2015

Some Practices of Theological Reasoning, or, How to Work Well with Words

Brad Kallenberg
University of Dayton, bkallenberg1@udayton.edu

The Routledge Companion to
the Practice of Christian Theology

Edited by Mike Higton and Jim Fodor

3

SOME PRACTICES OF THEOLOGICAL REASONING, OR, HOW TO WORK WELL WITH WORDS

Brad J. Kallenberg

> If anyone is in Christ, it's a whole new world.
>
> (St Paul, 2 Cor. 5:17)

I used to enjoy going on very long runs. Over the years I encountered a surprisingly wide range of animals as I ran: bobcat, eagle, osprey, armadillo, crocodile, wild turkey, owl, coyote, rattlesnake, tarantula, deer, and falcon. Twice I met a bear. But the strangest encounter of all happened on a fire road in the foothills of the San Bernardino Mountains. Coming round the corner I was suddenly faced with a wandering flock of sheep – in urban Southern California! I had never met sheep before and wondered what they would make of me. They were largely unconcerned.

Philosopher and theologian Herbert McCabe asks us to consider the similarities and the differences between the 'world' of sheep and the 'world' of human beings by comparing our respective responses to the presence of a predator, say a wolf.[1] As far as a sheep is concerned, a wolf is dangerous. As far as a human, alone in the wild, is concerned a wolf is also dangerous. 'Danger' is the meaning that the wolf presents to both the sheep and the runner. Because we share this meaning, both the sheep and I would react in similar ways: pulse quickens, nostrils flare, eyes widen and we both flee to avoid the danger posed by the wolf. When we run, we can both be said to act for the same reason.

Acting *for* a reason is one way to describe the world of meanings shared by mammals. In large measure, this kind of 'world' is one that can be described from the outside. A biologist can describe the similarities between the sheep's perception of *Canis lupus* and the human's perception. These similar bodily responses in the presence of a growling wolf are part and parcel of what it means to say that the sheep and the human act 'for the same reason'.

However, human beings also inhabit a 'world' of a higher order than that which we share with other mammals. While both the sheep and I act for a reason, unlike

the sheep, I, as a human, can also be said to 'have' a reason for acting. Having reasons means that the wolf becomes significant to humans in ways not available to the sheep. How a sheep reacts to danger is largely (if not entirely) determined by genetics. And while the human has similar genetically determined reactions, the wolf holds added significance to humans because humans share a linguistic world. As a speaker and reader of say, English, I understand that *Canis lupus* is one of the small number of meat eaters that hunts in daylight and hunts in a pack. So while both the sheep and I run *for* a reason (to escape the sharp fangs of the wolf), I do not run directly away from the wolf but at an odd angle because I also *have* a reason the sheep knows nothing about, namely I suspect the unseen presence of the rest of the pack. The sheep cannot conceive facts from books. It can only react to what it perceives here and now. When the rest of the wolf pack becomes perceivable, it will be too late for the poor sheep.

Language users share a higher-order world of meaning than animals can conceive. But language users, being bodily critters themselves, are able to imagine something of what it is like to be a sheep. In fact, in an important sense, human beings can only inhabit this higher-order world of meaning because we are critters who already inhabit the lower-order world of bodies. Now consider: St Paul says that 'if anyone is in Christ: it is a whole new world!' Taken at face value, Paul seems to be saying that there may be an even higher-order world of meaning that eclipses both linguistic and animal worlds and yet remains somehow entangled with them. These interconnections give warrant to one theologian's rough and ready definition of theology as 'the task of working with words in the light of faith'.[2]

Working with words

Our language contains a variety of 'tools' for getting things done ('Shut the door!' 'Will you marry me?' 'I christen thee John.' 'Did you hear the joke about ... ').[3] And the tools themselves are of our making. I do not mean that you or I make up words, but rather that all language speakers, over these many, many centuries, have in the ongoing acts of speaking molded the means by which we communicate. This fact sets us apart: Animals communicate by means that are genetically determined; humans communicate in media of their own making.[4]

Because speaking and being human are deeply intertwined, it is easy to overlook how deeply ingressed language is in us and we in language. Consider an easy word such as 'chair'. Speakers of English know what 'chair' means and show that they do know by using the word appropriately on all the right occasions. This we do without any effort. Conversely, fluency with 'chair' also results in our effortlessly *not* using the word on all the wrong occasions. So, we do not use the word 'chair' when talking about the smell of cheese or the direction of inflation or the imminence of rain. In fact, there are countless ways we do not use the word 'chair' and innumerable ways that we do. How in the world do we keep them straight and manage to do so without paying attention? Part of the answer may be uncovered by watching the way young children learn to speak.

Children begin speaking about the same time they become mobile. First they roll, then they skootch, next comes the army crawl and then ... they're off! In no time they are pulling themselves into standing position and hand-over-hand shuffling from

one piece of furniture to another until they make it over to wherever Mom or Dad is sitting. The child reaches and grunts, 'Unnnhhh', and the parent scoops her up. No sooner is the child seated than she slides off the lap. This becomes a fun game, up, down, up, down, ad infinitum. Most young parents assist the child in the game somewhat absent-mindedly while carrying on full-blown conversations with other adults.

This game is one of the child's first encounters with chairs. The encounter itself is part of the child's fluency: chairs are what we climb into, slide off from, sit in, bounce on, crawl around, spill food on, lose crayons under, and bump into. Eventually, the child will learn to count chairs, stack chairs, knock over chairs, drag chairs, and so on. These bodily activities comprise the familiar home in which the word 'chair' most often appears. How we speak of chairs – that is the pattern of regularities of our use of the word – is bound up with all these familiar activities. This is what philosopher of language Ludwig Wittgenstein meant when he said that it belongs to the grammar of 'chair' that we *do* things with them, especially that we sit in them.[5]

We can imagine a non-English speaker learning the English word 'chair' by simple substitution. If from France, the speaker will learn that 'chair' is synonymous with *chaise*. If from Germany, *Stuhl*. But how does someone learn the word whose host culture has no chairs (perhaps they only squat on their haunches)? To learn a brand new concept requires participation in the form of life that involves chairs. For the outsider, this involves both becoming familiar with the regular ways that the host 'tribe' uses a given word, which for speakers of English will include (1) all the *sentences* that use the word 'chairs' as well as (2) all the *activities* involving chairs: counting, stacking, fetching, stubbing toes on, and so on. Only when familiar with everyday activities with chairs will the non-native speaker acquire enough fluency to 'bicker with the natives like a brother'.[6]

This complicated form of life

Ordinary words are connected with our bodies in surprisingly deep and involved ways. In the case of 'chair', the meaning is bound up with what we do both with the chairs and with the word 'chair'. But how is this unique to the human animal? After all, cannot Koko the chimp, as well as many family dogs, work with words? Certainly. But this isn't very high praise for Koko or Rover since only in the most simple of cases do our vocables simply go proxy for things that can be detected by means of animal senses. In fact, the vast majority of human talking does *not* relate to a world-of-meanings that an animal could share. That does not mean that our talking is meaningless per se, only that it is meaningless to animals.

Consider how a very young child learns the word 'God'. A clue to their learning comes from noticing the sorts of occasions in which the word 'God' is familiarly spoken. If the child is asked to define God, he or she will likely say things such as 'We sing songs to God', 'God is the one we pray to', 'We tell God about what we did wrong', 'We visit God on Sundays', or 'We tell our friends about God'. For the child, the concept of God cannot be separated from all the bodily activities in which the word is used: praying, worshiping, confessing, thanking, singing, evangelizing, and so on.[7]

The intimate connection between bodies and words is the linchpin for understanding what theologians do all day. Theologians do not pull words out of thin air and rearrange them until they sound pleasing. Theologians undertake the most significant conversations possible and do so under the most restrictive conditions imaginable. Some of these 'restrictions' are self-imposed.[8] The theologian operates under the canonical text and in step with the Spirit who is moving the Church through history.[9] And what tools are available to the theologian working under such restrictions? Words, words connected to bodies.

In what follows I will sketch scenes from the history of theological reasoning in order to illustrate five kinds of practices that theologians are able to perform because words are connected with bodies. It all begins with a revolution.

A whole new world

There is a big difference between reform and revolution.[10] Both reformers and revolutionaries see problems in society that need fixing. The reformer can propose changes that make perfect sense: the proposed changes sound good to everyone because everyone already agrees what 'good' means. The revolutionary faces a more difficult task because the heart of the revolution is the revolutionary's conviction that everybody has got the meaning of 'good' all wrong. As a result, the changes proposed by the revolutionary may not sound very appealing, precisely because they will upend central aspects of what is currently held as decent, important, and beneficial. What the revolutionary proposes may in fact be good – but calling the changes 'good' will not make sense until after the revolution. Revolutionary good cannot be anticipated in advance; it is a new kind of good.

Jesus was a revolutionary. His message was Gospel or 'good news' – but the goodness of the news is only intelligible when viewed from the far side of his revolution. Prior to his life, ministry, death, burial, resurrection and sending of his Spirit, Jesus' words were often mystifying and therefore misunderstood even by his disciples.[11] In other words, prior to the revolution, listening to Jesus was for the disciples like working on a jigsaw puzzle while studying the wrong box top.[12] Subsequent to the revolution, which is to say after the Spirit gives birth to the Church, the wrong box top is wrested out of their hands. For them it was, as Paul says, 'a whole new world', one that required Christ-followers to figure out how to live lives faithful to the revolution. Here then is a short definition: Theology is the ongoing, sometimes heated, conversation about what does and does not fit the revolution. While no exhaustive account of the practices of theological reasoning is possible, different aspects of the theological task come to the fore at different moments of theological history. The first aspect is theology-as-witness.

Theology-as-witness

In Western society, giving witness in a court of law seems straightforward: using words that jurors understand ('speeding', 'reckless', 'running a stoplight'), the witness describes a series of events, events that are just the sort with which the jurors

are already familiar (e.g. car crashes). But giving testimony is not always straightforward, especially when the events or the vocabulary are unfamiliar to the hearers. This difficulty can be seen by comparing what a Jewish audience was able to 'hear' to what a Gentile audience could 'hear'. When Peter proclaims to an audience of Jews (gathered from across the Empire for the Feast of Booths) that Jesus was raised from the dead, they barely blink an eye. But when Paul tells the same story to a non-Jewish crowd, a sizeable majority shake their heads in confusion while others sneer at the ridiculous idea of resurrection.[13] In both Jewish and Gentile worlds, dead people ordinarily do not return from the dead sporting a body that eats solid food but walks through locked doors. Yet Jewish literature had, over a period of several centuries, slowly acquired the concept of 'resurrection'. Beginning with the idea of the extremely rare and miraculous resuscitation of a recently dead person (one who would ultimately die again),[14] the concept of 'raised' slowly morphs over time until Jews could speak about a universal, albeit distantly future, revivification of all persons before God-the-Judge.[15] Thus to the Jewish mind Peter's statement about a dead man being raised was intelligible; if this man Jesus was raised from the dead, it would signal the beginning of the End foretold by the prophets, which is to say, the distant future begins now. And 3,000 Jews converted.

But now consider what lengths Paul, 'Apostle to the Gentiles', must go to when addressing a non-Jewish audience. To begin with, Paul carefully aligns bodily deeds with the revolutionary message. For example, Paul urges the Thessalonians to remember 'what sort of men we proved to be among you for your sake'.[16] Similarly, Paul explains to the Corinthians that what ratifies his message is not his rhetorical skill but rather the manner in which Paul and his companions behaved.[17] The striking manner of Paul's daily conduct is epitomized during the last leg of his third missionary journey. While passing through Caesarea Philippi, a Christian prophet named Agabus foretold the arrest and imprisonment awaiting Paul in Jerusalem.[18] Assuming Agabus's prediction is reliable, how might we have expected Paul to respond? It seems eminently reasonable that Paul would have taken evasive action, like he did in the incident with the basket over the wall,[19] so as to extend the years in which he could minister. But on this particular occasion he refuses to deviate from completing the journey where he started: Jerusalem. Why? The answer seems mundane. Paul's trip had been a fund-raiser for the impoverished Jewish Christians, unemployed because of local persecution around Jerusalem. While it seems reasonable to hand off the money sack to a trusted companion with a lower profile, Paul insists on delivering the collection himself. Why was he so stubborn on this point? Apparently, Paul sees a crucial connection between the content of his message and this particular bodily deed. His gospel is not 'in words only',[20] but in words that become intelligible against the backdrop of deeds. His conduct displays his message. Paul must go to Jerusalem, because the revolutionary good news he bears is internally connected to caring for the poor.[21] If he surrenders this deed, his message becomes that much less intelligible.

Paul's action is an instance of theology-as-witness. To say the same thing differently, one practice of theological reasoning is *the intentional alignment of deeds and words* in order to properly convey a revolutionary message. This tactic is carried forward by each successive generation of Christians,[22] and especially by theologians

who are surrounded by ignorance and misunderstanding. Notice the length to which second-century apologist Aristides goes to set out the grammar of 'God':

> But the Christians ... show kindness to those near them; and whenever they are judges, they judge uprightly. ... they do good to their enemies. ... if one or other of them [has] bondsmen and bondswomen or children, through love towards them they persuade them to become Christians, and when they have done so, they call them brethren without distinction. They do not worship strange gods, and they go their way in all modesty and cheerfulness. Falsehood is not found among them; and they love one another ... And he, who has, gives to him who has not, without boasting. And when they see a stranger, they take him in to their own homes and rejoice over him as a very brother ... And if they hear that one of their number is imprisoned or afflicted on account of the name of their Messiah, all of them anxiously minister to his necessity ... And if there is any among them that is poor and needy, and they have no spare food, they fast two or three days in order to supply to the needy their lack of food. ...
> Such, O King ... is their manner of life. ... And verily, this is a new people, and there is something divine in the midst of them.[23]

Aristides is well aware that his polytheistic audience comes to the table with crippling misconceptions about what the word 'god/s' means. So he sets out what Christians mean by devoting several pages to describing the amazing manner in which Christians live.

Such examples of 'embodied' apologetics can be multiplied. The point for us is that an important aspect of theological reasoning is theology-as-witness by which the theologian seeks the alignment of deeds and words in service of the message. How must I/we live? The answer is that I/we ought to live in such a manner that our lives become what sociologists call a 'plausibility structure' for the Gospel.[24]

Theology-as-politics

If theology-as-witness seeks attunement between deeds and words in service of bringing comprehension to those outside the revolution, theology-as-politics strives for attunement between language and behaviors for the sake of those inside the believing community. Here the word 'politics' refers not to the combative rhetoric of an election year. Rather, the idea grows out of the Greek noun for community, *polis*, and the verb form, *politeuomai*, which connotes the art of community formation. The later term involves the corporate character that arises from the coordinated interplay of everyone's individual behaviors. Thus Paul writes to the congregation in Philippi, 'only conduct yourselves [*politeuomai*, literally "coordinate y'all's life together"] in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ'.[25]

Sometimes community life needs only a little tweaking. In these instances, the theological task can seem straightforward, as when Paul calls out Euodia and Syntyche by name and tells them, in no uncertain terms, to get along![26] On other occasions things are more complex, and restructuring the community life involves the entire community in protracted discussion before any restructuring begins. In hindsight,

the decision to let Gentiles into the Church without also requiring them to adopt Jewish ways seems like just the sort of thing Jesus had in mind in his John 17 prayer. But at the time, the decision recorded in Acts 15 was as dicey as it was hard won.

A powerful illustration of theology-as-politics comes from one congregation's response to food shortage in the fourth century.[27] In the year 369 CE, the region surrounding the town of Caesarea [Turkey] – 100 miles from anywhere – was devastated by famine. An extremely dry winter was followed by a spring without rain. The local pastor of the church in Caesarea, a man named Basil (one of the three famous 'Cappadocian Fathers') reported that the sky – 'shut up, naked and cloudless' – has left the fields 'little more than withered clods, unpleasant, sterile, and unfruitful, cracked and pierced to the depths by the hot sun'.[28] The hot spring and summer was followed by another tough winter that made travel from the land-locked town physically impossible. Those who could afford to do so began hoarding grain, while the commoners became 'walking cadavers' as they slowly starved.

Today people are hardened to the horrors of death by starvation because the images are shown so frequently on television. But imagine being a pastor whose job it is to care for these walking cadavers and their swollen-bellied children. There is evidence that the poor were desperate enough to sell their own children as slaves to the rich, thus ensuring nutrition for the child as well as food for the rest of the family for a few more weeks. For their part, the rich had the gall to haggle over the purchase price even though their own act of hoarding grain was making the scarcity problem worse.[29] It was under these conditions that Basil went to work.

The son of a nobleman and therefore at one time independently wealthy, Basil cashed in his own inheritance, bought grain from the hoarders and set up a famine relief center on what used to be the family's summer estate. He organized soup kitchens, built dormitories, constructed a hospital – one of the first, if not the very first, mercy hospitals on record – and hired bona fide physicians and nurses to attend the sick. Basil's *ptochotropheion* (literally, 'Patron House for the Poor') was large enough to create a small economy of its own, enabling the poor as they recovered first to be trained and then actually to serve in various trades.[30] This *ptochotropheion* was the first of several. The sheer scale of these complexes earned them the nickname Basil's Cities.

Basil's activities during this period encompassed a variety of reasoning practices. As we shall see below, Basil was one of the contributors to the doctrine of the Trinity that would be made official in 381 CE. So, obviously Basil excelled at theoretical reasoning. As a pastor/ethicist Basil engaged in practical reasoning classically understood – especially in his homilies, letters, conversations and other verbal strategies he employed to persuade the rich to donate foodstuffs. But also at every turn, Basil was engaged in a distinct sort of practical reasoning called design.[31] Design involves deriving satisfactory responses to problems whose answer cannot simply be 'Googled' by linking 'right means' to 'right aims'. Placement of buildings, layout of each building (whether dormitory or hospital or kitchen), logistics of food acquisition and distribution, procurement of doctors and medicines, organizing day to day care for the sick as well as a jobs-training program as each recovered were all instances of 'right means'. Nothing surprising in this list. The surprise comes under 'right aim'. Basil's city had Christ as its aim. What does it mean for design reasoning to have Christ as its 'aim'?

When Jesus announced to the skeptics 'The kingdom of God is in your midst',[32] he was referring to himself as the first-order instantiation of the new kind of human friendship that he was inaugurating. At that moment, Jesus was the kingdom; later there were a dozen, then 500, then 3,000, and so on.[33] It is not an accident that Basil's *ptochotropheion* was apparently nicknamed *basileia* (Basil's City) because the New Testament phrase for kingdom of God was *basileia theou*. When Christians pray the 'Lord's Prayer', they ask for God's kingdom (*basileia*) to come in the same breath that they ask God to provide bread. In Basil's mind, Jesus' kingdom shows up when bread is provided to the poor of God. Thus, Basil's City was *christomorphic*, which is to say shaped like Christ's kingdom.

Basil's city was christomorphic not only by reason of its mechanical functioning (famine relief) but also by reason of its physical location. Ancient Jewish Law required lepers to live 'outside the city'.[34] That's why Jesus met and healed the ten lepers outside the city wall.[35] Because Jesus befriended the sick and unclean 'outside the city', that is where the author of Hebrews tells us we should go too.[36] 'Outside the city' is where Christ can always be found. Christ went outside the city to suffer and die for the people. And that is the logic behind Basil's intention to build his complexes outside the walled enclaves of the wealthy and often stingy city-dwellers. Like Christ, Basil's complexes made all the difference for the poorest of the poor. Rather than being objects of pity, because of Basil's theology-as-politics the poor were blessed: 'Blessed are you poor (*ptochoi*), for yours is the kingdom (*basiliea*) of God.'[37] By both function and placement, Basil's theological project was community formation of the most revolutionary kind.

Theology-as-conversation

Theology-as-conversation is not something entirely distinct from theology-as-witness or theology-as-politics but rather an aspect of both. In the present age of blogging and texting and tweeting, words seem to have suffered devaluing by inflation. However, for the theologian, words are precious. We've already seen how deeply connected words are with bodily life. Sometimes our bodily living together actually effects a change in the meaning of the words we use. It is the theologian's task to work out the implications of these changes by means of ongoing conversations.

I mentioned above that the predominately Jewish early church restructured common life to include non-Jews. Any non-Jew was welcome who joined in activities such as the prayerful worshiping of Jesus as God[38] and recounting the Good News about Jesus and the reciting of the Shema: 'Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one!'[39]

If we understand 'recounting the Good News' to include telling stories like Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane, then the three activities (1) praying to Jesus as God, (2) retelling the story of Jesus' own prayers, and (3) recitation of the oneness of YHWH, constitute a theological headache! It would seem easy to keep any two of the three: (a) one could worship Jesus as God and confess that Jesus himself prayed, so long as one admitted a plurality of gods (for no one prays to oneself!); or (b) one could worship Jesus as the one God, but abandon the notion that Jesus himself prayed;[40] or (c) one could recount tales of Jesus' own prayer life and recite the singularity of

God but thereby infer that Jesus himself must hold a rank somewhat lower than full-fledged divinity.

Most early Christian congregations refused to surrender any of these three practices because together the three activities constituted their identity as Christ-followers (an identity for which many willingly died). These three practices are evident in the opening pages of Acts; the conceptual tension between them was not noticed until some time later. Over the first three centuries of the Church, believers tried to 'settle' things by 'rearranging the tracks' (to borrow Mike Higton's image from chapter 2). And I'll leave it to the reader to ferret out all the details of the drama as it finally came to a head in the fourth century. However, a couple of details about the *manner* of the 'settling' will shed light on the practice of theological reasoning.

There is a huge conceptual difference between the 'settlement' known as the Nicene Creed (325 CE) and the one that was adopted at Constantinople some fifty-six years later (381 CE). Both have to do with the status of the Lord Jesus Christ. After positive assertions of what Christians believe, namely that the Lord Jesus Christ is of the same, identical substance (*homoousia*; *homo* + *ousia* = 'same substance' or *consubstantial*) as God the Father, the Nicene Creed goes on to explicitly outlaw certain ways of saying things.

> But, those who say, Once he was not, or he was not before his generation, or he came to be out of nothing, or who assert that he, the Son of God, is of a different *hypostasis* or *ousia*, or that he is a creature, or changeable, or mutable, the Catholic and Apostolic Church anathematizes them.[41]

The important point for us is the proscription against asserting 'that he, the Son of God, is of a different *hypostasis* or *ousia*'.[42] Obviously, if the Lord Jesus Christ is of identical God-stuff as the Almighty Creator, he cannot be said to be of a different substance (*ousia*)! But Nicaea also prevented Christians from saying the Lord Jesus Christ is of a different *hypostasis*. But now observe: the Constantinopolitan Creed affirms consubstantiality (one *ousia*) but *drops* the proscription against saying Jesus was a different hypostasis. In other words, after 381 it was indeed orthodox to say both that the Lord Jesus Christ was of the same substance (*ousia*) and a different *hypostasis*.[43] In fact, the very construction *proscribed* by Nicaea became *normative* for Christian doctrine after 381: one *ousia*, three *hypostases*, or roughly, 'one substance, three persons'.[44] How did the council of Constantinople ever pull it off, this reversal?

Virtually all the heavy lifting for the semantic transformation of *hypostasis* was done, surprisingly, in a series of hand-written letters. Some of the letters are known by the addressee, such as 'To Ablabius'. Others are simply indicated by number, such as *Letter 38* and *Letter 236* – which tell us something about how many letters theologians wrote, if not also how many attempts it takes to achieve a satisfactory 'settlement'. These letters seem to be preparatory work for longer presentations in group settings.[45] Thus despite the strict synonymy on which Athanasius insisted ('*hypostasis* is *ousia* and has no other meaning apart from *ousia* itself'[46]), Basil (or perhaps Basil's brother, Gregory, the authorship is uncertain) instead proposes in *Letter 236* that the two be understood as semantically distinct.[47]

Although this example of doctrinal development makes for thick conceptual weeds, it does remind us again that theology is not something done by oneself in the closed space between the ears. Not only were these councils triggered by years of intractable bodily practices of worshiping, telling and reciting, but the main players were themselves not social recluses: the very Basil who oversaw the construction of *ptochotropheion* is up to his neck in letter writing about the meaning of *ousia* and *hypostasis*. Nor ought we to conclude that theology is primarily a matter of inventing new concepts.[48] Rather the point is that the best theological language evolves from lengthy and ongoing conversation.

So important is conversation to theology that the practice of theological discussion slowly evolved its own ground rules. These ground rules enabled all parties both to squeeze the very most out of a discussion *and* to keep the conversation going. Thomas Aquinas' thirteenth-century work, *Summa Theologica*, is a good example of these ground rules. Each entry begins with a question followed by a concise summary of what former thinkers had said about the question. Then comes Thomas's own proposal, followed by a defense of the claim, and then finally his answer to the objections of the former voices. This style of theological conversation is called *quaestiones disputatae* (disputed questions). But its goal is not so much to explicate a final position (although some treat it this way) as to invite further conversation.

Theology as working on oneself

Human beings do not naturally run marathons or speak in front of large crowds. Nevertheless, humans are gifted with the sort of nature that can be trained to do things we ordinarily shy away from. It is in this light we may understand how some of the self-imposed 'excesses' of earlier Christians are integral to theological reasoning.

Consider Anselm. Contemporary soteriology cannot move forward without first tackling Anselm's *Cur Deus Homo? (Why the God-Man?)*. And philosophers of religion are still today debating the merits of Anselm's (so-called) 'ontological proof' in the opening pages of *Proslogion*. Yet many of these same scholars are often surprised to learn of the rigor of Anselm's self-mortification.

Anselm himself recalls his life as a thirty-something theologian at the Bec monastery.[49] He writes that the years between 1063 and 1070 were marked by the study of Scripture and devoted friendships. But these years were also marked by hallucinations! How so? In addition to regular religious fasts, Anselm lived in a self-imposed state of semi-starvation. In addition, Anselm was perpetually sleep-deprived, because the only time for private meditation, writing, and prayer was in the small hours of the morning. Collective worship began well before sunrise and was repeated eight more times, the last around midnight. Semi-starvation and sleep deprivation are surely the biological contributors to Anselm's visions. But Anselm undertook his asceticism intentionally, as a training regimen for knowing God.[50] Today many Western theologians are apt to lament Anselm's regimen, thinking that if he had gotten more sleep and better nutrition he would have done better theology. But Anselm saw his daily grind as crucial to doing theology. And his stance is in continuity with generations of Christian discipleship stretching back to the desert fathers. Perhaps you have heard some of the spectacular tales: one fellow lived atop

a small platform (one meter square, forty-five feet high) for four decades; some mixed ashes with their food; others lived without sunshine, beat themselves black and blue, or had themselves lashed to a stake in a mosquito-infested swamp. But why?

There is a simple answer: the early Christian ascetics understood themselves to be martyrs-in-training.[51] In an age where Christianity was illegal ('Deny Jesus or die!'), these brave souls volunteered for severe training now in order not to deny Christ later.

But what has this got to do with Anselm? By his day, Christianity had been the official religion of the Empire for at least five hundred years. Anselm's era was one in which popes crowned emperors rather than flee them! So why the need for self-mortification? If Simeon the Stylite was a martyr-in-training, Anselm considered himself to be a theologian-in-training. Like an athlete or a musician, Anselm knew that excellence would come only as a function of bodily discipline. (Once again we see the inescapable connection between words and bodies.)

Nor was Anselm unique in this view. Six hundred years earlier Augustine had written in his commentary on Psalms that 'We ought not love fullness in this world.'[52] The idea was that privation and pain school one to long for God single-mindedly with one's whole body. For Anselm, it went without saying that the quality of one's knowledge of God was a function of the quality of one's character. And as character (*ethos*, long 'e') was the sum of one's habits (*ethos*, short 'e'), theologians of the age ordered their activities with due diligence. These examples could be multi-plied.[53] Today the notion that the quality of one's knowledge is a function of one's character seems ludicrous to most of us. Why is that? What happened? What sepa-rates our thinking from that of our theological forebears? One answer, the short version, is that during the long eighteenth-century Enlightenment, we began to forget how to read the Bible canonically.[54] For example, the study of the Bible seems to have been reduced to merely the application of historical critical methodology. Please do not misunderstand me. Historical criticism is enormously helpful to theology.[55] However, historical criticism cannot be the sum of biblical theology because it inverts the position of reader and text. Historical criticism asks the ques-tion of correspondence: how well does the biblical text correspond to facts that are known through non-biblical sources? This strategy, in effect, places the reader over the text to render judgment on it. However, good theology also requires one to be under the text, as it were. Theology is not so much us interrogating the text on questions of history as it is allowing the text to interrogate us. Thus Augustine, in a letter to Jerome (d. 420), wrote

> it is from those books alone of the Scriptures, which are now called cano-nical, that I have learned to pay them such honor and respect as to believe most firmly that not one of their authors has erred in writing anything at all. If I do find anything in those books which seems contrary to the truth, I decide that either the text is corrupt, or the translator did not follow what was really said, *or that I failed to understand it.*[56]

If these examples sound odd to our ears, we probably ought to conclude that it is we and not they who are the oddballs! An integral part of theological reasoning has

always been a planning of one's daily grind so as to achieve (eventually, hopefully) the kind of character capable of doing good theology. Consider this sensible piece of advice: if a burglar is breaking into the house, it is too late to *start* lifting weights! Anselm's example urges us to begin 'lifting weights' today. But note this: theological weight training is not restricted to brainwork – like learning to read your Greek New Testament. As much as brainwork is valuable, Anselm would have us pay close attention to what we do with the rest of our bodies. Even children are taught this.

Remember the children's song, 'Frère Jacques'? Brother John is a monk who is dozing during prayer.

> Are you sleeping?
> Are you sleeping?
> Brother John?
> Brother John?
> Soon it will be morning,
> Soon it will be morning,
> Ding, ding, dong,
> Ding, ding, dong.

Pre-dawn prayer (*matins* or *lauds*) was only slightly more difficult than midnight (*compline*) prayers. Nine times a day monks gathered to pray the book of Psalms. And because matins and compline were done in total darkness, it was not uncommon for monks to have memorized the entire book of Psalms! One begins to get the significance of Gavin D'Costa's point that we are to do theology on our knees, perhaps literally.[57] Of course prayer is only one of the ways bodies were made adequate for theological reasoning. The point is this: good theology requires a working on oneself.[58] It is no wonder that, prior to the Enlightenment, theologians were almost always deemed to be *saints* as well as scholars.

Theology as disclosure modeling

Thus far I've recounted four of the (perhaps many) reasoning practices that contribute to the theologian's task. Theology-as-witness is not a simple phrase-by-phrase same-saying, but the deliberate attempt to *show*, as well as to say, the Gospel by means of an intentional alignment of one's bodily life with the form of Jesus' narrative. Theology-as-politics extends that alignment from individual biography to the shape of a community such that together our corporate form of living becomes a plausibility structure for the Gospel. Theology-as-conversation highlights the teamwork and interchange permeating one's work with words.[59] And theology-as-working-on-oneself gestures to the way that decisions about one's daily grind (when to get out of bed, what to eat, and so on) are themselves profoundly theological decisions. In each of these cases, I've tried to show that bodies are connected with the words that are the stock and trade of theologians. We are now ready to glimpse the practice of theological reasoning as an instance of disclosure modeling.[60]

Aquinas gives us a toehold into the notion of disclosure models in his notion of 'analogy'. The tricky bit for us thoroughly Modern Millies to grasp is that not all examples of the English word 'analogy' fit under Thomas's use of *analogia*. For

Figure 3.1

example, the easiest kind of analogy to understand is proportionality. In geometry, one says that two triangles are 'similar' if the lengths of their respective sides are proportional. Is this what Aquinas means by saying theological language is analogical? No. God is not 'similar' to us – albeit bigger, stronger, faster.[61] Aquinas, like Augustine before him, explicitly *denies* that theological language employs proportionality to depict what God is like.[62] It would seem that Aquinas leaves theologians forever tongue-tied when it comes to speaking about the very object of faith, namely God. However, there is another way to understand *analogia*. If scale models can be constructed from 'sideways on',[63] then, in contrast, theology strives for disclosure models by means of growth terms. Let us tackle each in turn.

A *disclosure model* shows or gestures toward something that cannot be stated explicitly.[64] For example, if a math teacher begins drawing a series of regular polygons on the chalkboard: triangle, square, pentagon, and so on (see Figure 3.1), the student fairly quickly sees the circle as the geometric object towards which the series tends. But notice how this has happened: every polygon has a finite number of straight sides. A circle has, by definition, no straight side; in fact a circle has no 'side' at all! Nevertheless, the circle is truly disclosed by a series of polygons, even though the circle is not itself a polygon.

The notion of *growth terms* trades on the fact – a fact we tend to forget – that very few words are merely labels. A significant percentage of words require growth of the speaker if the speaker is to employ them well. For example, 'love' is a growth term.[65] Teenagers imagine that they *know* what love is and on this thin understanding youngsters marry. The teenager is not wrong to use the word 'love'. But thirty years and many hardships later the no-longer-teenage couple will have grown into a deeper fluency with the word 'love'. The teenagers are right to say 'God is love'. But the middle-aged couple is *more* right, for together they read 1 John 4:8 with deeper understanding. It is not that the word 'love' has changed meaning over the course of time, but that the human speakers have grown.

Every practice employs growth terms. Every skilled practitioner can give examples: for the engineer the motor that begins to smell is under too much 'stress'; for the physician a certain 'laceration' suggests a suicide attempt rather than an accident; for the symphony conductor the bass notes are 'too heavy', and so on. Regardless of the field, the presence of growth terms, as well as the tacit knowledge that growth terms are tied to,[66] points to the undeniable fact that to speak well 'inside' of a skill-based practice will require ongoing transformation of the speaker. Theology is no different. Theology done well is a self-involving, self-transforming enterprise. Theology, in addition to all we've seen above, is the employment of (self-demanding) growth terms to effect always provisional disclosure models of God.

With the concept of growth terms we have come full circle, back to the entry point of this chapter: the linguistic philosophy of Fr. Herbert McCabe. We've also

reached a place where we can better appreciate the image of 'settling' employed by Mike Higton (chapter 2) to describe reasoning. Like any particular arrangement of the toy train tracks, a disclosure model is necessarily always provisional and context-bound. When one discovers a piece of toy train track under the sofa, one must begin the 'settling' process all over again. While it is certainly the case that a 'settlement' in theology may be a highly structured architectonic system, it must also be acknowledged that theological reasoning may also take the form of parables and stories. Before concluding, let me recount a disclosure model that also involves toy train tracks. This disclosure comes from a surprising source: Catholic novelist Graham Greene.

In 1948 Graham Greene spins a tale of a conversation between two strangers pleasantly surprised by each other's company during a long, frigid, dark December train ride across Britain. The unnamed narrator identifies himself as agnostic. While he has some sympathy for the intuition that God exists, the recent horrors of the Second World War drive him to declare 'intellectually I am revolted at the whole notion of such a God. ... When you think what God – if there is a God – allows. It is not merely the physical agonies, but think of the corruption, even of children ... '[67] His companion, David Martin, who is a religious believer (Catholic in particular), is empathetic but gently objects that the human view is so limited that there can be nothing like an explanation on these matters. The best we can do, David says, is 'catch hints', even if such hints 'mean nothing at all to a human being *other than the man who catches them*'.[68]

So what is required to catch a theological hint? Hints are unlike scientific evidence – objective, repeatable, universally accessible, unambiguous. Catching hints is more like trying to figure out another's look or read another's intentions: 'What did she mean by doing this? What did he mean when he said that?' In the case of God, David suggests, hints of God may be manifest when events turn out as human actors do *not* intend.

As they talk, the narrator begins to suspect that his companion is one of those very rare persons – he has only met one other – who might be described as 'completely happy'. So his ears perk up when David begins to recount the horrifying childhood tale of his own near-corruption at the hands of an ugly, one-eyed baker named Blacker. Blacker – renowned as a free thinker, a skeptic, and an atheist – intentionally plotted to corrupt the then ten-year-old David. The point of the scheme was to procure a Eucharistic wafer so that Blacker might find out for himself 'what your God tastes like'.[69] The bait was an electric train set.

Over a period of several days Blacker patiently cultivated David's fondness for the toy. When David's fondness reached addictive proportions, Blacker made the offer:

> He said, 'You serve at Mass, don't you? It would be easy for you to get at one of those things. I tell you what I'll do – I'd swap this electric train set for one of your wafers – consecrated, mind. It's got to be consecrated.'[70]

David-the-acolyte carries the plan off flawlessly, tucking the consecrated wafer under his tongue and later, in secret, twists it into a bit of newspaper (pregnantly entitled *The Universe*) and stuffs it into his pocket for safekeeping. As he readies himself for bed, he empties his pockets and is instantly 'haunted by the presence of God on the chair'.[71]

As night deepens, Blacker appears ominously outside David's bedroom window with both the promise of the train set *and* the threat of a straight razor – presumably for slitting David's throat should he back out of their bargain.

> 'Give it me,' he said. 'Quick. You shall have the train in the morning.'
> I shook my head. He said 'I've got the bleeder here and the key. You'd better toss it down.'
> 'Go away,' I said, but could hardly speak for fear.
> 'I'll bleed you first and then I'll have it just the same.'[72]

How can a ten-year-old possibly resist the psychological duress of such emotionally charged bullying with clear intent to harm? If we freeze the story at this instant, Blacker has the upper hand. Like the Cyclops of old, this one-eyed baker was very clever with his hands, having made a mechanism of this boy. David was but a cog in a machine that inexorably cranks out intended effects. David was *bound* to hand over the prize. How could he do otherwise? The reader winces because the outcome seems inevitable. Or is it?

> 'I'll bleed you first and then I'll have it just the same.'
> 'Oh no you won't,' I said. I went to the chair and picked it – Him – up. There was only one place where he was safe. I couldn't separate the Host from the paper. So I swallowed both. The newsprint stuck like a prune skin to the back of my throat ...[73]

In a flash, the inevitability of unspeakable evil is foiled. Ours is the kind of universe in which persons who are most susceptible become pawns of 'irresistible' evil, because they are least able to resist evil. Yet, incomprehensibly, it is one of the children who effects a transformation of evil's 'inevitable' success into utter defeat. So startling is the reversal that in retrospect it is evil's defeat, rather than its success, that seems not merely good but in some deep sense *inevitable*. David continues,

> Then something happened which seems to me now more terrible than his [Blacker's] desire to corrupt or my thoughtless act: he began to weep – the tears ran lopsidedly out of the one good eye and his shoulders shook. I only saw his face for a moment before he bent his head and strode off, the bald turnip head shaking, into the dark. When I think of it now, it's almost as if I had seen that Thing weeping for its inevitable defeat. It had tried to use me as a weapon, and now I had broken in its hands and it wept its hopeless tears through one of Blacker's eyes.[74]

It is one thing to hope that an enemy's weapon breaks before it can be used. (Thus the Psalmist prays that 'their sword shall enter their own heart, and their bows shall be broken'.[75]) But sometimes *people* are used as weapons against others. And when those humans-as-weapons break for no apparent reason, and even more so when they are *redeemed* by means of their inexplicable breaking, a trace of something Wonderful remains for the one who can catch the hint.

Conclusion: On knowing when to stop talking

In this chapter, we have examined five complementary practices of theological reasoning. These five are not meant to be exhaustive, nor are they well defined and self-contained. If taken together we can see that to work well with words, the theologian must bear witness, envision and inhabit a politic, invite conversation, undertake a training regimen and construct disclosure models. Along the way I have sampled quotations from the enormous variety of word-workings from past theologians: sermons, biblical commentaries, formal 'orations', systematic treatments (like Aquinas' *Summa*), journal articles, 'apologies', theological books, personal correspondence and novels. I've tried to make the case that working well with words involves all these genres if for no other reason than that theology is a team sport.

I conclude with a reminder that working well with words may sometimes require us not to say anything at all. In our scientific age, theologians are frequently duped into thinking that theology is about explaining what we believe. Because our words are connected to our bodies, we do well always to remember that 'created beings ... find it impossible to speak adequately concerning things ineffable'.[76] Augustine reminds us that the goal of theological reasoning is not explanation. Rather the goal of theology, the criterion of our working well with words, is that we always and only speak in a manner worthy of the Gospel.

> We believe that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are one God, maker and ruler of every creature, and that the 'Father' is not the 'Son', nor 'Holy Spirit' 'Father' or 'Son'; but a Trinity of mutually related persons, and a unity of equal essence. So let us attempt to understand this truth, praying that he who we wish to understand would help us in doing so, so that we can set out [in words] whatever we thus understand with such careful reverence that nothing unworthy is said (even if we sometimes say one thing instead of another). ... But we must never allow any error to lead us astray in such a way that we say something about the Trinity which relates to the creature rather than the Creator, or results from wild speculation.[77]

And this means that, in the end, the theologian must grow until he or she knows when it is time to stop talking.

Notes

1 McCabe uses this sort of illustration in several places. For example, H. McCabe, *Law, Love and Language*, New York, NY: Continuum, 2004, ch. 3; 'Soul, Life, Machines and Language', in B. Davies (ed.) *Faith within Reason*, London and New York: Continuum, 2007, pp. 123–49.
2 J.H. Yoder, *Preface to Theology: Christology and Theological Method*, Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2007, p. 41. This theme has become the title of a recent book: S. Hauerwas, *Working with Words: On Learning to Speak Christian*, Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2011.
3 L. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, ed. G.E.M. Anscombe and R. Rhees, trans. G.E.M. Anscombe, New York, NY: Macmillan, 1953, § 23.
4 McCabe, *Law, Love and Language*, pp. 76–77.

5 L. Wittgenstein, *The Blue and Brown Books*, New York, NY: Harper and Brothers, 1958, p. 24.

6 The memorable phrase is W.V.O. Quine's. Cited in Richard Rorty, 'Hesse and Davidson on Metaphor', in *Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth: Philosophical Papers, Vol. 1*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991, p. 166 n. 17.

7 Of course, today the word 'God' more often shows up in coarse language. Thus the comedian's quip that he grew up thinking his own name was 'Jesus Christ' ('Jesus Christ, stop hitting your brother!'). Surely we live in a culture in which learning to use the word 'God' well is very difficult for children. These children grow into adults who are equally difficult to evangelize.

8 Theologians are not content to describe the world-of-meaning from 'sideways on', as it were, like the social scientist does. It is not that theologians are shy to employ social scientific disciplines. But at the end of the day the theologian herself is inside the world of meaning she studies. See K. Barth, 'The Strange New World within the Bible', in *The Word of God and the Word of Man*, ed. Douglas Horton, New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1957, pp. 28–50.

9 What 'under' and 'in step' (Gal. 5:25) mean, of course, are themselves theological questions. But such restrictions are not optional to the would-be theologian, for in abandoning them one ceases to be a theologian.

10 See McCabe, *Law, Love and Language*, pp. 26, 33–38, 44, 54, 60, 61, 113.

11 For example, Mark 9:32.

12 For example, the picture of a suffering servant did not fit the cultural expectation of a militant Messiah.

13 Compare Acts 2:37 with Acts 17:32.

14 2 Kings 4:8–37.

15 The fascinating evolution of the concept of 'resurrection' is detailed by R. Martin-Achard, 'Resurrection (OT)' and G.W.E. Nickelsburg, 'Resurrection (Early Judaism & Christianity)', in *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. D.N. Freedman, New York, NY: Doubleday, 1992.

16 1 Thess. 1:5.

17 The Greek term *apodeixis* was used in secular society to describe the method of 'carding' a person who wanted entrance into the Temple of Isis, which only admitted priests who had previously been initiated into cultic secrets. The test was simple: the person was given a script of hieroglyphics and asked to translate – a *skill* that only cult members could do. So Paul is saying that his message is proved or demonstrated (*apodeixis*) by supernatural knowhow (*dunamis*) of ordinary daily living. See 1 Cor. 2:1–5. See the entry on *apodeixis* in J.H. Moulton and G. Milligan, *The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament Illustrated from the Papyri and Other Non-Literary Sources*, Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1930.

18 Acts 21:10–14.

19 See Acts 9:25 and 2 Cor. 11:33.

20 1 Thess. 1:5.

21 I owe this exegetical insight to Glen Stassen.

22 Thus Thessalonian believers who saw what sort of men Paul's party proved to be themselves became imitators of Paul, and thereby imitators of the Lord Jesus, in such a manner that the Thessalonian believers became examples for novice Christians across all of Macedonia and Achaia! 1 Thess. 1:5–8.

23 Aristides, 'The Apology of Aristides the Philosopher', in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers (First Series). Original Supplement to the American Edition*, vol. 10, ed. A. Menzies, Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1965, pp. 276–78.

24 The biblical warrant for the notion that lives display the message can be found in 1 Tim. 3:15 where Paul says 'I am writing these things to you ... so that you may know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, that is, the church of the living God, the pillar and bulwark of the truth.' The Greek grammar indicates without a doubt that it is the church that is the pillar and bulwark of the truth and not the other way around. The term 'pillar' (*stylos*) was the ancient equivalent of a showcase. See U. Wilckens entry in G. Kittel and G. Friedrich (eds) *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. 7,

Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1971, p. 733. For further discus-sion see B.J. Kallenberg, 'The Technological Evangelist', in *God and Gadgets: Following Jesus in a Technological World*, Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2010, pp. 43–81.

25 Phil. 1:27. Moulton and Milligan in *The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament*, citing Dibelius, observe that *politeuomai* ought to be understood as virtually synonymous with 'walk' (*peripateo*). A related idea shows up in Gal. 5:25, 'y'all keep in step (*stoicheo*) with the Spirit.' Here the idea seems to be a complex coordinated activity, like a marching band that wheels and turns and spells out 'Ohio' – but always doing so in step to a single rhythm.

26 Phil. 4:2.

27 Thanks to Adam Sheridan for alerting me to 'Basil's Cities'. For a more complete discus-sion see my *By Design: Ethics, Theology and the Practice of Engineering*, Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2013.

28 St Basil, 'In Time of Famine and Drought (*Homila Dicta Tempore Famis Et Siccitatis*; *Hom* 8)', in S.R. Holman, *The Hungry Are Dying: Beggars and Bishops in Roman Cappadocia*, New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001, p. 184.

29 Holman, *The Hungry Are Dying*, p. 69.

30 Holman, *The Hungry Are Dying*, p. 74.

31 In the thirteenth century, Hugh of St Victor distinguished mechanical reasoning from theoretical reasoning, practical reasoning and logic/math. All four operations are redeemed in Christ. For further explanation see ch. 10 of Kallenberg, *By Design*.

32 Luke 17:21.

33 1 Cor. 15:6; Acts 2:41.

34 Num. 5:1–4.

35 Luke 17:12.

36 Heb. 13:13.

37 Luke 6:20.

38 There are nine explicit attestations of divinity to Jesus in the Greek New Testament: Rom. 9:5; Jn. 1:1, 18, 20:28; Titus 2:13; 2 Pet. 1:1, 1 Jn. 5:20, Heb. 1:8–9, and the variant reading of Gal. 2:20. Other possible attestations include Acts 20:28, Col. 2:2 and 1 Tim. 6:16.

39 Deut. 6:4.

40 The identification of Jesus as God alone takes various heretical forms of modalism such as patripassianism.

41 J.H. Leith (ed.), *Creeds of the Church: A Reader in Christian Doctrine from the Bible to the Present*, 3rd edn, Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1982, pp. 30–31.

42 *E ex heteras hupostaseos e ousias phaskontas einai.*

43 In point of historical fact, twenty years before the Council of Constantinople, the ambiguity was pushed to the extreme at the Synod of Alexandria (362 CE) which said that *either* formula was acceptable for describing Jesus' status relative to the Creator – one *ousia* and one *hypostasis* OR one *ousia* but three different *hypostases* – so long as the heresy of Arianism was avoided. Arianism was popularized by the sing-song jingle: 'There was a time when the Son was not.'

44 On the one hand, the Constantinopolitan Creed risked bi-theism insofar as it conflicted with Athanasius' (who died a decade before the council) insistence that the two terms were strictly *synonyms*. On the other hand, the Constantinopolitan Creed also risked falling into subordinationism because the pagan philosopher Plotinus had already used *hypostasis* as the label for a lesser mode of existence. Plotinus says that each successive emanation from 'The One' was properly called a '*hypostasis*' while being itself, *ousia*, is properly attributed to 'the One'.

45 For example, Gregory of Nazianzus, 'Third Theological Oration Concerning the Son', in *The Trinitarian Controversy*, ed. W.G. Rusch, Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1980. Gregory wrote some forty-five 'orations', some for a specific public reading but some also for pri-marily written circulation. See G.A. Kennedy, *Greek Rhetoric under Christian Emperors*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983, pp. 215–40.

46 See Athanasius' 'Letter to the Bishops of Egypt and Libya', cited in J. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church*, Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1985, p. 36 n. 23.

47 Full translated texts of the Cappadocian correspondence can be accessed at www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf208.ix.i.html (accessed 25 October 2013).

48 Of course, occasionally new words are invented: *trinitas* and *synderesis* being among the most important. Tertullian (second century) appears to be the first to use the word *trinitas*. The term *synderesis* appears first in Jerome (fourth century). Although it seems to be a copyist error for the Greek word *suneidesis* ('co-knowledge'), the term plays a crucial role in Aquinas' account of practical reason. See *Summa Theologiae* I.79.12. See also H. McCabe, 'Aquinas on Good Sense', *New Blackfriars* 67.796, 1986, pp. 419–31.

49 For a fuller treatment of the relation of Anselm's asceticism and his theology see B.J. Kallenberg, 'Praying for Understanding: Reading Anselm through Wittgenstein', *Modern Theology* 20.4, 2004, pp. 527–46.

50 In the early days of the Christian Church, asceticism was taken to be the training that readied one for the literal seeing of God: for martyrdom. See M.A. Tilley, 'The Ascetic Body and the (Un)Making of the World of the Martyr', *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 59.3, 1991, pp. 467–79.

51 Ibid.

52 St Augustine, *Exposition on the Book of Psalms*, ed. A. Cleveland Coxe, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers (First Series)*, vol. 8, Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1989, p. 259.

53 For further study see G. D'Costa, 'On Cultivating the Disciplined Habits of a Love Affair *or* on How to Do Theology on Your Knees', *New Blackfriars* 79.925, 1998, pp. 116–35. A similar emphasis on bodily training ran through ancient philosophical thought. See P. Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, ed. A.I. Davidson, trans. M. Chase, Oxford: Blackwell, 1995.

54 This enormous claim is central to H. Frei, *The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative: A Study in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Hermeneutics*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1974.

55 To cite one poignant example, evidence of the Ancient Near Eastern 'Myth of Omphalos' in the Hebrew Bible unmasks Solomon's ulterior motive in dedicating the newly finished temple, namely, he is trying to tether YHWH to a physical location. Cp. S. Terrien, 'The Omphalos Myth and Hebrew Religion', *Vetus Testamentum* 20.3, 1970, pp. 315–38; 'The Metaphor of the Rock in Biblical Theology', in T. Linafelt and T.K. Beal (eds) *God in the Fray: A Tribute to Walter Brueggemann*, Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1998, pp. 157–71; with W. Brueggemann, 'The Royal Consciousness', in *The Prophetic Imagination*, Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1978, pp. 28–43.

56 St Augustine, 'To Jerome', in *Letters, vol. 1 (1–82)*, ed. R.J. Deferrari, Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1951, p. 392. Emphasis added. For more on Augustine's seeing himself under or even in the biblical text, see S. Hauerwas with D. Burrell, 'From System to Story: An Alternative Pattern for Rationality in Ethics', in *Truthfulness and Tragedy*, Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1977, pp. 15–39.

57 D'Costa, 'How to Do Theology on Your Knees'.

58 'Work on oneself' is the title of theologian and philosopher Fergus Kerr's recent book. Both he and I are borrowing from L. Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value*, ed. G.H. von Wright and H. Nyman, trans. P. Winch, 2nd edn, Oxford: Blackwell, 1980, 24e.

59 Once again we must be careful. For medieval theologians like Anselm, *contemplatio* was an achievement that could only be reached after one had progressed sufficiently in *meditatio* and *cogitatio*, the last of which was often bound up in the teaching and arguing with students, which is to say a *shared* enterprise.

60 Technically speaking, disclosure modeling is a subset of 'design,' a topic at the heart of my own work. See B.J. Kallenberg, 'Dynamical Similarity and the Problem of Evil', in *God, Grace and Creation: The Annual Publication of the College Theology Society 2009, vol. 55*, ed. P.J. Rossi, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2010, pp. 163–83; *By Design*; 'Rethinking Fideism through the Lens of Wittgenstein's Engineering Outlook', *International Journal for the Philosophy of Religion* 71.1, 2012, pp. 55–73.

61 It must be noted that Duns Scotus does tend toward this way of thinking. For criticism of what has become called the 'univocity of being', see the writings of Catherine Pickstock and David Burrell, esp. D.B. Burrell, 'Creator/Creatures Relation: "The Distinction" Vs. "Onto-Theology"', *Faith and Philosophy* 25.2, 2008, pp. 177–89; C. Pickstock, *After Writing: On the Liturgical Consummation of Philosophy*, Oxford, UK & Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1998.

62 Aquinas makes a distinction between proportion and proportionateness (*proportionalitatem*). I owe this insight to Michael Cox. See St Thomas Aquinas, 'Liber IV Distinctio XLIX Quaestio II', in *Scriptum Super Sententiis*. See also St Augustine, 'Sermon 117,' in *Part III – Sermons, vol. 4: Sermons 94a–147a*, ed. John E. Rotelle, Brooklyn, NY: New City Press, 1990, pp. 209–23.

63 The term 'sideways on' is borrowed from philosopher John McDowell who criticizes the modern attempt to try to do serious reflection while standing nowhere in particular. See, e.g. J. McDowell, 'Non-Cognitivism and Rule-Following', *The Monist* 62.3, 1979, pp. 141–62.

64 The term is Ramsey's. See I.T. Ramsey, *Models and Mystery*, London: Oxford University Press, 1964; 'Talking of God: Models Ancient and Modern', in J.H. Gill (ed.) *Christian Empiricism*, London: Sheldon Press, 1974, pp. 120–40.

65 See especially, McCabe, *Law, Love and Language*, pp. 68–103.

66 Tacit knowledge is important in every social practice. For an entertaining introduction to tacit knowledge in engineering, perhaps the most technical of fields, see M.B. Crawford, *Shop Class as Soulcraft*, New York, NY: Penguin, 2009, esp. ch. 7.

67 G. Greene, 'A Hint of an Explanation', in *Twenty-One Stories*, New York, NY: Viking Press, 1962, pp. 136–37.

68 Greene, 'A Hint', p. 137. Emphasis added.

69 Greene, 'A Hint', p. 143.

70 Ibid.

71 Greene, 'A Hint', p. 147.

72 Greene, 'A Hint', p. 148.

73 Ibid.

74 Greene, 'A Hint', p. 149.

75 Ps. 37:15.

76 Athanasius: 'For all created beings … find it impossible to speak adequately concerning things ineffable.' Cited in A.I.C. Heron, *The Holy Spirit*, Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1983, p. 79.

77 *de Trinitate* IX.i.1, cited in A.E. McGrath (ed.) *The Christian Theology Reader*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1995, p. 100.