for one's experience of self" (Safran, 2012, pp. 37–38). Since the experience of self is organized around one's experiences of other(s), self-consciousness accumulates in this relational context. As the theory suggests, however, the development of the child's self-consciousness can be arrested or skewed by lapses in healthy relationality. As Safran concludes, "[T]he depriving or traumatizing aspects of the significant other that provide the raw material for the unconscious fantasy or internal object inevitably end up becoming part of the internal structure or enduring psychic organization" of the developing self (p. 38).

Due to their own inner conflictedness, parents and other close relations may behave at times in confusing and contradictory ways (see Klebanov & Travis, 2015). Even an otherwise attentive, nurturing parent may respond harshly to the child for a relatively minor infraction. Potentially, this unexpected, and intense experience of parental disfavor triggers an internal conflict in the child. On the one hand, there may be a strong desire to move toward the parent for comfort; yet, since the parent is simultaneously the source of discomfort, the child feels compelled to move away from the parent who has suddenly become unsafe. Depending on the length and severity of such contradictoriness in parental behavior, the child can develop a dysfunctional pattern of object-relations[47] that will then likely be carried into adulthood. If such occurrences

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[46]Fairbairn (1952) holds that, in the case of the infant's "oral orientation toward the breast," the relation is to a "partial object" (p. 13).

[47]Or "insecure attachment," according to attachment theory (Bowlby, 1988).

are few in number, the child will likely negotiate the meaning of the conflict by dissociating from awareness the parent's "bad" behavior, if only to preserve the relationship (Howell, 2005). Alternatively, the child may come to internalize the parent's disapproving projection of a "bad" child into his/her identity, which the child constructs, over time, as an intrapsychic object in the context of relationship. Within a corrosive relational context, the child's sense of self inevitably develops along predictably disordered and dysfunctional lines. In extreme cases, the relational damage endured by the young self can lead to severe psychopathological sequelae in adulthood (Dutra, Bianchi, Siegel, & Lyons-Ruth, 2009).

Developmental Dissociation

At the most fundamental level, "[d]issociation means simultaneously knowing and not knowing" (van der Kolk, 2015, p. 123; see also Whitmer, 2001). Notwithstanding the appearance of paradox, by some mysterious means, the human mind has the ability to distance itself from full awareness of that which disturbs and overwhelms its coping capacity. As the preceding discussion of dynamic psychology suggests, the developing self is vulnerable to disruptions in relational equilibrium, insecure patterns of attachment, and the emotional upheaval associated with psychosocial distress (Dutra et al., 2009). The ability of the self to dissociate from intolerable experiences appears to be a function of an essentially automatic defensive system (Putnam, 1997; Wieland, 2015). According to Carlson, Yates, & Sroufe (2009), "Dissociation is a complex psychophysiological process" that is most likely "integrally related to the developing self" (p. 39; see also Putnam, 1994). Apparently, once the tolerance of the child has been exceeded, dissociation is unconsciously and automatically deployed in defense of the young self. What the child cannot bear to know—of self and other—the mind obfuscates. In doing so, the form of the child's consciousness of self is unavoidably altered to accommodate a now-truncated record of experience. As Howell (2005) concludes, "Dissociation is one

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way that the psyche modifies its own structure to accommodate interaction with a frightening, but needed, and usually loved, attachment figure" (p. 3). Unacceptable and unbearable experiences are segmented and compartmentalized in service to the core self.[48]

Pathological dissociation. According to the standard account, dissociation occurs along a spectrum from normal/adaptive responses on the one end to pathological/maladaptive responses on the other (Bromberg, 2009; Chu, 2011; Howell, 2005; Putnam, 1994; van der Hart, Nijenhuis, & Steele, 2006). In children and adults dissociation is a normal, reflexive response to overwhelming psychological and somatic stimuli typically associated with traumatic events (Briere & Scott, 2014; Lynch, 2012). According to the standard nosological criteria, "Dissociative disorders are characterized by a disruption of and/or discontinuity in the normal integration of consciousness, memory, identity, emotion, perception, body representation, motor control, and behavior" that are "frequently found in the aftermath of trauma" (American Psychiatric Association, 2013, p. 291). Yet, as Dutra et al. (2009) have observed, traumagenic factors alone do not supply an adequate account of the etiology of pathological dissociation in adults; evidently, additional early developmental deprivations contribute to the breakdown of the normal integrative process. Along these lines, Liotti (1992, 2009) suggests a link between attachment style and dissociative phenomena. He specifically points to research indicating the likelihood that disorganized infant attachment is predictive of dissociative experiences in adolescents and adults (see Brown, 2009; Carlson, 1998; Ogawa, Sroufe, Weinfield, Carlson, & Egeland, 1997). In other words, the phenomena associated with pathological dissociation in adults may depend less on traumagenic factors than on a

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[48]The remarkable degree to which brain and mind interrelate can be seen in correlations between psychological and neurological compartmentalization of traumatic experience (see van der Kolk, 2015).

systemic failure to securely attach to parental caregivers during the child's formative years.

Nevertheless, occurrences of severe, chronic childhood sexual and physical abuse correlate very highly with the diagnosis of dissociative disorders in adults (Chefetz, 2015; Howell, 2011; K. Steele & van der Hart, 2009; van der Kolk, 2015). Human beings develop an integrated sense of self over time provided the proper nurture and relational foundation (Cozolino, 2017; Siegel, 2012).[49] Children naturally learn to integrate and regulate disparate states of experience and their associated behaviors, feelings, etc., as they mature and grow (Harter, 2015). Chronically abused and neglected children, on the other hand, will unconsciously and reflexively employ discrete experience states as a means of sheltering the delicate psyche from traumatic experiences (Putnam, 1997; Wieland, 2015). Physical pain and sexual assault perpetrated over the course of weeks, months or even years, betrayal of trust, mandated secrecy often accompanied by threats, and the concomitant feelings of powerlessness, isolation, and shame together undermine any sense of subjective unity or wholeness (see Finkelhor & Browne, 1985). Over time, these lingering divisions can develop from disparate experience states into discrete identities and accompanying frameworks of meaning.

Pathological dissociation and dynamic psychology. Some serious objections have been raised from within modern psychology concerning the standard nosological account of psychopathology (Colbert, 2000; Frances, 2013; Gonçalves, Machado, Korman, & Angus, 2002; Houts, 2002; Paris, 2015). As Ingersoll and Marquis (2014) point out, there is a "paradox" inherent in considering mental disorders as exclusively

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[49]Siegel (2012) alternately defines *integration* as the "mind's process of linking differentiated parts" and "the fundamental mechanism of health and wellbeing" (p. A1-40). He essentially describes three levels—the neurobiological, the intrapsychic, and the interpersonal, to which a Christian perspective may reasonably add a fourth, namely, the psychospiritual (i.e., "integration" or union with Christ). Curt Thompson (2010), in synthesizing the findings of neuroscience and Christian spirituality, employs the descriptor "dis-integrated" (p. 4) in speaking of the breakdown of normal integrative development.

medical or physical diseases:

> In physical disorders the symptom depends on the disease—meaning that when a symptom appears, a medical doctor tries to trace it to an underlying disease process. . . . This is not the case with mental disorders. In mental disorders, rather than symptoms leading to tests that reveal a disease process, *the symptoms . . . are themselves considered the disease*. Of the hundreds of diagnoses in the DSM-5, *not one* qualifies as a specifically identifiable disease process (which has a physiological/neurological marker) underlying the set of symptoms. (pp. 36–37; emphasis in original)

In particular, dissociative disorders highlight this critical shortcoming in the descriptive taxonomy of mental disorders as *diseases* or *illnesses* of the mind. The assumption implicit in a nosological model is that mental disorders arise causally from organic or physiological conditions (cf. Lingiardi & McWilliams, 2017).[50] Such assumptions are consistent with a materialistic account of human beings which disregards the reality of the inner self and its vulnerability to psychospiritual harm. But the medical model of psychopathology possesses very little explanatory power with respect to the etiology of pathological dissociation. What, after all, explicates the connection between insecure attachment and dissociative coping strategies? How is psychological injury—i.e., trauma—to be understood, if not as a wound inflicted upon the self? And from what organic or neurobiological criterion does the development of a split psyche arise? Apart from the thorny philosophical and theological problems that accompany modern agnosticism concerning the self, biologically-based nosological approaches to psychopathology simply cannot account for the subjective sense of multiplicity evident in cases of structural dissociation. Dynamic psychology, on the other hand, offers a more penetrating perspective on human subjectivity. As Howell (2011) succinctly articulates, "Relationality, multiplicity, and traumatic dissociation all come together to frame a different way of understanding the human mind" (p. 29).

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[50]Medication often offers a reduction in symptomology through the regulation of brain chemistry. Medical interventions of this sort offer no cure for a disordered psyche, but can provide an important buttress against overwhelming depression or anxiety.

Implications for self-knowledge. Human subjectivity—and, more specifically, the individual's experience of self—develops in the context of relationship (Harter, 2015), that is, intersubjectively. We first become aware of self and other at a very early developmental stage. Considered globally, self-consciousness bears both a synchronic and diachronic character. In other words, under normal conditions, one's sense of self entails a paradoxical certainty that I-am-the-same-me-as-ever, whereas, simultaneously, I-am-not-who-I-once-was. Autobiographical memory and human embodiedness appear to play crucial roles in granting one's subjective sense of self idiosyncratic personal identity. Crucially, the degree to which one possesses a sense of singularity and continuity appears to depend on whether one's self-perception gains sufficient anchorage at an early developmental stage. The care and nurture of parents, in particular, are vitally important for a child's ability to establish a firm self-concept that is relatively unbroken and discontinuous (Klebanov & Travis, 2015). On the other hand, relational instability and insecurity deprives the child of the necessary prerequisites for a firm and enduring sense of singularity. Moreover, as a species of self-threatening injury, trauma can greatly undermine the stability of the individual's self-concept (van der Kolk, 2015). Developmental or "complex" trauma can eventually lead to "breakdowns in the most fundamental outcomes of healthy psychobiological development" (J. D. Ford & Courtois, 2009, p. 16). Over time, severe interpersonal evil perpetrated against a young psyche will foment a multiple sense of self—a *we*-ness rather than a *me*-ness.

Developmental dissociation appears to offer a cognitive cushion, so to speak, against harm inflicted upon the young self (Wieland, 2015). This defensive strategy, however, comes at the cost of a genuine subjective unity in that it disrupts the normal integrative trajectory of the self-consciousness, depriving the child of a sense of singularity and continuity. In adulthood, dissociative disorders interpose significant barriers to self-knowledge. As Bromberg (2011) explains, pathological dissociation phenomenologically expresses the individual's "alienation from aspects of *self*" (p. 7;

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emphasis in original). That which in the interpersonal development *of* the self became unbearable results in estrangement *from* the self. It is expressly no longer *me*, but *not-me*, who has endured the horrors of abuse and trauma. Under the threat of annihilation, the self divests itself of a perception of integrity discarding a degree of narratival and autobiographical continuity. What remains of the individual's self-concept becomes more or less fragmented and disjunct leaving the path to integrative self-knowledge unclear and uncertain.

A Covenantal Response to
Dynamic Psychology

Psychodynamic psychotherapy suggests that the internal resolution of a conflicted self takes place through the integration into conscious awareness of one's disorganized and disordered sense of self in the context of relationship (Summers & Barber, 2010). To the degree that this premise can be sequestered from the shortcomings of post/modern anthropology and epistemology, it may well be compatible with a covenantal approach to self-knowledge. As a supplement to orthodox pastoral theology, dynamic psychology offers a more penetrating analysis of the phenomenon of dissociation as well as the psychological means by which human beings persist in intrapsychic conflict. In their evaluation of psychodynamic psychotherapy from a Christian perspective, Mangis, Jones, & Butman (2011) regard as compatible efforts "to understand the profound impact of early relationships on our character, the mysterious way in which we are shaped by unconscious processes, and the pervasive presence of psychological conflict in our lives" (p. 135). Arguably, the latter two bear considerable consonance with the apostle Paul's own personal experience of intrasubjective conflict.

A developmentally sensitive account of psychopathology provides a helpful corollary to a Christian understanding of sin and brokenness. Not all barriers to self-knowledge, in other words, bear the moral weight of pride, sloth, or falsehood. To suggest otherwise unjustifiably conflates the agency and responsibility of abuser and

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survivor. Since pathological dissociation occurs as a sequela of interpersonal evil, structural impediments to veridical self-perception can hardly be regarded as morally blameworthy. Truly, all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God; but children who suffer at the hands of abusers are *not* somehow guilty of the sins perpetrated against them.[51] They tragically suffer the consequences of another's sin, but the guilt of that sin rests squarely on the head of their abuser(s). Neither strictly nosological or hamartiological frameworks adequately explicate pathological dissociation. Furthermore, even normal, adaptive forms of dissociation occur as automatic creaturely responses to traumagenic dynamics. As Christian psychologist Frank Lake (2005) concludes, "The entire subject of the psychoneuroses, including depression along with hysteria and the schizoid reaction, is a corollary of the dissociation or splitting off of intolerable experiences of the self, either in its deprivations or its depravities" (p. 460). Sin stands as a universal barrier to self-knowledge. Nevertheless, the phenomenon of dissociation implicates a diminished capacity for dipolar self-reflection among victims of interpersonal evil.[52]

The seminal principles for secular psychodynamic remediation of trauma-induced dissociation, including the pathological splitting off of consciousness that follows from complex trauma, are empathic relationship and dialogue (DeYoung, 2003). Pressley & Hoek (2014) explain, "In order to facilitate the necessary conditions for emotional healing and behavioral change, the therapist has to provide a secure and safe enough environment for a client (child or adult) to release internalized 'bad objects' from

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[51]Howell (2011) observes that "Freud's views on instinctual drives and infantile development for the most part left out exogamous [*sic*] trauma and blamed the child as the guilty one for having incestuous wishes" (p. 31). In fact, Christian approaches to counseling that emphasize sin and obedience to God to the exclusion of other etiological factors imply the same thing. There is a high risk of retraumatization for survivors of complex trauma by counselors who do not adequately account for the traumagenic dynamics of abuse.

[52]Natural disasters and other deprivations, although impersonal, also contribute breakdown of healthy psychological development in innumerable ways.

the unconscious" (p. 254). When it occurs in a benign relational context, the externalization of conflict through dialogue aids in integration. Inarguably, caring, compassionate concern for others and a willingness to provide supportive help to the needy are hallmarks of New Testament ethics (Bonhoeffer, 2005). Whether the church can readily perpetuate Jesus' mission of providing "rest" for the "heavy laden" may depend on its ability to identify the unseen burdens borne by survivors of trauma and abuse (see Simpson, 2013; Stanford, 2017). Relational psychotherapy, in its attempts to ease the burdens of the afflicted and heal the broken through empathic relationality, in many ways images the agapic concern of the triune God, if only partially and unconsciously. Final, eschatological remediation of the *curvum in se* self and integration of its fragmented self-consciousness can only actualize through union with Christ. Yet, the principles of dynamic psychotherapy mirror at the psychosocial discursive level the means by which final eschatological healing takes place.[53]

In addition to these points of consonance, at least one serious disjunction must also be noted. At the theoretical or metapsychological level, dynamic psychology rests on a strictly modernist foundation. As such, it eschews the Christian doctrines of the *imago dei* and hereditary sin, which together point out the basal antinomy of the fallen human condition. Created by God in his image, the original state of human beings was that of sinless perfection and communion with God. Since the fall, though still bearing a vestigial goodness by reason of the constitutive *imago*, human beings enter the world covenantally estranged from God and thus congenitally broken and *curvum in se*

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[53]Yet another reason to stipulate an ontological distinction between self and soul is the rhetorical impression given by referring to counselors as "soul physicians" (see, e.g., Kellemen, 2007; Kemp, 1947). This jargon, though seemingly innocuous, stems from an overly dualist anthropology that dichotomizes human nature into outer and inner essences claiming the latter as the sole proprietorship of God and the church. To reiterate, Jesus offers salvation not to *souls* but to *persons*. A biblical ecology of the whole person suggests that God's eschatological concern is to redeem the whole person, not just the inner, psychospiritual self (see 1 Cor 15:54). Consequently, creaturely care and concern for the *inner* self may justifiably be termed *psychotherapy* or *soul care*. Since neither label describes the work that only God can do in bringing about final salvation, the former need not bear the polemical weight of association with secular competitors to the Christian faith.

(Bonhoeffer, 1996; see Ps 58:3). At a strictly phenomenological level, this reality only becomes visible in the universally sinful inclination of the human heart (Rom 3:10–11). Dynamic psychology, as an intellectual heir to modernist anthropology, regards the newborn self as an integral whole. According to Fairbairn (1954), "the pristine personality of the child consists of a unitary dynamic ego" (p. 107). Contemporary theorists have built on this thesis arguing that the infant self possesses a "primordial density" (Loewald, 1989, p. 180) or an "original, primal unity" (Mitchell, 2000, p. 4) undivided and undifferentiated by schism. These together suggest that, provided the ideal environment for its development, the adult self could achieve perfect equanimity and wholeness. A covenantal model of the self, on the other hand, rejects the possibility that human beings could achieve psychospiritual unity or wholeness apart from their reconciliation to, and union with, God-in-Christ.[54]

The Dialogical Relationship of Sin and Psychopathology

Dynamic psychology, Christianly understood, commends itself as a welcome ancillary to a christological anthropology, though caveats are warranted. As has already been noted, the language of sin and fallenness is conspicuously absent from most modern anthropologies (Menninger, 1973). Although the field of trauma studies commends itself to deeper probing of the psychospiritual roots of interpersonal evil, most writers refrain from venturing beyond the strictly clinical sphere (though cf. Herman, 2015; Howell, 2005). Whether consciously or not, the impression given is that human nature is perfectible without God: given the proper care and nurture, in other words, people will

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[54]This crucial point appears lost on Price (2002) who argues, "The anthropological holism that Barth advocates . . . finds a parallel in object relations [theory]. . . . Barth considers the human being as a dynamic and integrated whole, in ordered relation to God, self, and others. In similar fashion, object relations developed to the point where it could not accept the Freudian compartmentalization of the human being" (p. 225). Price is, perhaps, half-right; but the half he gets wrong is the concern Barth (2010) was most keen to emphasize: covenantal human relationality depends entirely on the person and work of Christ and believers' union with him. While object relations psychology corrects Freud in a number of helpful ways, its philosophical commitment to secularism remains expressly Freudian.

be, and do, good. Regrettably, this blind spot has come to characterize much of the Christian psychotherapeutic community at least insofar as it relies on modernist assumptions (Adams, 1986; McMinn, 2004; Powlison, 2003). As McRay et al., (2016) lament, "There certainly seems to be a fear among Christians [in the field] that if they reference sin they will be associated with those who essentially use the explanatory framework to bully others" (p. 95). On the other hand, as Johnson (2017) notes, Christian theologians rarely accommodate the reality of psychopathology and tend instead to focus exclusively on sin.[55] A dialogical perspective on the self, in contrast, will view sin and psychopathology in complementary and interactive ways. Not limited to a single discursive domain—whether theological or psychological, along with their accompanying explanatory frameworks—this broader perspective promises more holistic account of the fallen human condition.

The Paradox of Self-Deception

The problem of self-deception illustrates the value of a dialogical perspective on sin and psychopathology. This becomes particularly clear when considering the close relationship between pathological dissociation and self-deception. An individual's barriers to self-knowledge will likely stem from both sin and psychopathology, but determining the contributory degree of each may prove especially difficult. When it comes to what we can know about God and self, human beings are prone to "hinder the truth in unrighteousness" (Rom 1:19 ASV). In other words, there is a subliminal yet sinful motivation at work beneath agnosticism regarding the respective natures and forms of God and the self (Calvin, 2008). Yet, it also seems likely that some limitations to self-knowledge (as well as the knowledge of God) stem from factors beyond the personal control of the individual. Pathological dissociation, for example, disrupts the ability of

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[55]Sin can be understood as a form—indeed the most heinous form—of psychopathology.

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the individual to engage in dipolar self-reflection. Clearly, God does not charge the individual with sin for damage inflicted by others. To the extent that healing for psychopathological barriers like structural dissociation can be effected, self-knowledge is both means and end for the psychotherapeutic enterprise. In contrast, self-deception is both an ethical and a biopsychosocial problem. In other words, the ability of the individual to engage in self-deception is fomented by *both* sin and dissociation.

A supreme irony of the modern age is the fact that, with the notable exception of Kierkegaard,[56] inquiry into the phenomenon of self-deception has been dominated by *secular* philosophers and psychologists. Since Sartre's (1993) notion of "bad faith" (*mauvaise foi*), in fact, the phenomenon of self-deception has preoccupied modern philosophy (see, e.g., Barnes, 1997; McLaughlin & Rorty, 1988; Räikkä, 2014). Fueling the numerous secular attempts to comprehend self-deception is a confounding paradox— a puzzling gap inherent in the phenomenon. Put another way, scholars have struggled prodigiously to understand a universal tendency that is both biblically clear (Gal 6:3; Jas 1:26) and empirically evident (Lauria, Preissmann, & Clément, 2016): people deceive themselves. Though modern philosophy and psychology approach the question from distinct vantage points, the problem remains the same for both: how is self-deception possible? The phenomenological problem is no less complex for Christian psychology respective to the cognitive means of self-deception. Christian theology, on the other hand, fares better than secular philosophy because it posits a more comprehensive subjective motivation for self-deception.

Self-deception requires that the individual be conscious of some truth that has somehow simultaneously been hidden from consciousness. Paradoxically, the one who conceals the truth and the one who believes the lie are one and the same. Sartre (1993) summarizes the gap between the phenomenon and its conceptualization:

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[56]See, chiefly, Kierkegaard (1980, 1991).

> The essence of the lie implies in fact that the liar actually is in complete possession of the truth which he is hiding. A man does not lie about what he is ignorant of; he does not lie when he spreads an error of which he himself is the dupe; he does not lie when he is mistaken. . . . Bad faith then has in appearance the structure of falsehood. Only what changes everything is the fact that in bad faith it is from myself that I am hiding the truth. Thus the duality of the deceiver and the deceived does not exist here. (pp. 87, 89)

The well-worn case is often given of the woman with a philandering husband whose adultery is obvious to all but his stubbornly naïve wife. She cannot simultaneously acknowledge his sin *and* evade the resultant fear, shame, and self-hatred she would undoubtedly face. The lie she believes—that he is innocent—is preferable to the truth she conceals. Sartre implies as much in describing "bad faith" as "hiding a displeasing truth or presenting as truth a pleasing untruth" (p. 89).[57]

Yet, how can I simultaneously know the truth and believe its opposite? Half a century before Sartre, Freud (S. Freud, 1923) posited a tripartite structure of the self, wherein the ego—the "me" who is conscious and active in reality—is influenced by the id—my unconscious, primitive, self-gratifying impulses—and the superego—acquired social and moral strictures for acceptable behavior frequently in conflict with the impulsive id. In applying classical psychoanalysis to the paradox of self-deception, Spiegel (1999) observes that an individual "may unconsciously know one thing and, due to the impulses of the id, consciously believe something wholly contradictory" (p. 49). Thus, one module or system within the self impinges on another—obfuscating, concealing, placating—all in defense of the whole. Freudian theory proposes that defense mechanisms operating separately from the individual's conscious awareness serve to protect the ego from the anxiety induced by unpleasant truths (A. Freud, 1977; see also Bachkirova, 2016, p. 4; cf. Johnson & Burroughs, 2000). Yet, as has already been mentioned, Freudian metapsychology fails to adequately account for self-deception, effectively collapsing under the weight of paradox.

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[57]The parallel between self-deception and Freudian repression should already be clear.

The challenge most often leveled against compartmentalist theories of the

self—such as those found in the psychoanalytical tradition—is that they lack coherence

respective to self-deception (Spiegel, 1999). Despite the apparent explanatory power of

such models, their chief weakness lies in their appeal to interpersonal deception. In other

words, what appears non-contradictory when there are two individuals—the deceiver and

the deceived—descends into incoherence when there is only one person, unless it is

assumed that persons are actually (and not metaphorically) made up of discrete systems

capable of, and intent upon, deceiving one another.[58] As Johnston (1988) queries,

> [H]ow does the deceiving system engage in an extended campaign of deception,
> employing various stratagems to alter the beliefs of the deceived system, without the
> deceived system's somehow noticing? If the deceived system somehow notices then
> the deception cannot succeed without the collusion of the deceived system.
> However, to speak of the collusion of the deceived system in its own deception
> simply reintroduces the original problem [i.e., paradox]. (p. 64)

Moreover, Johnston, citing the details of Augustine's conversion,[59] points out that self-

deception often entails an act of the will, a refusal to face the truth—amounting to a form

of epistemic cowardice—though he notes that this type of mental activity is frequently

"subintentional" (p. 64).[60]

Taking the cognitive and the volitional aspects into consideration, Spiegel

(1999) concludes that there are two related forms of self-deception, the differentiation of

which

> . . . depends upon the degree of cognitive processing in the formation of one's
> belief. The more one is aware of the evidence for one's belief (whether bogus or
> not), the greater the ability and willingness to avow or spell out reasons for one's

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[58]An additional problem arises when consideration is made as to how the unconscious can
intend anything, let alone perpetrate the deception of the conscious self, if it is truly *un*conscious (see
Spiegel, 1999, p. 51).

[59]See Chapter 1, p. 34.

[60]This might be akin to a reflexive or habituated response; so, for instance, one person might
run from danger while another, perhaps someone trained as a first responder, might, without much
reflection, run toward it. In secular philosophy, the habituated avoidance of unpleasant truths about oneself
is typically viewed as an "adaptive" response—thus, persons who believe the best about themselves are
more likely to thrive and, ultimately, reproduce. It is difficult to see how self-deception, according to this
naturalistic account, can be a bad thing (see S. E. Taylor, 1989)!

behavior. And the less one is aware of evidence for the belief upon which one's behavior is premised, the less the ability to avow it. Self-deceivers of the former sort are what we call rationalizers, while those in the latter case are ignorantly self-deceived. (pp. 64–65)

In other words, not all faulty beliefs are thought out. This is not to say that self-deception is ever unmotivated,[61] as this would be a contradiction.[62] Nevertheless, I may not always have a sense of why I believe something that does not correspond to a truth that I, at some level, know. The degree to which I may reasonably be expected to recognize my self-deception will determine the degree to which I may be held responsible for this form of self-"betrayal" (Bachkirova, 2016, p. 6; cf. John 9:40–41). Along these lines, Darwall (1988) concludes, "[S]elf-deception is at least like other-deception in this respect: a person can be charged with and held responsible for it. It is a moral matter in a way that simply believing or thinking something as the causal result of desires may not be" (p. 411).

If all this be true, then the gap between the phenomenon of self-deception may be explained in terms of motivation. The naïve wife of a philandering husband is, perhaps, motivated by fear of shame and loss to trust in her husband's claims to fidelity. She will likely hold out in the marriage, enduring the inner turmoil of willed ignorance regarding his unfaithfulness, until, perhaps, he moves to divorce her and the reason for her self-deceit becomes moot. Augustine, until awakened from his ignorance and unbelief, was motivated, by both fear and pride perhaps, to believe he was one thing when in fact he was something else—a sinner (see Gal 6:3). Only when God refused to allow him to shelter any longer in his comfortable delusion was he obliged to confront the painful reality of his sinfulness. Self-deception, then, is rooted in a motivational bias[63]

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[61]Motivationalist accounts of self-deception (see, e.g., Fernández, 2013) are particularly compatible with a Christian understanding of the deceitfulness of sin.

[62]Mistaken belief (i.e., "epistemic failure") does not qualify as self-deception (contra Patten, 2003).

[63]Recent empirical studies examining how subintentional cognitive and volitional processes influence self-deception have demonstrated the remarkable degree to which bias can inform conscious

to protect and provide for the (supposed) wellbeing of the self by hiding (i.e.,

dissociating) unpleasant realities and by focusing instead on that which reinforces the

convenient fiction.[64] These beliefs become reinforced over time, or habituated, so that the

likelihood of influencing self-deception becomes increasingly remote.

Nevertheless, as is clear from these two examples, not all forms of self-

deception are morally equivalent. Although, generally, the motivation for self-deception

seems to be preserving the self from unpleasant truths, Augustine's desire to avoid certain

truths—namely, the extent of his sinfulness and his concomitant feelings of guilt and

shame—meant that he was consequently deceived about his need for forgiveness and

salvation. While the naïve wife's self-deception may, in fact, bear a moral component,[65]

Augustine's pre-conversion self-ignorance amounted to moral self-deception precisely

because he thought himself better than he actually was. As Jesus' warning against

hypocrisy among believers indicates (Matt 7:5), this capacity for self-obfuscation remains

even after conversion. Experience confirms this to be true. Moral self-deception, then,

may be defined as the motivated assuagement of the conscience—one's God-given sense

of reflexive moral judgment (see Johnson, 2007, pp. 341–342; cf. Rom 2:5; Titus 1:15;

Heb 10:22)—resulting in a false personal assurance of goodness or sincerity. Hypocrisy,

by extension, would consist of the projection of a false image onto others by means of

public *moral* conduct and speech. It is worth noting that hypocrisy essentially functions

to conscript others into the service of a conscience-placating agenda.

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belief and avowals (see, e.g., Funkhouser & Barrett, 2016).

[64]In his discussion of the social psychological implications of the noetic effects of sin, Moroney (2000) employs the term "self-serving cognitive distortion" to describe the phenomenon of self-deception (pp. 89ff.).

[65]Some feminist theologies of sin would hold the wife responsible for the sin of sloth, charging her with "*wilful* indolence or indifference which is culpable because it involves a free choice" for her, albeit subintentional, decision to perpetuate the sham that is her marriage, thereby enabling her husband's philandering (McFadyen, 2000, p. 139, author's emphasis).

Self-Deception and the Relational Self

In observing the dynamics of moral self-deception modern social scientists and psychologists have made an additional caveat. A growing body of empirical research has noted the apparent desire of persons, regardless of their worldview, to appear before others to act morally (Batson, 2007; Batson, Thompson, Seuferling, Whitney, & Strongman, 1999; Sie, 2015). For example, one study (Burris & Navara, 2002) demonstrated a positive correlation between moral self-deception and one's perceived social standing within a peer group or community. Based on the results of this study, researchers observed, "[individuals] who bolstered self-deception seemed to perceive disclosure of their faults as risking censure rather than ensuring solace from the religious group" (p. 74). In other words, the tendency to self-deceive is likely to increase as the social risks associated with shame and stigma increase. Fear of being found out and losing the support of one's community often drives individuals to conceal truths about self from others, as well as from self. Evidently, the dissociative structure of the mind makes such subterfuge possible.

Shame and the estranged self. In addition to being a subjective affect, emotion or evaluative criterion, shame is also a state of being inherited from the fall that profoundly corrupts the imaging capacities of human beings (Johnson, 2017). According to Bonhoeffer (2005), the source of humanity's endemic shame is our primordial estrangement from God:

> Shame is the irrepressible memory of disunion from [humanity's] origin. It is the pain of this disunion, and the helpless desire to reverse it. Human beings are ashamed because they have lost something that is part of their original nature and their wholeness. (p. 303)

Shame is the existential angst that flows from humanity's estrangement. The estranged self longs to be whole but is impotent to autonomously effectuate its own healing. Although Kierkegaard (1980) never directly refers to shame, it is nevertheless implicit in his notion of the despair that results from sin—the "sickness unto death" that

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characterizes the fallen human condition. In the same way that the fallen self seeks to "tear away" from God and from itself, so also does the shame-prone human self tend toward dissociation and self-deception (p. 20). Moreover, the social structures and dynamics of human society only serve to perpetuate this pathological tendency.

Existential shame, or the despair of the fallen self, drives many of the pathological dynamics of intrapsychic and interpersonal functioning (Johnson, 2017). Nevertheless, the subjective experience of shame, like other expressions of human brokenness, is not always due to some moral failing inherent in the individual (Stump, 2012).[66] Thus, shame can be greatly influenced by horizontal relationality as well (see Harter, 2015; Broucek, 1991; Tomkins, 1987). As recent empirical studies have demonstrated, dysfunctional and dysregulating interactions between self and other appear to fuel the subjective experience of shame (Gilbert & Andrews, 1998). Additionally, numerous social and cultural factors have been shown to exacerbate the perception that one is unworthy and unacceptable (Pulakos, 1996; Silfver-Kuhalampi, Fontaine, Dillen, & Scherer, 2013). While some forms of shame have even been demonstrated to have a prosocial function in inhibiting behavior that transgresses acceptable moral norms (Gruenewald, Dickerson, & Kemeny, 2007; Tangney, 2003),[67] most secular theorists tend to emphasize its psychopathological or maladaptive aspects. Additionally, chronic or pervasive shame has been implicated as the underlying psychopathological contributor to dissociation: "unspeakable shame at the affective core of the self soon becomes untouchable and unknowable. As a person finds ways to hide, protect, and compensate for shamed vulnerability, chronic shame itself becomes dissociated" (DeYoung, 2015, p. 140). Arguably, no other intrapsychic dynamic generates greater motivation to dissociate

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[66]So, for example, Tamar's feelings of shame following her rape by Ammon, her half-brother, did not arise due to any intrinsic fault or transgression on her part (see 2 Sam 13:19).

[67]Focusing exclusively on the subjective experience of shame, McCullough et al., (2003) classify shame as an "inhibitory affect" along with the emotions of fear, guilt, grief, and disgust (pp. 21–22).

from veridical self-knowledge than does shame.

A covenantal anthropology accounts for the findings of secular research into the interpersonal dynamics of shame and dissociation very well. We were created for right relationship with God and with other; and subjective wholeness depends on a being-in-relation that cannot be achieved autonomously. By suppressing knowledge of its estrangement from God, humanity unconsciously defends against the guilt and shame of its dislocation from divine favor and communion. In doing so, we dissociate from the very truth that perpetuates our estrangement. Additionally, breeches in horizontal relationality effect an analogous subjective experience of shame and hiding compounding barriers to self-knowledge by further fueling our self-deceptive inclinations. Tragically, humanity's archetypal dysregulating experience, from which we universally dissociate our shame, occurred on account of our rebellion.[68] Dissociation as a defensive strategy— a divine mercy for the abused and neglected—is only necessary in a fallen world where sin and shame pervade all forms of human relationality. As such, dissociation is the cognitive analogue of the animal skins God used to cover our first parents' nakedness— his shield for the vulnerable inner self. Self-deceptive inclinations, on the other hand, most likely function at some level in the interest of quelling psychospiritual unrest, yet often result in heightened dysfunction and isolation. Shame and the fear of shame typically operate on human cognition and volition at a preconscious and subintentional level greatly problematizing active, perspicuous introspection. The dissociative complexion of human cognition, moreover, fosters a sinful tendency to evade direct apperception of moral faults and weaknesses. To a remarkable degree the human mind demonstrates a resilient resistance to truth that disquiets or disrupts our preferred self-

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[68]Cain's experience of divine disfavor motivated his murder of Abel (Gen 4:1ff.; cf. 1 John 3:12). These two serve as archetypal figures respectively representative of the dynamics of interpersonal sin since the fall. Cain, having experienced the dysregulating, dis-integrating shame of rejection, narcissistically inflicted his anger upon the one he held responsible for his failure.

and other/Other-conceptions.

      Self-blame and moral stigma. Shame is an intrasubjective reality rooted in rejection and estrangement—personal shame stems from interpersonal isolation. Stigma, on the other hand, is a social reality with strong implications for the development of pathological shame. Stigma amounts to any mark of distinction resulting in social isolation or exclusion (Goffman, 1963). Stigma can consist of any indicator of difference from culturally-derived standards of normality, whether physical, mental, characterological, or social (see Ainlay, Becker, & Coleman, 1986). Whether stigmatizing differences bear a moral aspect or not, their effect is to place individuals beyond the bounds of acceptable norms within a given community or culture. As such, stigma often carries an immense social weight driving persons to conceal or otherwise diminish the visibility of such markers. Any stigma conferring attribute, when visible or public, can trigger the disapproval and disavowal of the community of "normals" to which the individual had hoped to belong.[69] So long as deviating markers remain unseen, the pressure to conceal them can further fuel any dissociative and deceptive inclinations (see Coleman, 1986).[70] As we might expect, sin and its concomitant shame carry the weight of moral stigma within morally-sensitive cultures, the fear of which instigates self-deception and self-righteousness among believers. Self-stigma can therefore be defined as an enduring perspective on self as unworthy, unacceptable, and beyond rehabilitation. The relationship between stigma and shame on the one hand, and dissociation and self-deception on the other becomes evident in the vital connection

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      [69]Vacek's (2015) survey of American Protestantism, for instance, demonstrates how evangelical attitudes toward mentally disordered persons have shifted over the years.

      [70]Fear of stigma associated with mental disorders varies from person to person (Corrigan & Watson, 2002) as well as along historical and cultural lines. One empirical study (Ilic et al., 2013) found that fears of stigmatization ran higher among sufferers of schizophrenia than for depression suggesting that certain disorders carry a higher degree of social stigma than others. The tendency to self-stigmatize correlates closely with individuals' beliefs regarding the cause(s) of their condition, whether genetic (i.e., tribal), organic, or environmental (see Larkings, Brown, & Scholz, 2017).

between personal and interpersonal wholeness. Human beings were created by God to exist in intimate communion with him and with each other.

Conclusion

The possibility of self-deception counts against any supposed "scientific" objectivity respective to God and self. While any reasonably minded, otherwise well-meaning individual may claim freedom from bias and a sole commitment to the facts, the realities of sin and psychopathology count against such claims. These two barriers to self-knowledge distort and obscure all that we think we know of self, God, and other with the result that our most sincere and discerning judgments can never be wholly trusted. Unseen and unacknowledged conflicts and schisms persist even in believers rendering our determinations suspect. The mind's dissociative nature makes it possible, even likely, that unpleasant and shameful truths about the self will remain hidden from view; whereas, the deceitful human heart perpetually supplies conscience-placating fig leaves—cover stories that ignore or explain away what cannot be formulated and integrated into our conceptions of self. In light of these mutually reinforcing dynamics of fallen human nature, how can we ever finally know that we are not mistaken and self-deceived about who we really are?

The promise of dynamic psychology, when framed in strictly secular terms, amounts to a recapitulation of the serpent's lie: the promise of veridical knowledge—of self and others—without God. As such, it perpetuates the folly of the fall. Yet, there is also ample consonance between Christian and psychodynamic conceptions of human beings to warrant further dialogue. In his skepticism, Freud's eschewed both Cartesian and Kantian epistemological frameworks and contributed to a new age of suspicion respective to human self-knowledge. While Freud regarded belief in God to be a delusion, he assisted, albeit unwittingly, in the overthrow of modern conceptions of the self. Psychodynamic psychology, inasmuch as it examines and explicates the phenomena

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of the conflicted, schizoid self-consciousness, accords with a biblical conception of human beings. As anticipated by a covenantally-construed theological anthropology, dynamic psychology affirms the relational nature of the human self, the numerous developmental contributors to psychopathology, and the psychological phenomena of dissociation and self-deception. Nevertheless, secular models lack sufficient coherence and explanatory power with respect to self-deception, failing to emphasize the moral weight and consequences of willed self-ignorance "before God" (Kierkegaard, 1980, p. 82). Only a Christian psychological perspective—one that maintains a biblical perspective on the sinfulness and deceitfulness of the fallen human heart—can sufficiently explain this universal human inclination.

CHAPTER 5

RECONCILIATION APPLIED:
PASTORAL AND PSYCHOTHERAPEUTIC
INSTRUMENTALITY FOR DIALOGICAL
SELF-KNOWLEDGE

Considering the fallen nature of human beings, it should be no surprise that contemporary social psychology has recapitulated Aristotle's observation of a self-serving attributional bias—a tendency to see the good that is not there and discount the bad that is—in our self-conceptions (Baumeister, 1999). As noted in the previous chapter, psychodynamic psychology still maintains a healthy dose of Freudian skepticism regarding hidden and unformulated aspects of the inner self—the "me" I believe myself to be. And Harter's (2015) broad survey of developmental psychology supports the conclusion that dissociative and self-deceptive tendencies originate in childhood and adolescence. For the most part, however, the intuition prevails that unchecked dissociation, self-deception, and hypocrisy effect a corrosive influence on individuals and their relationships (cf. S. E. Taylor, 1989). With few exceptions, the assumption is made that authenticity and transparency to self and others fosters psychological wellbeing and interpersonal wholeness. Self-awareness promotes characterological growth so long as it avoids the dangers of self-absorption (see Leary, 2002, 2004).[1] From the time of the ancient Greeks until the present, then, knowledge of self has persisted in secular thought as a worthy, achievable aim. In spite of the innumerable challenges and caveats, "Know thyself," still stands as a maxim attendant to human existence.

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[1]Overly "*ruminative* self-consciousness," Christianly understood, is an expression of our fallen nature and, as such, undermines believers' growth in Christiformity (see Johnson, 2007, p. 441, emphasis in original).

As borne out by the Christian tradition, knowledge of self should be understood, in its ultimate sense, as coming to perceive oneself in light of who Christ is and what he has done. Though any number of veridical claims may be made about the phenomenal "self"—its constitutive nature and formal qualities—by looking at the mirror of others who are made in God's image, there is no finally true knowledge of the covenantal self apart from the knowledge of God-in-Christ. Authentic human existence is covenantal (Barth, 2010; Horton, 2006). Created as we have been in the image of God, we instantiate the condition of our nature only in proper—that is, agapic—relation to God and others.

Agapic relationality is the *telos* of the *imago*; through love, human beings fulfill their creation in the image of God. God's archetypal love is the ethical projection of his being (1 John 4:8), resulting in an unyielding disposition of favor and faithfulness.[2] As the Scriptures attest, his steadfast love endures forever (Ps 136:1). The triune persons of the Godhead eternally subsist in a covenantal relationality perfectly balanced between self- and other-regard. In creating humanity in his image, God has established in our very nature the extrinsic aim of our existence. Through covenantal union with Christ we access this telic agenda, entering into agapic fellowship with God and others by means of a Spirit-mediated, perichoretic mutuality. As the apostle avers, the autonomous self no longer lives, but Christ-in-self (see Gal 2:20). As a requisite for their participation in the divine life, human beings possess divinely conferred constitutive capacities through which we relate to God, to others, and to ourselves. Yet, the constitutional aspects of human nature subsist in service to the covenantal character of human life. Whole persons

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[2]A biblical perspective on God's love need not temper this conclusion by juxtaposing it with God's justice (cf. Wolterstorff, 2015). The love and justice of God are both ethical aspects of his divine perfection; as such, they do not contradict or "balance" one another. A more salient juxtaposition would be God's love and human freedom: God, in his love, gives freedom to humanity to reject his loving overtures. By spurning God's love, humanity invites the just repercussions of eschewing our only good since all that is holy, righteous, and life-sustaining is found in God alone. God's eschatological wrath, then, may be viewed as both just *and* loving in that, by promulgating sin's punitive consequences, God seeks to motivate human repentance (2 Pet 3:9–10).

consist of inner and outer essences—noetic, volitional, affective, and somatic—so designed and conferred by God in order that they might fulfill the charter of the *imago*: to love the Lord God with heart, soul, mind, and strength, and to love one's neighbor as oneself (Mark 12:30). God has created human beings, in other words, in order that they might mirror him through their dialogical participation in covenantal communion—with him and with each other.

The self, as the onto-relational locus of subjectivity, is the vehicle for agentic expression of the covenantal image of God. Though every image-bearing person *is* a self, selfhood is nevertheless a calling. And the knowledge of self supports the covenantal agenda of selfhood as the barriers of sin and psychopathology are identified and overcome, specifically within the context of agapic relationality. We can know who we truly are—and, therefore, who we are *not*—as we are well-loved, by God and by others; whereas, sin damages and disrupts our self-perception. The universal human inclination toward dissociation and self-deception bears out the tragic noetic implications of human fallenness. Structural self-ignorance and self-blindness are not merely the consequences of the transcendent aspects of the self and our own creaturely finitude. To the contrary, hereditary and interpersonal sin effects a powerful and pervasive corrupting influence on our ability to self-perceive. We do not see ourselves both because we cannot *and* because we will not. There is a plank, as it were, in all our eyes (Matt 7:5).

As love provokes and sustains the noetic processes by which self- and other/Other-knowledge ensues, so too knowing enriches, informs, and effects a more genuine agapic regard for other/Other. Love is both the relational substratum supportive of mutual interpersonal knowing as well as the ethical expression of intersubjective apperception. In other words, we know best when we are loved, and we love best what we know most intimately. So, knowing and loving relate dialogically and reciprocally; yet, neither is possible without the initiatory self-revelation of God. Apart from our noetic and pistic appropriation of divine discourse, we do not know nor can we ever come to

love God.[3] Jesus adjures his disciples to love him through knowing and keeping his word (John 14:21). The relationship between the knowledge of and the love for God is dialogical. We love Christ as we maintain a pistic commitment to his word. Presumably then, as we become better listeners and doers of his word, our love for Christ can only grow (see 1 John 2:5).[4]

In the same way, love between human persons is mediated and expressed in the context of agapic dialogue. More than an exchange of intersubjective discourse, agapic dialogue is the mutual, reciprocal interpersonal knowing and keeping of the "word" of other.[5] By contrast, a strictly monological "love"—one that speaks but does not listen—is not love at all, but "self-love," autonomy's bitter ethical fruit. Along both its vertical and horizontal axes, relationality characterized by impaired or asymmetrical dialogue cannot but fail to displace barriers to self-knowledge. Faith must "hear" other/Other in fulfilment of love's imperative. Love that listens without fear receives the "word" of other/Other by faith. In the context of this dialogical exchange of covenantal personhood, over time, barriers to self-knowledge come to nothing. By contrast, an exclusively monological "exchange" is tantamount to interpersonal sin in that it deprives

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[3]Drawing on the philosophical writings of Reformed theologian Herman Dooyeweerd, Choi (2006) writes, "If the heart remains closed to God's revelation, the pistic aspect [of the heart] cannot but seek its alternate absolute ground in the creation itself, an act which results in the idolatrous absolutizing of meaning itself" (p. 27).

[4]The self-deceived Christian, as James warns, is the one who knows but does not keep the word of God (Jas 1:22). Echoing the apostolic admonition against objectivist spirituality, Kierkegaard (1991) picks up on this theme inviting Scripture's readers to "think that it is I to whom it [the word] is speaking, I—and incessantly I—of whom it speaks" (p. 36). It may be that the entire English Puritan movement can be summed up as the wholesale rejection of objectivist spirituality (see Packer, 2010). There is a case to be made that a person who knows but does not do the word, does not truly know at all.

[5]This understanding of dialogue follows from McFadyen's (1990) understanding of the term: "A relation of mutuality and reciprocity which involves the subjective engagement, and therefore autonomy, of two or more partners. In dialogue there is a sharing of the dialogue roles of I and Thou, so that all partners are given space and time for independent communication and are attended to by the others. Because attending to the independent communication and being of others can change one's own understanding of them, oneself or the world (and potentially one's identity as well), dialogue is also a dialectical process and more like a spiral than a circle" (p. 314). McFadyen's use of "autonomy" in this context is, possibly, somewhat misleading, if not, in fact, a poor word choice. It would seem that his usage is similar to what I have termed personal agency or response-ability.

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other of a fundamental means by which we become more fully human (see McFadyen, 1990, pp. 122ff). Having been reconciled to God-in-Christ, the self that dialogically self-perceives in agapic communion with other/Other need no longer disavow or evade veridical self-knowledge by means of dissociation and self-deception. Through the mediating influence of Christ's Spirit, the gaze of the loving other/Other facilitates the removal of the epistemic (and ethical) impediments of sin and psychopathology.

Agapic Dialogue: Faith Working through Love

Autonomy is the death of the covenantal self and the obviation of self-knowledge. In regard to the former, Paul in his admonition to the Galatian church decries the folly of those pursuing an autonomous righteousness through their obedience to the law. In the strongest of terms he remonstrates, "You have been severed [κατηργήθητε] from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace" (Gal 5:4, NASB). Paul intends that his warning should serve as a rebuke to the "foolish Galatians" (3:1) for having abandoned Christ as the sole means of their salvation (Moo, 2013). Although they began in the Spirit, they are now seeking their perfection—eschatological wholeness or completion—through autonomous means (Gal 3:3). The path of autonomy, according to Paul, is antipodally opposed to life—to seek one's wholeness apart from Christ is ultimately self-defeating (cf. Rom 7). The pursuit of self-righteousness only recapitulates the archetypal self-betrayal of humanity's Edenic rebellion (Gen 3). According to the terms of the gospel, reconciliation is wholly contingent on our submission to God's Christocentric agenda. The route the Galatians have chosen, in contrast, ends in eschatological death—ultimate, final alienation and separation from God (cf. Ezek 14:7–11).[6] To trust in one's autonomous ability only perpetuates the fallen, estranged state brought on by human sin. Paul enjoins the Galatians that their autonomous effort is doomed to fail. The only sure route to God, he

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[6]See the various meanings of καταργέω in Danker (2001).

avers, is "faith working through love" (Gal 5:6)—a pistic commitment to the "word" of Christ expressed both through one's agapic regard for God and concern for others.

Hermeneutics and Ethics in Dialogue

As we should expect, the dialogical pursuit of Christian self-knowledge parallels the Pauline soteriological framework. By means of *faith working through love*, the covenantal self comes to know God, self, and other. In other words, covenantal relationality results in veridical self-knowledge insofar as its hermeneutical and ethical aspects have been grounded in the person and work of Christ. The knowledge of self relates to hermeneutics because of the dialogical nature of knowledge (see Clark & Gaede, 1987). With revelation as its epistemological basis, hermeneutics is eminently programmatic for faith.[7] Faith attests to the warrant of Christian belief, the foundation of which is Christ (1 Cor 3:11). Moreover, self-knowledge relates to ethics due to the dialogical nature of the self. Faith, the apostle attests, is meant to be expressed covenantally *in love*—the supreme ethical calling of image bearers. "Love" that acts not in faith will invariably have self as its object. An unbalanced, wholly reflexive "self-love," moreover, is the ethical expression of the autonomous self and finds its basis in an inverted ethic. Autonomous "self-love" places self above other as the supreme object of worth, leading inevitably to a consumptive and abusive disposition toward other.[8] It is the wellspring of interpersonal sin. Love that expresses faith, by contrast, will find its basis in the good of other/Other, even if it comes at cost to self (see Zachman, 2012). These two aspects, faith and love—respectively, the hermeneutical and ethical causata of the

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[7]As early as the Augustinian formulation of *faith seeking understanding*, the relationship between hermeneutics and Christian belief have been clearly articulated. To wit, "There are two things on which all interpretation of scripture depends: the process of discovering what we need to learn, and the process of presenting what we have learnt" (Augustine, 2008, I.i.1; p. 8). Faith, in other words, entails the hermeneutical dialogue of the text and the reader.

[8]Kierkegaard (1998) argues that *all* forms of "preferential love" are actually expressions of "self-love" (p. 53).

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covenantal self—function dialectically and dialogically with regard to self-knowledge. Crucially, these two must balance and inform one another lest barriers to self-knowledge persist.

A Dialogue of Dialogues

As we have seen, covenantal self-knowledge is fundamentally dialogical—a dialogue of dialogues even, considering the relation of its hermeneutical and ethical aspects. By way of exposition, we must consider the dialogical character of *faith working through love*. For there to be faith or love, by definition, dialogue or exchange must take place. Orthodox Christianity maintains that God is a speaking God (Wolterstorff, 1995). Revelation is divine discourse—God's gracious word/Word to humanity. Faith entails a hermeneutical dialogue precisely because right interpretation—the exclusive provenance of the Holy Spirit—is faith's epistemic prerequisite. "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ" (Rom 10:17), and yet faith is not merely hearing but *receiving* (v. 14; cf. John 1:12; 1 Cor 15:1; Col 2:6; 2 Thess 3:6). Consequently, revelation relates to faith as locution relates to perlocution: faith is revelation's intended result, its dialogical reply (Vanhoozer, 2014; see John 20:31). The God who speaks also desires that we should *believe* his word/Word (see Gen 15:6; John 6:29; Rom 1:17; Heb 11:6). The idea of faith presumes a hermeneutical dialogue—an interpretative evaluation or determination made in response to divine discourse—and further, that any pistic commitment to Christian truth be rooted in a right interpretation of its discursive content. Unless the content of one's belief corresponds veridically with its revelatory counterpart, faith is misplaced. This hermeneutical exchange is completed or "perfected" as faith comes into increasing veridical correspondence with divine truth.[9]

Faith is the proper dialogical response to divine revelation. Yet, as the New

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[9]The writer of Hebrews refers to Christ as the "perfecter of . . . faith [τὸν τῆς πίστεως . . . τελειωτὴν]" (12:2); see Osborne's (2006) "hermeneutical spiral."

Testament bears out, faith's reply to revelation leads to an even higher, divinely enacted end: the reconciliation of God and the human person brought about through the agapic union of Christ and his people. Peace with God comes through faith in Christ's atoning death on our behalf—his act of agapic self-sacrifice by which divine love speaks (Rom 5:1; Eph 2:8). In the death of Christ the divine Word of truth discloses God's work of love (John 3:16). The cross of Christ is God's ultimate speech-act with enough perlocutionary force to overcome sin and death, along with every other barrier to covenantal wholeness. Although numerous impediments and deficits may remain for the present age, the promise of love is God's eschatological bestowal of "every blessing in the heavenly places" (Eph 1:3; cf. Col 1:12). Consequently, as divine revelation relates dialogically to human faith, so reconciliation relates to love. Love for God-in-Christ is the only proper ethical reply to the loving self-sacrifice of God-in-Christ. Indeed, the divine disclosure of Christ must redound in love for God and other if it is to fulfill the ethical calling of *faith working through love*. As with faith, love also entails a dialogical exchange. Mutual, reciprocal agapic regard is the means by which humanity fulfills the covenantal image—both in relation to God and to others.

   Dialogical hermeneutics. Hermeneutics relates to covenantal self-knowledge in a number of ways. For Gadamer (1976), self-knowledge is an expressly hermeneutical enterprise. "To understand a text," he writes, "is to come to understand oneself in a kind of dialogue" (p. 57; see also Bakhtin, 1986). Self-consciousness is, as Gadamer suggests, an experience of the transcendent or what he calls "the self-understanding of faith" (p. 49).[10] He further argues that Christian theology provides the proper hermeneutical frame for the knowledge of self as the subjective center of transcendent human experience.[11]

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   [10]Gadamer focuses on the hermeneutical implications of self-knowledge, but his conclusions bear strong implications for pastoral theology and Christian psychology as well.

   [11]According to Zimmermann (2004), Gadamer's recognition of the epistemic value of Christian theology respective to transcendence, regrettably, does not extend to any personal commitment to

The self is not, as modernity would have us believe, an object that may be subjected to phenomenological scrutiny or scientific systematization. This objectivist error perennially bedevils attempts to grasp the meaning of the self and its proper telic orientation. Rather, Gadamer recapitulates Augustine in arguing that the knowledge of the transcendent human self comes—as with its converse, the knowledge of God—through faith seeking understanding. Along these lines, he concludes,

> From the theological point of view, faith's self-understanding is determined by the fact that faith is not man's possibility, but a gracious act of God that happens *to* the one who has faith. To the extent that one's self-understanding is dominated by modern science and its methodology, . . . it is difficult for him to hold fast to this theological insight and religious experience. The concept of knowledge based on scientific procedures tolerates no restriction of its claim to universality. On the basis of this claim, all self-understanding is represented as a kind of self-possession that excludes nothing as much as the idea that something that separates it from itself can befall it. (p. 54)

Self-knowledge is a gift but *not* a possession. In other words, it is contingent upon relationship, not on any strictly constitutive or rational capacity. As such, self-knowledge can only arise in the context of dialogue.

As self dialogically discloses itself with Other/other, a mutual and reciprocal knowing and being known ensues. The hermeneutical exchange that results in veridical self-understanding, however, requires that faith pursue its basis in divine self-disclosure. Every mirror reveals self, but only that mirror which reflects self truly should be wholly trusted (cf. Jas 1:24). It is possible, therefore, to grow in assurance of self-understanding and yet be finally misled.[12] Dialogue that disregards the hermeneutical supremacy of Christ and the epistemic warrant of Scripture will necessarily distort perspectives on self and other. Interpersonal sin, a defective and destructive form of dialogue, certainly informs a diversity of perspectives on self; yet, the resulting "knowledge" of self will

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the exclusive truth claims of the Christian faith. His hermeneutical theory is consistent with Christianity even if his personal belief system is not.

[12]From this we may conclude that self-deception, as an aspect of one's self-consciousness, also arises within a relational context.

necessarily be characterized by various barriers to veridicality. In order to overcome false

images of self resulting from hereditary and interpersonal sin, self's hermeneutical

dialogue must first rest in assurance of the epistemic sovereignty of the triune God. God

alone knows self as it truly is. Although some psychopathological barriers to self-

knowledge may, in fact, yield to a strictly secular dialogue, self's deepest, most

fundamental delusions and deceptions can only be overcome when faith is grounded in

divine self-disclosure.[13]

The ethical dialogue. Although Gadamer rightly apprehends the dialogical

character of self-knowledge, he nevertheless falls short of a fully Christian approach to

self-knowledge in his failure to recognize the hermeneutical significance of the person

and work of Christ (Zimmermann, 2004). He rightly identifies the nature of the

transcendent human self and the dialogical quality of self-knowledge, but falters on the

most crucial juncture—the ethical imperative of love disclosed by God-in-Christ. The

incarnation and subsequent vicarious death of Christ supply the necessary hermeneutical

correctives for a more thoroughly Christian discursive framework. Zimmermann (2004),

in elucidating the lapse in Gadamer's hermeneutic, elevates the ethical dialogue enacted

by the Christ event:

> An incarnational view of relational transcendence puts the ethical demand of the
> other into the context of the good as a historically embodied act of selfless love. . . .
> If ethical transcendence is rooted in God's self-revelation, the incarnation (which
> includes the resurrection) is true exteriority rooted not in some abstract notion of
> God but in the concrete historical act of self-sacrifice, which defines the ethical as
> the ultimate good (p. 268).

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[13]By way of example, pathological dissociation such as that observed in dissociative disorders like DID may, in fact, be partially overcome in a strictly secular context (see Chefetz, 2015; Chu, 2011). However, the authoritative content in any secular hermeneutical dialogue entails the authority of the psychotherapist and, presumably, the normative standard of subjective singularity. By placing his or her faith in these "texts," the counselee/client engages in a discursive exchange that, other therapeutic preconditions assumed, may eventually result in some degree of remediation. But, understood Christianly, the repair of intrapsychic division should not be confused with covenantal wholeness, the latter being a function of one's union with Christ. Nevertheless, the pursuit of intrapsychic integration should be seen as a clear implication of the gospel (see Badgett, 2018).

God, in his love for fallen humanity, has spoken definitively in the person and work of the divine Word-made-flesh. Revelation and reconciliation, as Barth (2010) avers, are intractably bound together. Neither is dispensable for the proper appropriation and application of the other. Christ is the ultimate "text" dialogically informing human self-understanding and enacting the agapic *telos* of selfhood. Jesus himself suggests as much in his hermeneutical formula, "You have heard it said, . . . and/but I say to you . . ." in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5:21, 27, 33, 38, 43; see France, 2007). Christ alone is διδάσκαλος for his people, the Church (Matt 23:8).[14]

Genuine faith works itself out in an agapic disposition toward God and other. "Faith," argues Gerrish (2015), "makes moral demands on us" (p. 211). Indeed, Christ's love is a display not only of divine regard for sinful, broken human beings, but also of a proper ethical ideal among the community of believers (see John 13:34).[15] To paraphrase the Apostle, even if we come to understand the mysteries of the self and have sufficient faith to remove all barriers to self-knowledge, but have not love, it counts for nothing (1 Cor 13:2). God's love for sinners is initiatory; as such, it is wholly "imbalanced." And yet, its demand on us is that we respond in kind, both to God and among believers. Human love, therefore, works diachronically toward mutuality and reciprocity in order to avoid the subjective dangers of total self-abdication and -annihilation.[16] The ethical distinction between the two self–other love imperatives found in the New Testament is

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[14]According to Yieh (2004), Jesus' "first task" as Israel's teacher *par excellence* "is to interpret the Scripture" authoritatively (p. 248). We may carry this conclusion even further by averring that Christ's hermeneutical sovereignty applies equally to every "text," including the human self.

[15]In speaking of the "ideal" love of believers for God and others, allowance must be made for the discrete agentic and ethical capacities of individuals. More on the realities of ethical asymmetry in caregiving relationships follows below.

[16]Balance is key to preserving the ethical demands of self and other. Should balance be lost in favor of self, the result will inevitably be attempts to dominate others. Inversely, the ethical abdication of self can result from overemphasis on the needs of other. Bakhtin's (1986) "architectonic self" can be both an I-for-myself—what Bakhtin elsewhere terms the "carnival self"—as well as an I-for-the-other—his "dialogic self"—granted the proper balance. Emerson (2006) explains that "the architectonic self is the most morally responsible structure in all of Bakhtin, because it balances inner and outer pressures, demands of self and other, perfectly" (p. 39).

best understood in this light.

Before the crowd Jesus reifies the original Mosaic command to love one's neighbor "as oneself" (Mark 12:33; cf. Lev 19:18), both summarizing the ethical substance of the Old Covenant and confirming the ethical standard for all image bearers (cf. also Luke 6:31). Yet, in private, Jesus gives his disciples a "new command" that elevates the older neighbor-love standard to a higher level: "just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another" (John 13:34; see Michaels, 2010). Evidently, Jesus intends that his sacrificial death should serve as an illustration of this more radical ethic *among believers* (v. 35).[17] With both imperatives, mutuality and reciprocity supply the means of maintaining dialogical balance. Under the Old Covenant, love for self as one bearing the image and likeness of God implicated a call to an equitable love for one's fellow image bearers as well. Conversely, Christ's loving sacrifice impels the believer, out of love for Christ, to take up one's cross and follow him (Matt 16:24). Ideally, love between human beings is to be mutual and equitable. Among the community of believers love adheres to the more radical standard modeled by Christ, yet the clear implication is that New Covenant love must also work toward reciprocity. Love for one's neighbor as self and love among believers aims at imaging Christ's love in order to fulfil these two distinct ethical imperatives *and* avoid the threat of self-abdication. Love between human persons, therefore, best images God's love when it is dialogically enacted and reciprocally exchanged. An asymmetrical or unidirectional love, by contrast, effaces the worth of the self, in effect, putting the self at risk of annihilation.

As illustrated by Christ's resurrection, dying to self among believers does not

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[17]Just as evidently, God's love for the two basic human constituencies—the elect and nonelect—can be distinguished according to two analogous differentials. Although God loves humanity without exception, his love for the elect redounds efficaciously in their salvation (Carson, 2000). In Scripture, moreover, election is often described in terms of God's having set his affection on a particular people (see, e.g., Deut 7:7–8; 10:14–15; Mal 1:2–3; Eph 5:25). Although God loves the whole world, only as we love God in kind—by giving up our lives for Christ—does his love redound efficaciously in our salvation.

result in self-abdication, but rather fulfills the ethical calling of the covenantal self.[18]

Jesus' call for believers to lose their lives, for his sake, comes with the proviso that, in doing so, they will find them (Luke 9:24). Love for God and for others within the body of Christ demands that we relinquish our pretensions at self-understanding and divest self of its aggrandizing delusions and deceptions. Furthermore, as Christ's sacrifice illustrates, agapic concern that is Christocentrically situated both in terms of its hermeneutical and ethical aspects will effect other's dialogical release from captivity to delusion and self-deception. Christ's love for sinners invites our entry into an agapic spiral by which our love for God and others is diachronically "perfected." This is to say that, though we at first lack any capacity to love, he overcomes the fears on account of which we dissociate from the truth of who we are and, as our love for him grows, come to see ourselves in the light of his love. Over time, subjective barriers to self-knowledge will become increasingly permeable in the face of other's simultaneously kenotic self-regard and agapic other-regard. The power of such barriers—to protect the vulnerable self from harm—and their appeal—the false comfort of delusion—are negated by the merciful gift of genuinely loving regard and concern. In the context of mutual self-denial and self-sacrifice, no individual need evade avenues to veridicality or remain hidden behind false self-conceptions and hypocrisy.

Christ's agapic work of atonement bridges the hermeneutical and ethical aspects of self-knowledge for believers: his act of self-sacrifice demonstrates that agapic concern for others is necessary for dialogically undermining the autocentric pull of self. Only in the presence of self-giving love can the autonomous human self escape its

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[18]Jesus commands his followers to serve rather than be served, yet he accepts the anointing given to him at Bethany just prior to his death (Mark 14:3ff.). He rebukes Judas for censuring as wasteful the woman's gift of a costly flask of ointment even though it could have gone toward providing for the poor. The implication of Judas' criticism is an indictment of Jesus as complicit in the woman's profligacy. Yet, Jesus affirms the woman's agapic act as "good [καλός]" (v. 6). Other-regard for Christians, following Jesus' example, must be balanced by self-regard. In other words, it is not *wholly* selfless as in certain Eastern religions.

reflexive inertia. Specifically with respect to self-knowledge, as the individual imitates the divine program of agapic regard for other/Other historically enacted by Christ, self achieves the appropriate covenantal balance necessary for veridicality. Love is vital if we hope to overcome the pathological dynamics of fallenness and autonomy. Self-deception and hypocrisy are the epistemic and moral fruit of autocentric, monological discourse. Barriers of self-knowledge, moreover, so often constructed and maintained in service to self-protection, can be overcome only in the context of agapic mutuality. Fears of self-discovery naturally attend the life of the fallen self. And the sequelae of interpersonal sin so often metastasize these fears into persistent, structural barriers to veridical self-knowledge. The self that is being made whole in love for God and for other, by contrast, will come to welcome the dialogical dynamics of *faith working through love*. "Perfect love," so says the apostle, "casts out fear" (1 John 4:18).

Evaluating Disparate Discursive
Frameworks

Both Christian and secular approaches to self-knowledge, insofar as they apprehend its correlation with individual and relational wellbeing, operate with a similar appreciation of hermeneutical and ethical dialogue. For dynamic and relational psychotherapies, the "cure" for dissociation and self-deception involves coming to regard oneself through the eyes of an empathic other. This therapeutic program entails a course of dialogical self-discovery as self is guided by other(s) through a hermeneutical exploration of the interpersonal roots of defective and pathological self-schemas. Mitchell (2000) describes it as a process by which "one comes to a sense of oneself as an agentic subject through the experience of oneself in the mind of the other, and the other-as-agentic subject in one's own mind" (p. 101). Perspectives on self that have accumulated in the context of dysfunctional or abusive relationship(s) can be reformulated and integrated into a less schizoid and conflictual self-concept. Crucially, the ability to deactivate one's protective defenses, renounce toxic self-evaluations, and

embrace a deeper self-awareness will reflect the degree to which hermeneutical and ethical dialogues—often referred to as the "therapeutic alliance"—inform this process (Martin, Garske, & Davis, 2000; Muran & Barber, 2011; Norcross, 2011). Indeed, "alliance predicts outcome" stands among the most fundamental assumptions of modern psychotherapy (Barber, Khalsa, & Sharpless, 2013, p. 29). Accordingly, it is the quality and depth of the therapeutic relationship that accounts for change.

Secular psychotherapeutic dialogue. At first glance, then, secular psychotherapeutic approaches to self-knowledge appear to bear out the apostle Paul's peroration: "Love never fails" (1 Cor 13:8 NASB). Self-regard—one's intrasubjective sense of self—can be favorably modified over time through the "interpenetrating involvement" of self with an empathic other (Bromberg, 1998, p. 157). In other words, the crucial element in the therapeutic process seems to be the relationship between counselor/therapist and counselee/client. For DeYoung (2003), a capacity for "change in [the individual's] self-structure" arises out of the hermeneutical and ethical dialogues contextually enacted within a "good relational experience" (p. 173). And Stern (2010) pithily concludes, "[W]hen the mind is locked, relationship is the key" (p. 129). Yet, in spite of any superficial similarity between secular and Christian discursive frameworks, a deeper analysis reveals fundamental distinctions. In particular, what qualifies as empathic regard proves to be a poor imitation of genuine Christ-imaging love.

As Holifield (1983) posits, "The contrast between therapeutic acceptance and sacrificial love might tell us more about both love and acceptance than would the quest for analogies between them" (p. 355). This is certainly the case. So, for example, Pizer (1998), in examining the "quality" of the therapeutic relationship, acknowledges that it paradoxically bears both "real" and "unreal" aspects—an apparent "love," yet one that is more accurately characterized as metaphorical and "subjunctive" (pp. 48–49; cf. Freud, 1915). In other words, the transference-countertransference dialogue of dyadic caregiving

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enactments more accurately bears a symbolic or *as-if* quality. In essence, the psychotherapeutic caregiver becomes a metaphorical parent of sorts, an antitypal presence symbolically interposing agapic regard and concern in place of defective relational dynamics from the past (cf. Kelly, 1991, II, pp. 14ff). Christianly understood, however, parent–child relational dynamics relate antitypally to the relationship of God as Father with his elect people (see 1 John 3:1). Secular caregiving unconsciously appropriates and approximates both the horizontal and vertical dimensions of therapeutic dialogue, and in so doing potentially perpetuates basal barriers to veridical self-knowledge. This is not to say that secular empathy will never reach the level of "a deeper caring about the fate the other" (Mitchell, 2000, p. 135).[19] But inarguably, secular expressions of empathy cannot match the liberating, illuminating power of *faith working through love*, the archetypal illustration of which can be seen in the cross of Christ. Moreover, genuine healing and growth in the image of God, at least in biblical terms, amounts to much more than favorable modifications of one's self-schema.

The respective presuppositions of Christian and secular frameworks for self-knowledge differ not so much on its dialogical means—that is, the hermeneutical and ethical outworking of the self-in-relation—but rather on how to characterize and programmatize these dialogues. In particular, the respective objects of faith and love disclose the most crucial distinctions between the two approaches. For Christianity, the object of faith is the God revealed in his own divine self-disclosure and discoverable only in the Bible and in the person and work of Christ. It regards all other faith-objects as idols or false gods by which fallen human beings are led astray from the truth and so become enslaved. Any hermeneutical dialogue that neglects or obviates the truth content of the gospel of reconciliation only perpetuates false images of self and other.

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[19]Barth (2010) holds that caring about the good of other is an irreducible aspect of the image of God in human beings.

The most insightful and sensitive secular psychotherapeutic approaches to self-knowledge approximate this formulation, if only in an analogous way. Secular psychotherapy, insofar as it respects the relational nature of the self, will recognize and enact the hermeneutical and ethical aspects of dialogue: the therapist guides the client into dialogical interactions specifically aimed at building mutual understanding and undermining fears and defenses. To varying degrees, then, postmodern and relational approaches esteem dialogue as a means of self-discovery and -understanding. And yet, they have no epistemic basis in revelation. As such, they lack hermeneutical authority. In the context of a secular therapeutic relationship, either the empathic caregiver effectively serves as the hermeneutical authority for the task of self-discovery or else self and other together assume for themselves a hermeneutical sovereignty that belongs to Christ alone. Christ's hermeneutical formula comes to be applied in a strictly horizontal dimension: "You, counselee, have heard it said, . . . but I, counselor, say to you . . ." surely bears diminished efficacy for genuine veridicality, most especially when it comes to the individual's standing before God. Secular "faith" amounts to confidence in humanity's putative potential for reformation and actualization by human ability and effort alone. Once the hermeneutical dialogue has been dissociated from its preeminent connection with divine discourse, it becomes circular and self-serving. Dialogue, in strictly secular terms, ultimately foments a kind of mutually assured self-deception.

Likewise, the empathic regard of secular frameworks, even when it amounts to a genuine caring about the good of others, inevitably falls short of authentic New Covenant love. In contrast to God's exhibition of agapic regard in the cross of Jesus Christ, in the end, secular approximations of "love" are tragically flaccid and inimitably self-serving. Apart from any anchor in the divine wellspring, love becomes a pale imitation of kenotic self-giving and agapic regard for other (see Kierkegaard, 1998). We ought not wonder, then, at how secular psychotherapeutic formulations of interpersonal

regard—expressed in such terms as empathic concern (see Mitchell, 2000),[20] therapeutic relationality (see DeYoung, 2003), or "unconditional positive regard" (Rogers, 1961)—differ from a New Covenantal understanding of love. According to Jesus, the supreme ethical imperative of all image bearers places God above any other object of agapic regard (Mark 12:30). Love for God, then, must surpass all other loves in order both to fulfill the divine command and to accord with the aesthetic and axiological realities of his beauty and worth. Although mutual regard among image bearers—loving neighbor as one loves self (v. 31)—approximates the ethical dialogue of secular frameworks, the hierarchical imperative can only be fulfilled with God-in-Christ as its supreme object: love for God must come *first* (cf. Luke 14:26).

Furthermore, the implicit ethics of secular psychotherapy holds to a confidence in the basic ethical goodness of the human self. A biblical ethics, in contrast, perceives the dialectical quality of the fallen self—both its image-bearing beauty and its sin-wrought horror—and prescribes an exclusively divine cure. The source of the antinomy inherent in human nature is a love for self that collapses all other agapic objects into servants of the self (see Kierkegaard, 1998). In giving up his life for sinful humanity, Christ interposes a revolutionary new standard for ethical dialogue: a kenotic regard for God and others that does not cling to the rights of self (see Phil 2:3). This "greater love" consciously, purposefully holds the interests of other *above* the interests of self (John 15:13).[21] Love of this sort "endures all things" (1 Cor 13:7). In this way, Christian love

[20]Mitchell (2000) differentiates between secular "caring" and "empathy" in a telling way. Empathy for Mitchell, is "a methodology, a way of thinking that employs feelings" for the purposes of "vicarious introspection," or "imagining what a situation feels like for someone else" (p. 135). "Caring," on the other hand, is a "complex affective involvement" arising as the subjective response to "interpersonal chemistry" (p. 134). Genuine agapic regard, in contrast to these two secular standards, is vitally connected to Christ's love for the care recipient. It is rooted in the volitive rather than the affective domain—a commitment to love others out of love for Christ. Patently, God's command to love implicates its dependence on the will rather than the affections (see Elliott, 2006). From this we may conclude that genuine agapic concern for others is only indirectly fostered by mutual interpersonal affection.

[21]New Covenantal love is more than a reciprocal "care" through the pursuit of just and ethical treatment for both self and other. Barth (2010), after all holds "care" to be the universal ethical imperative of our shared human nature. In his presentation of "care-agapism" Wolterstorff (2015) evidently seeks to balance the ethical interests of justice with those of love, but in so doing only diminishes the scandalous

comes to image the multidimensional agapic disposition of Christ in relation to the Father and with others, especially toward one's fellow believers (1 John 3:16). Only in this context does the apostle's Corinthian peroration possess genuine warrant.

The paradox of eudaimonist self-knowing. Orthodox Christian perspectives on self-knowledge have always elevated the principals of faith and love as the proper dialogical expressions of our covenantal nature. Following from the Pauline formulation, *faith working through love* best describes a Christian discursive framework for overcoming barriers to self-knowledge. Especially in regard to undermining our sinful tendencies, Christian approaches to self-knowledge helpfully elucidate the hermeneutical and ethical imperatives of human nature. Secular frameworks, by definition, neglect the vertical dimension of dialogue presuming, in effect, that the descendants of Adam and Eve can somehow avoid their first parents' tragic fate while exchanging the same deadly fruit.

The contrast between secular and Christian dialogue, then, could not be clearer. Yet, careful reflection on Christian perspectives on eudaimonist self-knowledge reveals a confounding paradox. True knowledge of self for Augustine, as well as Calvin (2008) and Kierkegaard (1991), comes from God by means of divine self-revelation contained in the Scriptures. Consequently, knowledge of self from a eudaimonist standpoint is reciprocal and mutual—a "double" knowledge of God and self imparted as a gift of the indwelling Spirit of God—yet circumscribed within its vertical dimension. According to Houston (2000), "True self-knowledge comes only through knowledge of God; knowledge both of self and of God comes only through the Bible" (p. 313).

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nature of divine love and forgiveness. As John's Gospel makes clear, Jesus' love ethic will supply the singular distinction by which his followers will be identified (John 13:35; Michaels, 2010). New Covenant love requires much more than "that we decenter the self by caring about the other, not only about ourselves" (Wolterstorff, 2015, p. 141), as Jesus' agapic illustration of footwashing and his even more definitive sacrificial death both demonstrate (cf. 1 John 3:23). Ethical balance, then, is not achieved by juxtaposing love with justice, but through mutuality and reciprocity.

Zimmermann (2004), expressing a similar thought, concludes:

> We find thus in the [Christian] theological tradition the assurance that self-knowledge is possible, that it depends on divine revelation, that the nature of this revelation is personal, and that self-knowledge is hermeneutical, obtainable only in dialogue with God. (p. 270)

So, veridical knowledge of self, for the Christian eudaimonist, involves the dialogical appropriation of divine discourse. Though there is also ample consensus that human beings are perennially and pathologically inclined to dissociation and self-deception—Augustine (2009) observed as much subsequent to his conversion to Christianity—presumably, barriers to self-knowledge are wholly subject to the strictly intrasubjective application of biblical truth. Having identified and overcome his own dissociation and self-deception, Augustine appears to disavow any horizontal dimensionality. The conclusion seems to be that human beings overcome their dissociation and self-deception through communion with the Word of God as they encounter him *individually* in the pages of Scripture.

According to the implications of a eudaimonist formula for overcoming noetic barriers, Christian self-knowledge is procured along a vertical relational axis alone; solely via believers' dialogue with divine revelation does veridical self-knowledge become possible (Houston, 2000). Kierkegaard (1991), in commending the subjective appropriation of divine revelation for self-knowledge, describes the noetic process in unidimensional terms:

> [Y]ou will read a fear and trembling into your soul so that, with God's help, you will succeed in becoming a human being. . . . You will, if you read God's Word in this way, you will (even if it will be dreadful for you, but remember that this is a condition of salvation!) succeed in doing what is required—to look at yourself in the mirror of the Word. Only in this way will you succeed. (p. 43)

Kierkegaard's admonition suggests that sufficient subjective motivation can be mustered to overcome one's internal resistance to self-discovery and -disclosure. Though the process "will be dreadful," we will "succeed" in accurately self-perceiving, because God himself offers his aid. Given the theological anthropology upon which eudaimonist ethics

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is based, this conclusion seems reasonable. Yet, according to covenantal anthropology, the *imago* implicates horizontal correspondence as a fundamental and indispensable condition of self-knowledge. In other words, the eudaimonist proposal for veridical self-knowledge neglects human instrumentality as a critical aspect of effecting divine–human dialogue.[22] Respective to self-knowledge, the truth of divine self-disclosure is indeed sufficient for veridicality, but as Paul helpfully reminds us, "How are they to hear, without someone preaching?" (Rom 10:14).[23]

Eudaimonist frameworks do not sufficiently allow for the instrumentality entailed in horizontal expressions of covenantal relationality. God "speaks," and we "hear" him, through *instrumental* means. The covenantal self may be veridically known and loved in correspondence along both its vertical *and* horizontal axes. Furthermore, in light of the antinomy of fallen human nature, the paradox of eudaimonist self-knowledge becomes even clearer. Although Christian "double" knowledge assumes the supervening assistance of the Holy Spirit, it is still the human mind that acquires and evaluates subjective knowledge of God and self, identifying gaps in correspondence with biblical perspectives, and making determinations of veridicality. But, as noted in the previous chapters, biblical anthropology maintains that the redeemed self subsists in a state of internal conflict. Eschatologically whole in Christ, the believer's self-consciousness and noetic faculties nevertheless remain finite, divided, and conflictual, and thus susceptible to dissociation, delusion, and self-deception. As Augustine (2009) keenly observes, "My

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[22]In both Augustine and Kierkegaard examples of horizontal instrumentality respective to self-knowledge can be found. As Augustine (2009) relates, God instrumentally employed the testimony of Ponticianus as a means of directing him inward, thus allowing him to reconsider his need for the gospel (VIII.vii.16; pp. 144–145). In Kierkegaard's (1991) critique of "impersonality" and "objectivity" respective to Christian truth, he observes Nathan's instrumental role in allowing King David to overcome his dissociation and self-deception, effectively bringing him to his senses (p. 39). In both cases, God effected his discursive ends through human means.

[23]On this point it is worth noting that the Christian Scriptures are "God-breathed" (2 Tim 3:16), but they share a dual—divine and human—authorship. The Bible is not the direct speech of God, though it is through the Bible—or, as Paul suggests, through the Bible faithfully preached—that God speaks to his people. Neglect of a proper perspective on human instrumentality in the authorship of the Bible correlates closely with the docetic bent of some modern evangelical Christologies (cf. Macquarrie, 2003b, p. 343).

mind on examining myself about its strengths does not regard its findings as easy to trust" (X.xxxii.48; p. 207). The authoritative role of the Bible notwithstanding, a covenantal anthropology avers that, respective to self-knowledge, it is not good for human beings to be "alone" (cf. Gen 2:18). In contrast to the divine disapprobation of a strictly vertical correspondence, eudaimonist frameworks suggest the inverse.[24]

Although the Scriptures are a mirror for the self, the fallen human mind exerts a distorting influence on all they reveal. In fallen hands the Bible all too often serves as a "nose of wax, to be turned and bent," as Locke (1824) cautions, suiting our tastes and so fomenting self-assurance and self-righteousness (p. 295).[25] Yet, according to eudaimonist perspectives, apart from the possibility of direct divine disclosure, there is no mechanism of verifiability for the eudaimonist noetic process or its results.[26] If self-knowledge comes only through the Scriptures, even assuming the involvement of the Holy Spirit, what assurance can we have that the barriers of sin and psychopathology have been overcome? Left to ourselves, we will always tend to distort their truthfulness to personal advantage. Christian eudaimonist self-knowledge presumes that God, through the Scriptures, authoritatively reveals the self as it truly is. And this is assuredly the case; yet, who but the self interprets and evaluates all that God is "saying" therein? Who but the self can call the individual to account for hermeneutical faults? Furthermore, how is the self to overcome persistent barriers to self-knowledge such as those encountered in pathological

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[24]One could justifiably argue that Christ himself might effect both the vertical and horizontal dimensions of dialogue respective to individual believers. This certainly appears to be the case in Christ's self-disclosure to Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9:4ff.; cf. Gal 1:12). This argument does not, however, obviate the necessity of horizontal correspondence, but rather reinforces the present point: God works instrumentally, that is through created means, to reveal the human self. As the God-man, Christ instantiates a dual correspondence respective to individual human beings (so, see John 15:14–15). He is humanity's archetypal "helper," thus fulfilling our covenantal need for epistemic and ethical correspondence.

[25]This paradox is not in the least ameliorated by Wolterstorff's (1995) otherwise helpful admonition: "to interpret God's discourse more reliably, we must come to know God better" (p. 239). This statement is undoubtedly true, but the question remains: when can individuals rest in a strictly subjective assurance that they have come into a more intimate knowledge of God?

[26]Augustine's (2009) conversion account suggests the direct involvement of God in revealing his sinful state, sounding at times similar to Paul's Damascus road experience (Acts 9:3ff.; cf. Gal 1:16).

dissociation? Though God unquestionably knows the self veridically, when can individual human beings rest in any assurance that their self-perception accords with divine truth?

In light of our remaining sin and the deceitfulness of the human heart, for the remainder of the present age believers cannot be certain of any ostensible freedom from self-deception (Jer 17:9). When limited to its vertical dimension and considering the dissociative and self-deceptive tendencies of the fallen self, dialogue may all too readily become monologue with barriers to self-knowledge firmly remaining in place. Along these lines, Jesus' parable of the speck and the plank cautions against making facile determinations of bias-free attribution, and further suggests that we are more likely to employ the Scriptures to search out others' faults than our own (Matt 7:5). Not even believers, it would seem, are immune to error or distortions in their self-conceptions. In fact, Christian eudaimonist approaches to self-knowledge may more readily contribute to self-righteousness and pride considering the authoritative bearing of divine disclosure. How simple and seductive it is to presume the divine oracles have wholly rooted out our false conceptions of self, effectively turning our subjective self-approval into divine approbation! Like the Pharisees, we risk self-deception and hypocrisy so long as our dialogue remains closed to any horizontal dimensionality.[27] After all, what more effective support for a false confidence in one's transparency and authenticity can there be than a presumption of divine authorization?

Covenantal self-knowledge. By contrast, a covenantal framework for undermining barriers to self-knowledge commends both the vertical and horizontal dimensions of dialogue. As Johnson (2007) concludes, our dialogical nature suggest that

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[27]It is far more likely, in fact, that those who possess the keenest knowledge of the oracles of God will be most prone to employ them in searching out the faults of others (Badgett, in press). This appears to be the concern against which Baxter (1974) undertook to counsel his fellow Puritan pastors.

human self-knowledge must indeed be Christ-centered and biblically grounded, yet also be "fundamentally social" (p. 433). The covenantal implications of Christ's person and work further crystallize this conclusion. As with the doctrine of the Trinity, so too does Christology implicate and decode the fundamental dialectic of divine self-disclosure. Christ, in his relatedness to the Father through the Spirit, reveals God to be one-and-three—beautifully, mysteriously whole in plurality (John 10:30). Whether historically or logically, the triune nature of God can be neither disclosed nor apprehended apart from the incarnation of the divine Word-made-flesh. In showing himself to be the Son, so Christ reveals the Father. Through Christ, we may see and know God more fully; apart from Christ, we would never have come to a knowledge of the triunity of God. As with the divine nature, so Christ discloses the divine *telos* of human nature as well. Through the person and work of Christ, in other words, God reveals the full grandeur of his intention for human beings as image bearers—as objects of divine affection and instruments of divine agency.

With the cross in view, the Father sends the Son to redeem sinful creatures. In the likeness of sinful flesh, Jesus dies for sinful flesh. Yet, as scandalous as the cross is, the divine aim for humanity is yet further on and more implausible even than the notion of a crucified God. Through his death, Christ sets aside the sins of his people making broken vessels whole in order that he might employ them as vehicles for his glory—a living "temple," as it were, for his presence on earth (1 Cor 6:19). As head over this redeemed and reconciled body of sinners *cum* saints, Christ effects his gracious will for the world. Now, those whose rebellion contributed to the death and disorder of the whole world God has transformed, through the work of Christ, into instruments of his glorious dispensation for that world. Though banished from the first garden, this redeemed, reconciled humanity has become for the present age the "place" on earth where the divine presence perichoretically dwells. It is through Christ—his person and his work—that we see, know, and appropriate these blessed realities. Furthermore, it is *in Christ* that human

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beings instrumentally, dialogically effect his will "on earth as it is in heaven." Believers, through their union with Christ, come to faithfully embody the truth of the word/Word in such a way that they may serve, if only contingently and instrumentally, as "mirrors" for the self. Though they bear no revelatory authority in themselves, through the perichoretically indwelling presence of Christ, God may nevertheless employ the redeemed as his instruments to authoritatively reveal others as they truly are.[28]

Redeemed Humanity and the Ecological Presence of Christ

In an admittedly limited and analogous way, Christ's person and work—who he is and what he does in relation to God and to the world—defines the life and bearing of believers (Bonhoeffer, 2005). The anthropological implication of the perichoretically instantiated dual natures of Christ entails that though the redeemed are not themselves divine, they share in the divine nature even as the incarnate Christ shares in their human nature. The divine person of the Son took on flesh; as of Pentecost, God's gift to believers is that they might take on the Spirit, so to speak (Gal 4:6; 1 John 3:24). Their perichoretic indwelling by the Spirit is effected by—indeed, it is the effectuation of—their union with Christ. Subsequent to these two analogically related unions, neither the essence of the divine Son nor that of the human person becomes anything more or less that it previously was. Christ remains a divine person in spite of his assumed humanity. The believer remains a human person, yet in Christ has been granted a taste of the triune life and communion. Christ issues to human persons a share of the divine nature by means of their perichoretic union with his Spirit thereby transforming his people into

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[28]Jesus commends the centurion for his recognition of this truth: namely, that all authority rests in God alone, but that Christ bears an instrumental authority conferred upon him by God (Matt 8:9). As of the resurrection, "all authority" resides in Christ (Matt 28:19), yet in transferring his own apostolic ministry to the church, he confers a contingent authority upon believers to "make disciples . . . in the name," that is, under the authority of the triune God and empowered by Christ's perichoretic presence (v. 20). So, Bucer (2009), in articulating the Reformed perspective, attests, "[I]t has pleased [Christ] to exercise his rule, protection and care of us who are still in this world with and through the ministry of his word, which he does outwardly and tangibly through his ministers and instruments" (p. 17; cf. Adams, 1970, pp. 15ff.).

instruments of his covenantal agenda for the world (see Col 1:11–12). God himself

dwells within them, accomplishing his purposes through them as they operate in step with

him (Gorman, 2015).[29] Believers relate to the world instrumentally insofar as they

mediate the person and work of Christ to all with whom they come into contact.

The knowledge of self, when self is understood as the onto-relational locus of

Christ's covenantal presence in the world, bears immense semiotic and ecological

implications. Under the terms of the Old Covenant, God gave the tabernacle—and later

the temple—as a sign of his presence in the midst of his people (Koester, 1989; see Inge,

2003).[30] Where God led them, so the tabernacle was to follow. Though he is the God of

all heaven and earth, he had chosen this people and this place in which to dwell (Exod

19:5). Moreover, his presence among them was a sign not only for Israel, but for the

whole world (Exod 33:16). The tabernacle/temple signified God's favor, his election of

Israel as his covenant people, and his eschatological agenda to fill the earth with the

knowledge of his glory (see Num 14:21; Ps 67:7; Isa 49:6; Hab 2:14). As the history of

Israel bears out, however, the *place* of God's presence periodically fell into disrepair and

desuetude as the people's *pursuit* of God's presence declined (Provan, Long, &

Longman, 2015; see Jer 7). In the context of the prophetic warnings of impending

judgment, the ecological impact of their syncretism and idolatry became clear: their bad

behavior had heaped scorn upon the name of their God (see Isa 57:3ff). The destruction

of God's own dwelling place—and the exile of the nation—amounted to both a

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[29]It is Christ who accomplishes his purposes; yet he does so by means of a dual agency—his own and that of his people. So, for example, Jesus says of himself, "I am the light of the world" (John 8:12). And he says of his followers, "You are the light of the world" (Matt 5:14). Clearly, the metaphor of light is flexible enough to carry a different sense in these two contexts. One key distinction is that individual believers do not have a light of their own; rather, they bear the light of Christ's presence. But there is also a sense in which the two statements relate analogically. After his resurrection, Christ appoints his disciples to carry on his own mission to the world (John 20:21; cf. Matt 28:19). In conferring this mission upon them, he also pledges to remain with them forever (John 14:23; Matt 18:20; 28:20). The conclusion seems to be that believers both *have* the light and *are* the light of the world.

[30]Cf. Block's (2011) insightful analysis of deuteronomic prescriptions for encountering the presence of Yahweh under the Old Covenant (pp. 98ff.).

repudiation and an anticipation of the dramatic renovation of God's promise to dwell eternally with his people. On account of their rebellion Yahweh would forsake his people, raze the temple, and eject them from the land. He would demonstrate to the world that his name would not be mocked, not even by his own people. In the course of time, however, Christ, on behalf of his estranged people, would vicariously die their deaths thereby ushering in a new age of union between God and humanity in which there would no longer be any possibility of separation or alienation (Rom 8:38–39). In his steadfast love, God would remember mercy and show his covenantal favor again.

With the advent of the New Covenant, the locus and sign of God's presence is different in several remarkable ways (Fee, 2009; Hamilton, 2006). As Jesus predicted, human beings no longer encounter and worship God in structures built by human hands, but rather "in spirit and truth" (John 4:23). Throughout the gospel of John, Jesus suggests that the new "place" where God will meet with his people will be *in Him* (Gordon, 2016; see Keener, 2010; Michaels, 2010). He will become the living temple wherein the people of God gather before the Almighty (Wright, 1996). The Apostle Paul confirms that in Christ, the Ephesian Christians "are being built together," along with all other believers, "into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit" (Eph 2:22). In other words, by means of the Spirit each and every individual believer has access to his perichoretic presence. Christ bodily resides within the highest heaven, seated at the right hand of the Father (Matt 26:64; Eph 1:20; Col 3:1; Heb 8:1; 12:2). Yet, Christ spiritually dwells within believers and they may encounter him there (John 14:23; Rev. 3:20; cf. Jer 29:13).[31] Indeed, the

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[31]This proposition *must* be held in dialectical tension with the second half of the Johannine epistemological formula, "in spirit *and truth*" (John 4:23). The gospel writer precludes the possibility of a *wholly* subjectivized spirituality by pressing the point that believers are sanctified by the truth of the Scriptures (John 17:17). So, while it is accurate to say that believers are perichoretically indwelt by the Spirit of Christ, human beings do not encounter Christ apart from the truth of his word. Christian traditions and movements that emphasize one or the other side of the dialectic— spirit *or* truth—will inevitably levy a tragically anemic spirituality. On the one side they will fall prey to subjectivist error unjustifiably elevating human experience and insight over divine revelation. On the other side, objectivists, perhaps preferring the relative safety of a strictly canonical "presence" of Christ, effectively rule out of bounds all subjective experience of divine presence. The result is a functionally deist spirituality.

meeting place of God and humanity is confined, for the remainder of the present age, to the corporate and particular union of Christ and redeemed human persons. The human self may then be construed as a unique, embodied onto-relational unity upon whom God has conferred his image and within whose formal, phenomenal constituents—i.e., the body–soul composite—he has purposed to reside (see 1 Cor 3:17). And the believer's ecological stewardship entails the knowledge of self as a locus of the triune God's covenantal presence in the world.

Covenantal Dialogue in Caregiving Contexts

From the earliest moments of its existence, the human self assumes an asymmetrical, proximal correspondence to other/Other that can only be regarded as prospectively dialogical. A bundle of potentialities and promise, the person growing within her mother's womb will need time and care to fulfill her telic design. For months to come, as a developing fetus and, later, a nursing infant, she will possess a nominal discursive capacity. Yet, given the proper parental nurture and care over the course of time, her primordial, inchoate agency will invariably acquire fuller expression. Eventually, through a cumulatively constructed awareness of self and other, the healthy child will adopt an increasingly sophisticated, albeit subliminally deployed, array of communicative means, both verbal and nonverbal, which will contribute to her growing ability to engage dialogically with others. On account of her creation according to God's covenantal *imago*, she will see herself as she is seen and know herself as she is known. As her agentic faculties—her powers of cognition, affection, or volition—come into full flower in proper relation to God and other, the *telos* of her covenantal personhood will become increasingly viable: she exists to love and be loved in a fully dialogical communion. In other words, God created her so that she might participate in a mutual, reciprocal agapic dynamic—one reflective of triune self-giving and other-receiving—to which Christ through the Spirit gives her access. By means of her perichoretic union with

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Christ, she is able to love and receive love as a fully response-able agent. She best expresses her covenantal design, then, in agapic dialogue that is perfectly symmetrical and balanced, and wholly mediated by Jesus Christ. But all of this will become possible for her *in time*.

While the New Testament's agapic imperatives entail mutuality and reciprocity, evidently, some particular relational contexts allow for, and even require, a diachronic asymmetry. For example, the transitive parent-child relationship, initially asymmetrical and unbalanced in favor of the child, shifts toward a more equitable correspondence over time as the child develops increasing agentic capacity. As the respective needs and capacities of child and parent change over the course of years and decades, dialogical expressions of agapic concern will inevitably vary as well.[32] Parental love for a newborn in some ways antitypally reflects the divine initiative of vertical reconciliation and communion. Yet, as with divine love, parental love cannot remain forever monological. According to the apostle, our love for God is properly responsive to divine initiative (1 John 4:19); similarly, then, the child's ethical responsibility to love her parents grows as an expression of her maturing agency. As a mature adult agent, her agapic regard and concern now bears the potential of dialogical symmetry. Love is perfected in the course of time. Perfect love, consequently, is dialogically enacted, yet diachronically capacitated (vv. 16–17).

Expressions of agapic mutuality and reciprocity between parent and child follow the same telic, diachronic trajectory of the believer's relationship to God. Despite the universality of the New Testament's ethical imperatives, evidently determinations of proper dialogical "balance" must be informed by the respective agentic capacities of each

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[32]In a clear reversal of classic parent-child roles, Jesus affirms that the necessity of caring for one's elderly parents as an expression an agapic ethics (Mark 7:10–13). On the other hand, children with disabilities may never develop a full agentic capacity to love as they are loved. Thus, dialogical symmetry and equity should be seen as an ideal, and one that is perfectly instantiated only among the persons of the Trinity.

correspondent. Mature agency—one that fulfills its covenantal imperative and telic design—is mitigated by the persistence of barriers to self-knowledge. To the extent that dissociation and self-deception persist, agency is compromised. God's provision for redeemed humanity assumes the diachronic growth of self's capacity to love other/Other with the eschatological promise of final release from any remaining barriers to agapic expression. As the psalmist suggests, the discursive movement of divine initiative awakens its reciprocal reply: from "my mother's womb," David reflects, "Your eyes saw my unformed substance" (Ps 139:13, 16). And from this he concludes, "I am fearfully and wonderfully made . . . my *nephesh* knows it very well" (v. 14). Patently, David's capacity for mature self-reflection in covenantal dialogue with the God who first knew and loved him could have only grown over time, awaiting the development of an agentic response-ability he could not possibly possess within the womb. A mature capacity for the sort of penetrative reflection and theological synthesis he demonstrates in this passage would await the maturation of his cognitive, affective, and volitive faculties. Even more significantly, David's agentic faculties would season and mature through his diachronic experience of the love and favor of the God who speaks. In this way, God himself nurtured the growth of David's capacity for pistic and agapic dialogue.

Pastoral and Psychotherapeutic Dialogue

Determinately, the relational self diachronically develops an increasingly whole self-consciousness provided the proper agapic care and nurture along both its horizontal and vertical relational axes. Stated another way, as human beings grow in covenantal intimacy with God and agapic others, barriers to self-knowledge are increasingly susceptible to disruption and displacement. To the extent that dissociation and self-deception may be dialogically overcome, self-consciousness will increasingly correspond veridically with self—that is, with God's perception of the individual— leading to the fulfillment of the agapic *telos* of the *imago*. Sin's influence is pervasive, its

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scope universal. It corrupts and skews the telic development of the covenantal self and its accompanying self-schema to the extent that it foments the structural self-blindness of otherwise mature, response-able adults. The most durable and persistent barriers arise from the debilitating impact of interpersonal sin on healthy psychological development. Personal sin, moreover, compounds and perpetuates the destructive force of caregiver failings, parental neglect, and abuse. Whatever the source, all forms of inter/personal sin also contribute to the propagation and reinforcement of dissociative and self-deceptive tendencies.

The consequences of a child's deprivation of healthy attachment, psychological trauma, and interpersonal violence are frequently enduring and debilitating (see Badgett, 2018). Although every human being suffers from sin's devastating influence, those who have suffered most are invariably the ones perennially confronted with the pangs of inner conflict and pathological self-ignorance. They are truly "poor in spirit" (Matt 5:3). Held "captive," rendered "blind" to self and other, and "oppressed" by sin's lingering insult upon the image of God within them, they await the proclamation of "liberty," "sight," and "favor" that Christ's coming offers to them (see Luke 4:18–19). Although it is Christ alone who can grant them freedom, he has purposed to do so for the remainder of the present age through the instrumental means of his redeemed, reconciled people. Through the instrumental means of caregivers' *faith working through love*, mediated by the working of his Spirit, Christ will set the captives free. He calls believers into agapic fellowship with himself in order that they might become vessels and instruments of his redemptive purposes; and their dialogical response to his agapic word compels and empowers their consent to his covenantal agenda for all suffering the sequelae of estrangement. In laying down his life for us, he has set for us the ethical example by which we now enact the fulfillment of the covenantal *telos* with others in the body of Christ.

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The imprimatur of pastoral and psychotherapeutic dialogue.

Appropriate and efficacious dialogue, that is, discursive relationality that promotes covenantal valence, will adequately address the twofold consequences of estrangement without neglecting or overlooking either. Specifically, since both sin and psychopathology interpose barriers to self-knowledge, covenantal dialogue cannot fail to address the two means by which individuals persist in a state of structural self-blindness. Certainly, personal sin has a more detrimental impact on covenantal self-knowledge in that it perpetuates a disruptive and corrosive dynamic within the believing self's inter/subjectivity. Although secure in Christ, believers must still move in step with Christ in order to find benefit from that union. Further, the psychopathological sequelae of interpersonal sin tend to promote the recapitulation of those sins: those who have been sinned against tend to sin against others in similar ways, thus compounding and perpetuating a cycle of damage and disunion. Yet, although union with Christ invites agapic submission to Christ, the believer's repentance and obedience will not automatically redress the sequelae of estrangement. Psychotherapeutic healing for past wounds entails separate yet interrelated processes. Consequently, justification should be seen as a correlative, rather than a preliminary, condition of remediation for psychopathological barriers to self-knowledge. Dialogue must also address the sequelae of inter/personal sin in order to effectively undermine barriers to self-knowledge. Especially as sinful tendencies reflect and recapitulate these sequelae, a dual focus that addresses both sin and psychopathology will prove most efficacious.[33]

By delineating barriers to self-knowledge along these two lines, two types or modes of instrumentality come into focus, namely, the pastoral and psychotherapeutic

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[33]So long as persistent dissociative barriers remain intact, caregiving that is limited to paraenetic applications of biblical and theological content will prove insufficient. Developmental trauma mitigates agency by compromising one's noetic capacities and reinforcing dysfunctional patterns of intersubjectivity. Christian caregiving, whether pastoral or psychotherapeutic, that fails to redress the wounds of childhood trauma and abuse inevitably leaves its recipients ill-equipped to walk in faithfulness and obedience to Christ.

functions of agapic caregivers. To a significant extent distinctions between the two

should be seen as the result of cultural and historical conditioning. Arguably, the role of

the pastor entailed both functions of caregiving prior to the advent of the modern

psychotherapeutic age (Charry, 1997; Clebsch & Jaekle, 1994; Holifield, 1983; Johnson,

2007; Oden, 1984).[34] With few exceptions, ostensibly Christian caregiving frameworks

tend to emphasize one or the other aspects of the fallen human condition. In other words,

implicit within disparate disciplinary expressions of caregiving, whether pastoral or

psychotherapeutic, the assumption seems to be that the most direct route to personal

wellbeing and interpersonal wholeness is found, chiefly, in overcoming one or the other.

In very broad strokes, historical pastoral frameworks have tended to emphasize the

deleterious effects of sin and the value of obedience for characterological growth while,

at times, minimizing psychopathological factors beyond the control of the individual;[35]

whereas, psychotherapeutic approaches often focus on healing while neglecting the

etiological role personal sin plays in fomenting psychopathology.[36] In consideration of

the two types of barriers to self-knowledge and their contributory and complementary

roles in obstructing covenantal relationality, salutary caregiving interventions should

pursue means of supplying both pastoral and psychotherapeutic instrumentality out of

agapic concern for the care recipient. Effective care that entails both pastoral and

psychotherapeutic dialogue bears the most promise for undermining the two primary

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[34]The ubiquity of secular psychology and psychotherapy is best understood as the fruit of two realities of the modern age: the rise of secularism and the decline of classical pastoral care (Holifield, 1983; Tidball, 1997). Presently, an assumed segmentation of disciplinary purview attends extant expressions and understandings of caregiving in both secular and Christian caregiving. A secondary aim of the present work has been to repair the bifurcation of pastoral and psychotherapeutic considerations while avoiding the presumption that a truly holistic synthesis is either practicable or necessary.

[35]As stated in Chapter 4, sin underlies all forms of psychopathology, but psychopathological sequelae are not always the result of *personal* sin.

[36]To the extent that Christian psychotherapeutic frameworks rely on secular dialogical standards and methods, they undermine the warrant for their distinction as "Christian." On the other hand, with a fuller appropriation of the hermeneutical and ethical framework of the New Testament, Christian psychology and psychotherapy will provide a more salient complement to orthodox pastoral care.

barriers to veridical self-knowledge in the interests of the fulfillment of self's covenantal *telos*.

   Contextually determined hermeneutical and ethical asymmetry. In many ways the relational dynamics that constructively impact barriers to self-knowledge mirror the asymmetrical relationship of parent and child.[37] As the child's understandings of self, other, and the world are appropriated through the instrumental influence of the parent, so persistent dissociative and self-deceptive tendencies in adults will come to be favorably resolved by similar means in the context of asymmetrical dialogue. The developing self of the child relies on the relative sovereignty of the parent in providing nurture and shelter from excessive stress (Klebanov & Travis, 2015). Over time, and as the child matures, parental sovereignty yields to the burgeoning agency of the child. Contextual determinations of children's developmental needs include their age and relative capacity for environmental and relational stress. On the other hand, lapses in healthy development occur when those needs go unmet resulting in persistent dysfunction. The fundamental aim of "good" parenting is the development of the child into a mature agent—a response-able subject capable of functioning in diverse contexts and, eventually, of recapitulating the process with a new generation (cf. Prov 22:6).[38] Considered along these lines, the caregiving dyad, whether pastoral or psychotherapeutic, assumes a similar transactional dynamic of care *giving* and *receiving* analogous to the parent–child relationship, though with several significant caveats. Under a covenantal anthropology, the pastoral and therapeutic concern of both caregiver and recipient should be the Christiform wholeness of the latter. As has already been suggested, wellbeing or *eudaimonia* is a worthy and

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   [37]Beasley-Murray (1993) notes the apostle Paul's use of parent–child allusions throughout his epistles as a primary metaphor for pastoral caregiving (see 1 Cor 3:1–3; 4:15, 17; 2 Cor 6:13; 12:14; Gal 4:19; Phil 2:22; 1 Thess 2:7, 11; 1 Tim 1:2, 18; 2 Tim 1:2; 2:1; Titus 1:4).

   [38]Ostensibly Christian parenting must also recognize the biblical imperative to provide for children's spiritual nurture and discipleship (Eph 6:4; cf. Deut 6:7).

appropriate aim, but given the covenantal *telos* of the human self and its eschatological orientation, wellbeing should not supersede agapic union with Christ and one's fellow believers (through Christ) as the final end of all forms of Christian caregiving, whether or not they are primarily pastoral or psychotherapeutic.

The appropriate degree of hermeneutical and ethical asymmetry in any relational dyad follows from several factors. In contrast to secular discursive frameworks, Christian pastoral care and psychotherapy may draw on the truths of divine revelation in determining the proper contextual limits.[39] As McFadyen (1990) rightly concludes, "The ethical limits to communication in a particular relation can only be found, known and understood through the orientation towards a mutuality of understanding which happens in dialogue as relations are in conformity to Christ" (pp. 128–129). Consequently, the primary consideration in achieving dialogical "balance" in any caregiving exchange must be the ultimate hermeneutical and ethical sovereignty of Christ. Jesus is Lord over both caregiver and recipient: he alone knows and believes wholly veridically; he alone has been "perfected" in love. Both caregiver and recipient, on the other hand, will suffer from remaining sin and the subliminal tendency to deploy dissociative means for avoiding unpleasant and unflattering realities. As such, neither is immune to the possibility of self-deception. Although, generally, pastoral and therapeutic discursive frameworks presume that some degree of interpretative authority must be granted to caregivers, orthodox Christianity recognizes the final sovereign authority of the word/Word. Consequently, Christian caregivers will avoid the pitfalls of self-righteousness and hypocrisy automatically entailed by asymmetrical relational dyads only by acknowledging their own need for their own agapic dialogue with God and others.

The therapeutic role of the Christian caregiver is to undermine dysfunctional

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[39]This is not to say that Christians may not benefit from the empirical findings of secular transactional analysis (see Jacobs, 1994).

attachment patterns and relational schemata carried forward from childhood through agapic exploration and dialogical enactment of divine and human "texts." Efficacious dialogue—that is, intersubjective communication that effectively undermines intrapsychic barriers—is inevasibly asymmetrical. Christian caregivers will necessarily be afforded greater hermeneutical authority respective to both divine and human "texts" if barriers are to be identified and overcome. Still, caregivers' authoritative role must be properly balanced and conditioned by genuine agapic concern for care recipients. This is the dialogue of dialogues—the dialogical dynamic of *faith working through love*—by means of which barriers to self-knowledge become permeable. Together, the authority and the agapic concern of the caregiver provide the dialogical means by which old "knowledge" comes to be replaced by new. Secular models that recognize intersubjectivity as therapeutic means yet neglect the self's basal need for vertical reconciliation and dialogue grant caregivers an unwarranted degree of hermeneutical sovereignty. Furthermore, hermeneutical authority must be balanced by genuine agapic concern for care recipients in order to maximize its efficacy; yet in emphasizing the metaphorical or subjunctive quality of therapeutic caregiving, secular frameworks deprive care recipients of a genuine agapic relationality.[40] Knowledge of, and love for, Christ grounds all normative dialogical frameworks.

Christian caregiving, in contrast to secular frameworks, sees the triune God not as any metaphorical or subjunctive "parent," but as our archetypal Father after whom all others are so named (Eph 3:14–15). Further, only in Christ are our greatest attachment needs met. As believers come to relate constructively to Christ, the instrumental dialogue of caregiving assumes its most efficacious bearing. The caregiver is called to function instrumentally by embodying Christ's presence, authority, and agapic concern, not in any

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[40]According to Weiss (1994), excessive hermeneutic sovereignty improperly balanced by ethical considerations—whether due to the caregiver's aloofness or over-identification with the recipient—undermines favorable psychotherapeutic outcomes.

subjunctive sense, but veritably insofar as she or he is filled with and led by the Spirit. Christ is truly present and working as shepherd, healer, and "father" alongside the person of the caregiver and within the dialogical exchange of caregiver and recipient. As Isaiah prophesied of the Messiah, Jesus' "name shall be called Everlasting Father" (Isa 9:6) inasmuch as he will never forsake or abandon his people (cf. Heb 13:5). He will not leave them "as orphans" (John 14:18).[41] Efficacious dialogue, moreover, will include both explicit articulations of the caregiver's instrumental role respective to Christ and the care recipient, as well as caregiving practices, such as prayer, instruction, confrontation, and expressions of agapic concern, that implicitly enact and demonstrate the caregiver's Christiform instrumentality.[42]

Diachronic degrees of asymmetry. To the extent that barriers to self-knowledge persist, caregiver and recipient must negotiate the degree to which each one assumes contingent hermeneutical sovereignty over questions of veridicality. As discoveries are made and barriers removed, the degree of asymmetry will presumably decrease as both come to see and know mutually. Over time, the care recipient will ideally assume a greater degree of hermeneutical sovereignty until, having achieved sufficient covenantal wholeness and response-ability, a provisional symmetry becomes possible. The constant concern confronting Christian caregivers, therefore, will be nurturing the appropriate contextual "balance." The aim of Christian self-knowledge is not merely self-understanding or self-mastery, but the appropriation of a Christiform

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[41]There is no conflation here of Trinitarian Persons or functions. Isaiah employs the title, "Everlasting Father," as a recognition of the Messiah's "royal . . . kingship" and signifying that he will be "endowed with enduring life" (Childs, 2000, p. 81). Although Christ's fatherhood is ultimately metaphorical, it better approximates the archetypal fatherhood of God the Father than does any strictly human antitype (cf. Heb 12:9).

[42]By explicitly articulating Christ's sovereignty over caregiving processes and outcomes, the caregiver undermines the possibility that she or he would be seen in that light. It is a helpful check on pride and self-righteousness, and it also guards against unhelpful or countertherapeutic degrees of asymmetry in the relational dyad.

covenantal agency on the part of the care recipient. The *faith working through love* of the caregiver is purposed toward the maturation of the recipient's full agentic participation in *faith working through love* before God and in relationship to others, including, as it happens, the caregiver. In the context of a fully symmetrical dialogue, either side of the relational dyad may assume a caregiving role respective to the other. Considering the agapic imperatives of the New Testament, hermeneutical and ethical symmetry should be regarded as the pastoral and psychotherapeutic aim of caregiving. In other words, Christian caregiving fulfills the "law of Christ" when it is mutual and reciprocal (Gal 6:2). So long as barriers remain, however, an inverted transactional exchange will prove inefficacious, if not countertherapeutic.[43]

**The Christiform Person and Work
of the Christian Caregiver**

Christ stands at the center of all effective caregiving, Christian or otherwise (see Col 1:17). He alone makes "all things new" (Rev 21:5). The work of Christ in bringing about intrapsychic reconciliation, however, is instrumentally enacted through the person and work of the caregiver. Christ's primary means of shepherding and healing broken and sinful human beings is through his redeemed, reconciled people (Johnson, 2017; Kellemen, 2007; Purves, 2004; Tripp, 2002). They are those whose lives have come to be marked by a "radical commitment to the person of Jesus," both in terms of their communal relation to him and their conformity to his character (Boa, 2001, p. 382). Having received the gift of God's reconciling love through their union with Christ, they become signs and vessels for his glorious dispensation for the world. This corporate vocation is also the particular calling of certain individuals within the body of Christ.

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[43]Outside of caregiving contexts, whether pastoral or psychotherapeutic, the love imperatives apply equally to all believers. It should be regarded as both unwise and unethical, however, for caregivers to invert the caregiving dyad, allowing themselves to become the object of concern. That being said, caregivers who do not allow themselves to receive care in other contexts will eventually undermine their effectiveness.

Although Christ calls and commands all believers to "bear one another's burdens" (Gal 6:2), he also sets apart specific individuals for the work of pastoral and psychotherapeutic caregiving (see Eph 4:11; cf. Rom 12:6–8).[44] Those he calls he also equips for their work of caregiving. Central to his preparation and sustenance of caregivers for their vocation, Christ seeks to influence the form and expression of the Christian caregiver through agapic dialogue. He molds and shapes vessels for his use, remaking them in his image and for his purposes. As living vessels—self-conscious, response-able agents capable of doing otherwise—their full agentic participation as Christ's instruments of agapic care is contingent on the removal of their own barriers to self-knowledge. Consequently, self-knowledge relates intrinsically to caregiving efficacy in that it allows for the formation of the numerous vital ethicospiritual aspects of individual caregivers. As they pursue their own growth in transparent self-awareness through dialogical communion with God and others, they may become more suitable instruments of agapic care for others (Johnson, 2007). In other words, he helps them to remove planks from their eyes so that they might better help those in their care to do the same (see Matt 7:5).

Hermeneutical dialogue and the pistic work of caregivers. The most vital aspect of the caregiving enterprise is the caregiver's conformity to the person and work of Christ. Through union with Christ, the caregiver's *faith working through love* allows the

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[44]Bucer (2009) recognizes a distinction in what today might be called the hortatory and caregiving functions of pastors finding that Christ imparts necessary gifts for each role in differing degrees to individuals: "To one he gives the skill of teaching clearly and understandably, while not endowing him with so much grace in exhorting; to another he gives ability to exhort warmly and seriously, without also enabling him to be powerful in the teaching and exposition of the scriptures" (p. 34). His description of the latter entails gifts and activities most commonly associated with Christian caregiving: "There are those whom the Lord has appointed to exercise their ministry conscientiously and usefully to the bruised and wounded, warming and powerfully comforting them and applying the right measure of gravity and discipline, but who are not particularly effective in other aspects of the pastoral office" (p. 34). Likewise, Bonhoeffer (1985) holds that pastoral or "spiritual" care, as a form of *diakonia*, is properly complementary to preaching: "In this process of spiritual care . . . the pastor's task is to listen and the parishioner's is to talk" (p. 31). He further argues that "spiritual care joins with the sermon to enable [believers] to uncover and banish true sin" (p. 32).

care recipient to begin to "hear" and "see" around false and corrosive conceptions of self that have accumulated due to sin and brokenness. Through pistic submission to the hermeneutical sovereignty of Christ, the caregiver helps undermine subjective barriers to self-knowledge that are rooted in dissociative processes and self-deceptive tendencies. In pastoral and psychotherapeutic contexts, the caregiver embodies a Spirit-mediated confidence in the word/Word of God and its ability to undermine barriers to self-knowledge. Jesus is Lord over every text. Consequently, divine discourse serves as a mirror for self and a lens for other. The caregiver's hermeneutical task entails "hearing" Christ's word to and about the individual, as well as the individual's dialogical reply. The caregiver listens to Christ's "thou art" and the individual's "I am" in order to facilitate determinations of veridicality. Furthermore, Christ's hermeneutical authority applies to all other texts as well: the word/Word is also a lens through which they must be read and "translated" (see Johnson, 2007, pp. 226ff). Following from a reformational theory of knowledge, the word/Word of God is the "norming norm" by which all other texts are "normed," whether the text in question in the counselor, the counselee, or the discursive content that informs their dialogue (Vanhoozer, 2005, p. 234). More than a mere counselor or specialist, the caregiver serves as a living hermeneutical bridge of sorts between Christ and the recipient, as well as other sources of discourse.[45] Critically, the caregiver's competency for this hermeneutical task depends on the degree to which *every* text has been dialogically balanced by pistic commitment to the supremacy of divine discourse.

Maintaining dialogical balance with secular texts. Extant frameworks for Christian caregiving relate dialogically to their secular counterparts in a variety of ways. To some degree the rise of Christian counseling[46] as a fundamental aspect or subset of

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[45]E.g., secular texts, but also the care recipient's past and present relations.

[46]The terms "psychotherapy" and "counseling" are often used interchangeably (Corey, 2017;

caregiving may be seen as both a converse and constructive response to secular

psychotherapy. On the one hand, secular "edification frameworks" have essentially arisen

as modern rivals to the Christian gospel, offering wholeness and wellbeing apart from

any dialogical engagement with the person and work of Christ (Johnson, 2007). Modern

and postmodern psychology and psychotherapy have largely evolved, at least since

Freud, as competitors to Christianity (Vitz, 1994). Christian counseling, in some ways,

seeks to stem the tide of secularization presently dominant in Western understandings of

mental health and wholeness. On the other hand, having recognized the benefits of the

kind of focused, purposeful person-to-person dialogue such as that which is practiced in

secular contexts, Christians have adopted many of the forms and strategies learned from

secular psychotherapy.[47] Whether consciously or not, as Holifield (1983) rightly

observes, all forms of contemporary pastoral counseling have been influenced by

"psychological modes of thinking" (p. 356). The same is certainly true of Christian

psychotherapeutic practice, especially as its standards and best practices rely on secular

psychology and psychotherapy for normativity.

     The work of the Christian counselor as caregiver, specifically as it relates to

the hermeneutical side of the caregiving dialogue—*faith working (through love)*—is, at

present, a locus of serious contention among Christians. Throughout the first half of the

twentieth century, uncritical engagement with secular discourse unquestionably

contributed to the loss of hermeneutical balance in many Christian edification

frameworks (Johnson, 2007, 2010a). For some time, modern psychological and

psychotherapeutic discursive frameworks would encounter minimal resistance from

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Day, 2004; Sommers-Flanagan & Sommers-Flanagan, 2015; Tan, 2011; though cf. Collins, 1972). I employ the term "Christian counseling" to refer to a particular caregiving process or context—i.e., person-to-person ministry or "soul care"—that, depending on the intended aim or outcome, may be more properly pastoral or psychotherapeutic (though hard distinctions between the two are difficult to maintain).

     [47]Christian rejections of secular psychotherapeutic discursive frameworks do not entail the determination that person-to-person edification frameworks—i.e., counseling or "soul care"—are inherently unbiblical or unhelpful (see, esp., Bobgan & Bobgan, 2009).

Christian theoreticians and practitioners of pastoral and psychotherapeutic caregiving. Little regard was paid to the hermeneutical primacy of the Bible with the result that Christian counseling came increasingly into conformity with modernist standards (Adams, 1970; Ganz, 1993). Thankfully, reversals of this accommodating trend can be seen in the rise of pastoral and psychotherapeutic efforts to reassert the Bible's fundamental hermeneutical authority (Johnson, 2010a). Articulations of avowedly Christian, biblically faithful counseling frameworks increasingly reflect a renewed confidence in the hermeneutical sovereignty of divine discourse; although, particularly as it regards the theory and practice of Christian counseling, controversy still attends the pursuit of hermeneutical balance.

The principal means of distinguishing between the various Christian edification frameworks is the degree to which they appeal to divine and secular discourse, respectively (see Johnson, 2010b; see also Greggo & Sisemore, 2012). Intramural difference is then mapped along a continuum according to the putative warrant each framework grants to dialogue between divine and secular discourse.[48] The concern of such evaluative efforts appears to be ensuring that Christian caregiving frameworks are situated within a stable and faithful hermeneutic that affords the Bible sufficient authority in any dialogical engagement with secular discourse. This is certainly a salutary aim. Christian caregiving frameworks ought not to afford undue hermeneutical authority to secular discourse. Caregiving efficacy, to say nothing of the caregiver's responsibility to God, rests on the presumption of a biblically faithful hermeneutic. According to Christ,

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[48]All forms of *Christian* counseling engage, to varying degrees, in dialogue with secular frameworks, whether constructively or not. Along the hermeneutical continuum, differences between disparate frameworks depend on two factors: the degree to which divine discourse is afforded hermeneutical sovereignty, and the relative optimism regarding constructive dialogue between Christian and secular frameworks. According to Johnson (2010b), traditional Biblical Counseling and Christian Psychology concur on the supreme hermeneutical authority of divine discourse, yet differ on the potential for constructive dialogue with secular frameworks. It should be patently clear that, any time secular discourse is granted hermeneutical sovereignty over and against divine discourse (as in, say, ostensibly Christian affirmations of same-sex marriage), there has been a breach in hermeneutical balance to the extent that it is more consistent with a modern, secular perspective.

faith finds its surest footing only when grounded on divine discourse (Matt 7:24). Yet, just as clearly, faith must work itself out *in love*. Above and beyond the justifiable hermeneutical concern, there is the ultimate ethical aim of all Christian caregiving.

In light of the recent emphasis on the hermeneutical aspects of Christian caregiving, less clear has been the vital *ethical* role of the agapic caregiver. Among the key competencies of effective caregivers, Kellemen (2015) cites conformity to Christ as crucial to efficacious caregiving: "We are powerful," he avers, "to the degree that we reflect the loving character of Christ" (p. 84). According to Sbanotto, Gingrich, & Gingrich, (2016), "[T]he most influential variable in counseling is the person of the counselor and the relationship that is cultivated" between caregiver and recipient (p. 34). In addition to these affirmations from Christian writers, secular researchers have also concluded that "the best available research clearly supports the healing qualities of the therapy relationship and the beneficial value of adapting that relationship to patient characteristics beyond diagnosis" (Norcross & Lambert, 2011, p. 4). Caregiving efficacy, in other words, cannot be wholly linked to its hermeneutical aspects. It is the person of the caregiver—whether as a pastor, friend, spouse, counselor, psychotherapist, etc.—and the quality of the caregiving relationship, that Christ uses to effectuate the removal of epistemic barriers. Truth alone, it would seem, will prove insufficient for undermining barriers to self-knowledge. For this task, truth must learn to speak in love (Eph 4:15). The love with which caregivers "speak" must be rooted and grounded in a dialogical love for Christ.

Pastoral perspectives on agapic caregiving. The biblical and historical literature outlining the optimal characterological and relational qualities of Christian caregivers is considerable. The person and work of pastoral caregivers, in particular, while not systematically articulated in the New Testament, are implicated as vital aspects of caregiving effectiveness, most notably in the epistles of Paul. Inarguably, the apostle

holds that preaching and teaching should serve as the primary discursive function of

pastors (Beasley-Murray, 1993). His self-articulated charter for his own personal ministry

includes "admonishing" and "teaching" as the seminal means of believers' growth in

Christiformity (Col 1:28).[49] In his so-called "pastoral" epistles, Paul affirms numerous

necessary characterological aspects of pastors attendant to their divine calling (Mounce,

2000). In his first epistolary missive to the young pastor, Paul exhorts Timothy to

distinguish himself by his pursuit of "righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness,

gentleness" (1 Tim 6:11).[50] These virtues, though commonly enjoined for all believers,

are especially apropos for Timothy in light of the opposition he has encountered in the

Ephesian church (Ellicott, 2010). His pastoral care and concern for Christ's people, as

Paul suggests, must embody Christ's own compassionate and virtuous character. The

"aim" of pastoral ministry, according to the apostle, is "love that issues from a pure heart

and a good conscience and a sincere faith" (1:5). Consequently, Timothy is to "command

and teach" (4:11; cf. 5:7), but not without concern for the status and station of his

listeners. He is not to "rebuke" but to "encourage" his fellow believers as he would a

close family member (5:1).[51] Similar instructions found in his other pastoral epistles

demonstrate the necessity of agapic regard for others in the church (see 2 Tim 2:22–25;

Titus 1:8). In summary, Beasley-Murray (1993) rightly concludes, "Love—as a parent for

a child—was the bedrock of Paul's pastoral care" (p. 655). Paul's exhortations to his

fellow pastors reflects his own parental concern for the believers under his charge.

　　　　The notion of the pastor as "parental" caregiver finds ample warrant in the

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[49]O'Brien (2000) sees no need to sharply distinguish, based on Paul's apostolic calling, the work of the pastor from that of the missionary.

[50]There are four contrasting imperatives in the present context "reminiscent" of Paul's admonitions to the Ephesians and Colossians to "put off" the old and "put on" Christ (Mounce, 2000, p. 353; cf. Eph 4:22–24; Col 3:8–17).

[51]Admittedly, this command not to "rebuke" applies only to those who do not stand in opposition to right teaching and reverent submission to the gospel (see 1 Tim 5:20; Titus 1:13; 2:15).

Pauline oeuvre. For the apostle, however, the dyadic correspondence of caregiver and care recipient follows not so much from the analogical link between parent and pastor, but from caregivers'—whether pastoral *or* parental—antitypal correspondence to Christ (see 1 Cor 11:1). If Paul is like a father or mother[52] to others in the church, it is precisely because he is imaging Christ to them. To the degree that pastors and other caregivers image Christ, then, they become effective instruments of God's agapic concern for *his* children.

Following from this biblical sketch, treatises from classical pastoral care writers provide ample supplement in regard to the caregiver's moral life and caregiving competencies (see, e.g., Augustine, 1978; Benedict, 1998; Bucer, 2009; Chrysostom, 2015; Gregory, 1978). Again, the emphasis on the vital relationship of the caregiver to Christ is evident. According to Gregory (1978), caregivers must be like Christ:

> . . . pure in thought, exemplary in conduct, discreet in keeping silence, profitable in speech, in sympathy a near neighbor to everyone, in contemplation, exalted above all others, a humble companion to those who lead good lives, erect in his zeal for righteousness against the vices of sinners. He must not be remiss in his care for the inner life by preoccupation with the external; nor must he in his solicitude for what is internal, fail to give attention to the external. (p. 45)

As instruments of Christ's agapic work among his people, caregivers effect great influence over others, whether for good or ill. So, Chrysostom (2015) warns that inconsistencies between "work" and "word" in the life of the caregiver "must needs do much harm" (p. 77). Hypocrisy, for those standing in Christ's stead, is a most condemnable sin (see Matt 23; cf. Matt 18:6; Jas 3:1). Whereas, genuine conformity to Christ in one's inner life and outward actions is key in fulfilling the caregiving vocation lovingly and efficaciously.

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[52]Paul compares himself to a nursing mother in relation to the Thessalonian believers (1 Thess 2:7–8). To the Galatians, he writes that he is "again in the anguish of childbirth until Christ is formed in you" (Gal 4:19).

In many ways, the Puritan pastoral writers renew and deepen the classical tradition by emphasizing the Pauline themes of union and communion with Christ as the basis of all pastoral caregiving (see Packer, 2010; Yuille, 2013). For the most part, the spiritual and ecclesial reforms of English Puritanism centered on the person and work of Christ as revealed in the Scriptures. Central to their perspective on pastoral caregiving is the caregiver's dependence on and love for Christ. In his call for renewal and reform among his peers, Baxter (1974) cites the crucial link between vertical and horizontal correspondence: "Our whole work must be carried on under a deep sense of our own insufficiency, and of our entire dependence on Christ" (p. 122). As the caregiver's relationship to Christ deepens, so caregiving dyads bear increasing vitality and potency. Nowhere is this more evident than in the need for genuine agapic concern for care recipients. Boston (1998), for example, considers that an individual's "flame of love to Christ" would "fuel" a heart of genuine compassion for others (p. 42). The agapic character and concern of the caregiver flows from love for Christ. In his prayer echoing the Pauline theme of the pastor as Christiform "parent," Swinnock (1868) entreats,

> Lord, when I behold wounded, bleeding, dying souls, let my eyes affect my heart with sorrow. May I seek Thy blessing upon my diligent efforts for their recovery. Make me such a tender and affectionate mother that I patiently bear their offenses. . . . Let all my actions toward them flow from sincere affection. May all my counsels and comforts, even my rod of reproof, be dipped in honey. (p. 323)

Perspectives such as the Puritans had on pastoral caregiving can be applied to all Christian caregivers regardless of the role or capacity in which they serve (see Deckard, 2010).

In the modern era, the influence of secular psychotherapeutic frameworks has led to a diversification of perspectives on pastoral caregiving (Holifield, 1983; see, e.g., Adams, 1970; Doehring, 2015; Hiltner, 1949; Kellemen, 2007; Tidball, 1997).[53] As with

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[53]As to the influence of pastoral caregiving on secular psychotherapy, Clebsch and Jaekle (1994), observe, "[M]uch of what is done today by therapists is recognizable in what has been done before by pastors" (p. xi).

Christian psychotherapy and counseling, pastoral caregiving frameworks continue to wrestle with vital hermeneutical questions regarding the role of divine discourse and the feasibility of dialogue with secular texts.[54] Significant differences presently persist as to the proper nature of the pastoral caregiver's work, whether it amounts to, for example, providing a supportive "spiritual presence" to hurting individuals (Doehring, 2015, p. xxii), identifying and overcoming psychogenic barriers to wellbeing (see Hilter, 1949), or paraenetic exhortation that fosters obedience to God (Adams, 1970). Whether any one of these may be identified as the *sole* aim of orthodox pastoral care and counseling remains to be seen; the Scriptures clearly provide ample warrant for all three, and many others besides. Furthermore, extant aims in contemporary pastoral caregiving can also, to varying degrees, be seen within the classical pastoral tradition (see Charry, 1997; Oden, 1984; Purves, 2001). On the other hand, nearly every perspective on pastoral caregiving, whether ancient or contemporary, consistently holds that the caregiver's compassionate correspondence to recipients is indispensable for efficacious care.

Compassionate correspondence as key. Empathy, an individual's cognitive and affective capacity to vicariously enter the experience of another, purposefully "feeling with" that person, is a crucial skill every caregiver must cultivate (Sbanotto et al., 2016; cf. Norcross, 2011). Moon and Crews (2002), cite empathy, along with warmth and genuineness, as the three key traits making up the "golden triad" of effective counselors (p. 185; see Rogers, 1967). Care recipients need to know that someone "hears" them, cares, and can identify with the sin and suffering they have endured.

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[54]The Biblical Counseling movement, broadly conceived, may reasonably be understood as an attempt at hermeneutical renewal for Christian caregiving (see Lambert, 2011; MacDonald, Kellemen, & Viars, 2013; Powlison, 2010). Differences within the movement on the feasibility of dialogue with secular discourse, in many ways, mirror similar differences among Christian counselors and psychotherapists concerning the role of the Bible in counseling. Again, under a covenantal theanthropology, dialogical "balance" entails a presumption of the supreme hermeneutical authority of divine discourse over all other texts. Loss of balance can occur when secular texts are given hermeneutical precedence over the Scriptures, or whenever discourse becomes excessively or exclusively monological.

Empathic discourse is the most basic therapeutic means by which caregivers may skillfully communicate understanding and warmth.[55] And yet, as Moon and Crews further conclude, a strict emphasis on skills-based competency in Christian caregiving probably reflects an over-dependence on secular frameworks. And Collins (2006), though keen to stress the need for well-developed discursive skills, exhorts caregivers to first pursue a life that "show[s] evidence of the Holy Spirit's fruit" (p. 67).[56] While empathy, warmth, and genuineness are vital to the task of effective caregiving, they do not supplant the New Covenantal imperative to love. "Competent" Christian caregiving is, above all, agapic. And the subjective disposition that most clearly expresses agapic concern and regard for others is not empathy but compassion.

Compassion is evidently a reflection of character rather than discursive competency (Hunsinger, 2015; Purves, 1989). Less a skill that may be learned, it is a wholly Christiform disposition. A compassionate concern for others, according to Purves (1989), embodies the person and work of Christ:

> [C]ompassion is entirely a messianic reality. Jesus alone is the compassionate person, the one in whom compassion is an actuality. This means that compassionate ministry is possible for us only if we are in a relationship with Jesus Christ. Through our relationship with him we participate in his compassion. Our compassion, or, more accurately, his compassion in which we participate, is an expression of our life in Christ, the result of having died and risen with Christ (2 Cor 4:10), of having been born again (John 3:3), of having been transformed by the renewal of our minds (Rom 12:2). We recognize that apart from him we can do nothing (John 15:5). (p. 82)

Christiform compassion, unlike empathy, reflects the multiplex dialogical dynamic of agapic concern. By dwelling or abiding in the vertical dimension of Christ's love, caregivers become instruments of Christ's compassion along a horizontal dimension (1

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[55]Wachtel (2011) observes that empathy can, in fact, be "aversive" whenever the care recipient is closed to reflective self-perception (pp. 207ff.). In such cases, caregivers must strategically titrate discourse that might trigger the hardening of barriers.

[56]Collins further cites the past president of the American Psychological Association, Allport (1961), who identifies love as "incomparably the greatest psychotherapeutic agent," yet candidly confesses, "Psychotherapy knows the healing power of love, but finds itself unable to do much about it" (pp. 81–82).

John 3:17). Genuine compassion, then, proceeds from Christ, through his caregiving instrument, to the individual in need of agapic care. It depends on the degree to which the caregiver has cultivated the perichoretic appropriation of Christ's compassionate disposition toward sinful and broken human beings. Other discursive competencies, such as those outlined in secular counseling manuals, are rooted in individual skillsets rather than dependence on Christ. This observation should not in any way detract from the necessity or helpfulness of counseling skills for pastoral and psychotherapeutic caregiving; moreover, a compassionate disposition toward others will likely impel the caregiver to further develop the discursive skills of empathy, genuineness, and warmth— to learn to "speak the language" of suffering individuals.[57] Yet, neither can the appropriate application of competent discourse displace the need for genuine compassion in Christian caregiving. Furthermore, there is a clear hermeneutical fault in any presumption by Christian caregivers that efficacy obtains as a result of a strictly horizontal dialogue (see John 15:5).

Christiform compassion and vicarious suffering. For the apostle Paul, Christiform correspondence to God and others within the body of Christ suggests that caregivers will suffer vicariously with both in the context of agapic dialogue. Generally, Christian suffering images the dying and death of Christ (Gorman, 2001; Tannehill, 2006). In regard to his own suffering "for the sake of" Christ and his people, Paul perceives a direct connection to his faithful "stewardship" of the "mystery" that God has called him to disclose (Col 1:24–26). This mystery, he explains to the Colossians, is

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[57]Oden (1984) rightly identifies the christological basis for empathy: "Empathy is the process of placing oneself in the frame of reference of another, perceiving the world as the other perceives it, sharing his or her world imaginatively. Incarnation means that God assumes our frame of reference, entering into our human situation of finitude and estrangement, sharing our human condition even unto death" (p. 18). While, as Oden argues, the two are analogous, the degree of disjunction between them is made clear in his use of the term, "imaginatively." New Covenantal compassion demands that caregivers love "not . . . in word or talk," or, dare we say, imagining, "but in deed and in truth" (1 John 3:18). There is an important distinction between empathy and compassion that Oden fails to make.

"Christ in you, the hope of glory" (v. 27). In other words, Paul's suffering as a servant of Christ discloses the otherwise hidden purposes of God to bring about the perichoretic union of his people with the indwelling Christ (see Moo, 2008; O'Brien, 2000; see also Rom 8:10; 2 Cor 13:5; Gal 2:20; 4:19; Eph 3:17). As a "minister" or servant of divine discourse, Paul's calling includes his active participation in the death and resurrection of Christ as an embodied sign of this transcendent truth.[58] To the extent that Christian caregivers' appropriate this semiodiscursive calling of *faith working through love*, their pastoral and psychotherapeutic ministry will bear out the reality of Christ's redemptive power over every barrier to self-knowledge. "God alone can bear the sins of the world and not be destroyed by them," Hunsinger (2015) concludes; "While God calls human witnesses [i.e., caregivers] to partake in this ministry, it is first and foremost God's ministry into which human beings are called to participate" (p. 40). Through their Christiform participation in the suffering of others, caregivers partake in God's ministry to broken and sinful human beings. In this way, they fulfill the *telos* of the *imago* in a fallen world and enact the means by which barriers to self-knowledge become permeable.

The ethical imperative of self-knowledge. To the degree that asymmetry characterizes the transactional dyad of caregiver and recipient, the former must pursue the dialogical appropriation of those subjective qualities of Christ's person that undermine persistent barriers to self-knowledge. Caregivers are signs and images of Christ, whether they accurately disclose him or not. The stewardship inherent in their vocation should impel their pursuit of conformity to Christ through veridical self-knowledge. As Jesus advised his followers, they must first remove planks in their own eyes before they attempt to help their fellow believers with their specks (Matt 7:5).

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[58]So, Campbell (2012): "[S]uffering is to be viewed as a *participio Christi* and not as an *imitatio Christi* only. Believers share in the ongoing force of Christ's death and the power of his resurrection" (p. 381).

Barriers to self-knowledge conceal and obfuscate the true nature of the self. As these barriers are displaced, caregivers may more accurately and adequately evaluate their competency for the agapic work to which they have been called, and for which they are being equipped, by God. Not only this, but insofar as caregiving efficacy depends on caregivers' Christiform correspondence, they must endeavor to "judge" themselves according to their conformity to Christ's image (see Matt 7:1). The work of dialogical self-examination and self-evaluation stands among the cardinal desiderata of the caregiving vocation.

Shame, Stigma, and the Ecclesial Environment

Barriers to self-knowledge thrive, as it were, in aversive relational contexts. In particular, personal shame and the fear of stigmatization, both of which are relationally induced and maintained, can critically undermine an individual's ability to accurately self-perceive, let alone self-disclose. Tragically, many Christians struggling with the weight of shame and guilt over sin remain in a state of concealment and self-deception because either their primary relational base—home and family—or their faith communities offer judgment and exclusion rather than agapic regard and concern. Expectations of homogeneity and conformity to communal standards of "righteousness," rather than Christiformity, will drive broken and sinful people into hiding. Clearly, the New Testament never sanctions a flippant or permissive attitude toward sin; on the contrary, sin is condemned in the strongest terms (Matt 5:29–30; John 8:34; 1 Cor 15:34; 1 Tim 5:20; Heb 10:26; 1 John 3:8). Yet, the implication of the gospel is that human sin and divine grace correspond to each other in a strictly binary relationship: Christ's work cancels all debts. Where sin abounded, the apostle declares, grace abounds all the more (Rom 5:20).

Divine reconciliation places the repentant believer within a state of divine acceptance and agapic favor (Eph 2:8–9). What sin destroyed, grace restores.

Consequently, condemnation of the contrite—amounting to a form of stigma—is absolutely excluded (cf. Rom 8:1). Once alienated and estranged from God, by reason of Christ's death on our behalf we have now been welcomed back into the garden. Agapic communion with Christ and one's fellow believers is not simply a function or consequence of our obedience, but of our Spirit-mediated proximity to him. We receive the perichoretic joy of Christ by abiding *in* him, not by performing *for* him (John 15:11). Through our *faith working through love* we avoid the pernicious lie of self-righteousness and, to the degree our Christian communities foster an environment of transparency and grace, we deactivate others' fears of stigma and shame. Through active participation in Christ's agapic mission to "sinners," rather than to the "[self-]righteous," Christian communities foster such an environment (see Mark 2:17).

Conclusion

In the end, it is the knowledge of the Lord that will finally fill the earth as the waters cover the sea (Hab 2:14). And from now and through all eternity, this knowledge supplies human beings light for genuine understanding (2 Cor 4:6; Eph 1:17; 2 Pet 1:3; 3:18). True knowing comes to us through Christ, whether the knowledge is of God, of ourselves, or of anything else in heaven above or earth below. That God has granted human beings to know him truly, and in so doing to know themselves as he knows them, is the greatest gift imaginable. To know God and the Son he has sent is, as Jesus pronounced, eternal life. In coming to know themselves *in Christ*, they come to see *him* more clearly, to love him more dearly. Christian self-knowledge differs from secular self-knowledge, therefore, in at least two fundamental ways. First, by promulgating a covenantal theanthropological understanding of the self, the object of self-knowledge and the subject of self-knowledge can be seen to be one and the same: the "me" that God-in-Christ sees and knows veridically and invites into perichoretic communion with himself. Although he promises eschatological wholeness and wellbeing to his people, the supreme

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good he offers them is *himself*. He has disclosed himself as the ultimate source of their life and aim of their existence, and further, through his atoning death has opened to them the way to union with him. Christian self-knowledge, then, can never be an end but only a dialogical means of deepening our union with Christ.

Second, although secular approaches to the self and self-knowledge have rightly observed the disruptive influence of inter/personal evil, whether due to individual sin, bad parenting, or other tertiary factors, they cannot perceive the final cause of all human psychopathology and suffering: estrangement from God and the anticipatory torment of autonomy and isolation. Barriers to self-knowledge not only testify to the developmental and relational needs of human beings, but also disclose our fallen-yet-perfectible condition. We were made for communion with the triune God. Though presently ensnared by and enslaved to sin, the self that is *curvum in se* may be made whole in Christ. The redeemed self, once formerly estranged from God, is now reconciled to God and estranged from sin and death. Formerly isolated, the reborn self is now incorporated into his eschatological body, the Christiform ἐκκλησία τοῦ θεοῦ. Formerly consigned to eschatological chaos and conflict, the believing, persevering self is now being dialogically perfected in faith and love through union with him. All who seek their eschatological rest in him, though subject for the remainder of the present age to the fallen conditions of a cosmos held captive, will one day see him revealed to eyes that now recognize him only by faith. And until he returns, he has entrusted the instrumental remediation of subjective barriers to self-knowledge to the elect, having called them to serve as semiodiscursive vessels of his ecological presence and power.

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ABSTRACT

CHRISTIAN SELF-KNOWLEDGE: A CHRISTOLOGICAL
FRAMEWORK FOR UNDERMINING DISSOCIATION
THROUGH RECONCILIATION

Jonathan Paul Badgett, Ph.D.
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2018
Chair: Dr. Eric L. Johnson

Self-knowledge unavoidably implicates and, in the end, it must presume correspondence. How, indeed, can a self even be posited in the absence of a corresponding other? While the triunity of God reveals a dialectic of unity and correspondence, the human self has ever struggled, within traditions as seemingly diverse as ancient Hellenism and the sundry schools of modern philosophy and psychology, against the presumption that "autonomous self" might not be fatally contradictory. On the other hand, with the lens of orthodox Christology properly affixed, God, self, and others may finally be seen as they truly are. Christ is the revealer of mysteries, the reconciler of God and humanity, and the One in whom all the treasures of (self-)knowledge and wisdom are found (Col 2:3). Christian self-knowledge, then, presumes the believer's ethical correspondence—to God-in-Christ and, through Christ, with fellow believers by means of faith expressing itself in love. When sought in Christian caregiving contexts, this Christ-mediated knowledge of self, over time, counters and undermines the countertherapeutic expression of dissociation and its ethical corollary, self-deception.

VITA

Jonathan Paul Badgett

EDUCATION
       B.M., Florida Southern College, Lakeland, Florida, 1996
       M.A., M.M., University of Kentucky, 2000
       M.Div., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2013

PUBLICATIONS
       "Child Sexual Trauma, Dissociation, and the Soul: A Christian Psychology
              Conceptualization." *Journal of Psychology & Theology*, advance online
              publication. doi:10.1177/0091647117750659
       "Undermining Moral Self-Deception with the Help of Puritan Pastoral
              Theology." *Journal of Spiritual Formation & Soul Care*, in press.

ORGANIZATIONS
       Society for Christian Psychology
       Evangelical Theological Society

ACADEMIC EMPLOYMENT
       Adjunct Faculty, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville,
              Kentucky, 2000–2002

MINISTERIAL EMPLOYMENT
       Minister of Music, Carlisle Avenue Baptist Church, Louisville, Kentucky,
              2000–2002
       Minister of Music, Westwood United Methodist Church, Cincinnati, Ohio,
              2002–2005
       Lead Church Planter, Awakening: Cincinnati, 2005–2006
       Associate Pastor, Living Faith Christian Church, Farmingdale, New York,
              2006–