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WORLD VIEW OF AQUINAS, LUTHER, AND CALVIN: MODERN MESSAGE THEORY AND THE CREATION MODEL

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Aquinas, biotic message theory, Calvin, creation, creationism, creation-science, Christianity, cosmology, Luther, miracles, modernism, history of philosophy, Reformation, Renaissance, seventeenth century, theology, transcendence

ABSTRACT

William Placher has forwarded a challenging description of the historical changes that took place in the way Christians think about God and biblical doctrine as the age of reason took center stage beginning in the seventeenth century. His thesis is that the proper sense of God's transcendence was lost as philosophers and theologians came to believe that, apart from Scripture, and solely by human reason, they could think clearly about God and His mode of operation in the world. Placher's analysis is reviewed in detail to establish a sense of direction for the development of a creation model of origins that is properly honoring of Scripture and the character of God.

The author concludes that a biblically appropriate model of origins will have the following characteristics: God will be presented as relating personally to the creation; and because God is all powerful and sovereign over all things, including what we refer to as natural law, the particulars of the universe's origin and operation will be viewed as reflective of Divine plan and purpose rather than physical necessity. The most promising of current creationist models in this regard is Walter ReMine's biotic message theory. Message theory proposes that the purpose of God in creation was to communicate a message of where the universe came from, and to frustrate alternative interpretations to the biblical revelation of supernatural creation by one almighty God. First, certain patterns and features of the universe and its life forms frustrate the idea of a naturalistic origin; second, the distribution of similar features and processes frustrates the idea of multiple gods or processes of origin; and third, the apparent intentional nature of the data frustrates the idea of an impersonal, pantheistic divine force.

INTRODUCTION: HOW MODERN THINKING ABOUT GOD WENT WRONG

In the wake of the Reformation, the seventeenth century growth and development of philosophy and science was accompanied by a shift in world view to what may be called the modern era encompassing what historians have called the ages of reason (philosophy) and analysis (natural science). William C. Placher, Professor of Philosophy and Religion at Wabash College, has recently executed an insightful Christian study of the modern era, and develops the thesis that, beginning in the seventeenth century, the world view particulars of Western thought led to errors in thinking about God, grace, and other issues of biblical doctrine [2]. He writes, "Certainly a historian of theology, contrasting how things stood when Calvin died in 1564 with the eighteenth century's debates over Deism, cannot help feeling that a dramatically different era had begun sometime in the interim" [2, p.1]. Placher examines the thought of pre-seventeenth century Church fathers Aquinas, Luther, and Calvin, and concludes that, in terms of the essence of Christian faith, they had more in common with one another than each had with their own disciples in the early modern era. By going back to Scripture, and reconsidering the insights of Aquinas, Luther and Calvin, Placher seeks to sensitize readers to key errors of faith brought on by modernism's philosophical, scientific and technological intoxications. Specifically, Placher seeks to help Christians restore a sense of God's profound transcendence.

The problems of greatest concern to me are not the modern world's famous inability to believe in God—I'm willing, as a theologian, to take my chances there—but the world's characteristically trivial images of God. When the culturally dominant pictures of God have come to be simplistic, it becomes hard to arouse much excitement about the news of divine incarnation—or much sense of its meaning. [2, p.xi]

Placher's thesis is that the "trivial images of God" he laments have flowed from the idea that by human reason alone man can think clearly about God.

Before the seventeenth century, most Christian theologians were struck by the mystery, the wholly otherness of God, and the inadequacy of any human categories as applied to God. That earlier view never completely disappeared, but in the seventeenth century philosophers and theologians increasingly thought they could talk clearly about God. [2, p.6]

The result—in Placher's words—was that "transcendence got domesticated, and theology suffered as a result" [2, p.7].

In retrospect, socio-cultural influences can always be identified to help account for historical trends. Indisputably, seventeenth century Europe had a strong cultural base supportive of biblical faith. In contrast to the present day, the dominant cultural world view was Christian. Placher shows that in spite of Christianity's cultural dominance, severe pressures perplexing to biblical faith were also present. These pressures included powerful climatic, ecological, economic, cultural, and social forces. Seventeenth century Europe was cold, experiencing what has been called "a little ice age." A series of devastating plagues ravaged parts of Europe, particularly France and England. A severe economic depression struck Europe ending an era of economic expansion that had prevailed throughout the sixteenth century. War and strife, much of which was brought on by religious disputes, ravaged Europe. Worst hit was Germany where one third of the population died. Finally, new scientific discoveries and ideas were becoming known that must have shaken the faith of many. Quoting Placher,

People's minds as well as their bodies must often have seemed under assault in the seventeenth century. For nearly a millennium, most Western Europeans had been able to take their religious beliefs for granted, as fostered by the dominant social structures around them and shared by nearly all their neighbors. Now their neighbors in the next territory might hold quite different religious views and be threatening military invasion over the difference. [2, p.5]

In the face of such circumstances, the dominant voices in philosophy and theology in the seventeenth century came to be those that wanted to drive back the mysteries of God and nature by the application of pure reason. [2, p.85]

As an illustration of the change, consider the matter of God's eternal, living nature. The Bible teaches that God has life, and His life is eternal. But what "life" means when used in relation to God, we do not understand. Aquinas, Luther, or Calvin would have left matters there, saying that by faith we trust that the life we perceive and experience is in some unsystemizable way analogous to the eternal life that is in God. As regards to understanding the life of God, we must be content in the spirit of 1 Corinthians 13:12 to "see through a glass darkly." The inadequacy of human categories to clearly grasp the nature of God is a reflection of our dependence on Him and on His grace.

The seventeenth century followers of Aquinas, Luther, and Calvin rejected this stance of resigned awe in the face of unfathomable divine mystery. For them, Scripture revealed what categories apply to God, and the philosopher's calling was to learn precisely what these categories of divine nature mean by reflecting on their use with creatures. Placher quotes the late sixteen century Reformed theologian, Girolamo Zanchi,

Holy Scripture clearly teaches that God lives, and that God is living, and that that life is eternal. ... On the other hand, what "life" means when applied to God and how to understand that God lives is not clearly explained there. From what God teaches, however, it is clear enough that we must first grasp the kind of thing that life and "to live" are. This is to be learned from philosophy. [2, p.78]

The seventeenth century's greatest champion of clear reasoning was the philosopher, René Descartes. His famous, "I think, therefore I am." was the rational foundation of his philosophy. From his experience in deriving this first "clear and distinct idea" he derived his philosophical method, namely the principle that

"whatever I perceive very clearly and distinctly is true" [2, p.81]. Armed with this method, Descartes embarked on a mission to clearly and distinctly perceive God and thereby establish the truth of His necessary existence. A God that necessarily existed could be put to useful work as a basis for all other truth.

Descartes first argued that the total and efficient cause of something must be as real as the thing caused. An imaginary match cannot totally and efficiently cause a real fire. Then he argued that the idea of something cannot exist unless it is caused by something that has as much reality as that attributed to the imagined thing. A child believes that Santa Claus is real. This belief may have been caused by a real parent, but it cannot have been caused by an imaginary one. Of course, beliefs about the reality of all sorts of things, that are, in fact, unreal, might simply be caused by me. After all, I am real—because I think—and therefore I meet the necessary condition of causing ideas about things that I think are real, even though they are not.

However, Descartes argued, there is one idea of something that exceeds the reality of myself, and thus cannot be caused by me. That is the idea of God. Descartes had an idea of "a supreme God, eternal, infinite, immutable, omniscient, omnipotent, and the creator of all things that exist apart from him" [2, p.81]. But nothing Descartes could reflect on—including himself—had enough reality to account for the reality attributed to God. Therefore, since the idea of something cannot exist, unless it is caused by something that has as much reality as that attributed to the thing imagined in the idea, Descartes reckoned that God must necessarily exist, and be the necessary and efficient cause of the idea of God.

Now Descartes had positioned himself—as Placher would say—to "domesticate God" and put Him to some useful work. It was not *faith* in God's existence but, God's *necessary* existence established by human reason that Descartes believed he had provided and could be used as a warrant for a sensible universe [2, p.82]. On this basis, a clear and distinct rationality could be developed that could resolve human disputes and build civilized societies. "[M]athematicians do not go to war when they come up with different results. [Rather they] sit down and review their calculations to find who made the mistake" [2, p.85]. Just so, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, building on Descartes, dreamed that political and religious differences might be settled in the same way, and, as an exercise in this vein, he attempted a geometric proof of who should be elected king of Poland [2, p.85]. In 1676, Leibniz penned a one-page memorandum to repair a minor flaw in Descartes' argument. Having repaired the flaw, he was confident that Descartes' vision of a system of knowledge founded on rational proofs of God's existence could proceed. Placher observes,

From some points of view, there is something comic about thinking that one has nearly established definitively that the world makes sense and human knowledge is basically trustworthy, but there are one or two weak points in the argument that need attention. Yet Leibniz, like many of his contemporaries, was engaged in roughly such a project, and that points to an important change in seventeenth-century thought. [2, p.86]

Miracles

There is a gulf between the way in which the writers of Scripture and theologians prior to the seventeenth century thought about miracles and the way in which theologians and philosophers came to think about them later. First, consider the Bible. Parts of Scripture describe dramatic instances of divine activity, while other parts tell of times when no wondrous interventions occur. Yet, the biblical writers never comment on these differences. "No one ever says, 'God didn't do miraculous things for David the way God did for Moses and Elijah'" [2, p.192].

The texts as we have them assume that God is at work in *all* of this history and do not reflect on the different modes of divine action they report in different periods. If one were to try to extract a "biblical point of view" from these texts, therefore, it would have to be something like, "God works in history—sometimes more dramatically and sometimes through the more ordinary behavior of natural forces and human actors—and the differences do not much matter." What seems central is an understanding of God as sustaining *all* history. [2, p.192]

Pre-seventeenth century theologians, reflective of the biblical attitude, "generally made no sharp distinction between the 'natural' and the 'miraculous'" [2, p.135]. The idea of a miracle as a direct intervention of God in the otherwise normal flow of events is a modern concept. Augustine saw both nature and miracle as direct operations of God's will. Aquinas noted that the root word for "miracle" is the same as for the word "admiration." We stand in awe of events whose cause we do not understand, and a miracle is an event whose cause is hidden from all. Calvin, likewise, refused to grant special status to a certain class of events

as uniquely miraculous. His position was that all is miraculous. “[T]here are as many miracles of divine power as there are kinds of things in the universe” [Calvin quoted in 2, p.135].

This way of thinking about miracles took a subtle but far reaching turn beginning in the seventeenth century. To reiterate, Placher's thesis is that this change occurred because philosophers and theologians of that period thought that scientific knowledge and human categories of thought could be used to clearly grasp the nature of God and His mode of operation in the world. Closely following Placher, we may trace the change [2,pp.136-145]. During the Renaissance, Neo-Platonism became prominent with the consequence that miraculous occult forces were seen at work in all sorts of places. Alchemy, magic, and astrology all aroused great interest. Against this tide, mechanistically minded scientists and Christian theologians often joined forces. The former saw “interest in the occult as the enemy of empirical, predictive science.” Christian theologians, of course, saw this interest as counter to biblical teaching and Christian faith. Scientists and theologians sought to draw a sharper distinction between the ordinary, scientifically explicable course of the world and the occasional, but rare, miracle of divine intervention [2, p.136].

Rather than viewing the miraculous and the ordinary course of nature as a joined fabric of God's sustaining of the world, the two came to be seen in opposition to one another. Joseph Glanville, in the middle of the seventeenth century, wrote of a miracle as a *violation* of the natural order by divine power. Glanville's contemporary, Walter Charleton, wrote of God as a “supernatural nature” who can “*infringe, transcend, or pervert*” nature's ordinary course [2, p.136, emphasis added].

As some saw miracles as rare infringements and perversions of nature, others saw them as generally beneath God's dignity. Placher quotes scientist and Christian, Robert Boyle,

‘It became the divine Author of the universe . . . to establish among its parts such general and constant laws, as best suited with his purposes in creating the world’ and ‘it seems very congruous to his wisdom to prefer ... catholic [universal] laws, and higher ends, before subordinate ones, and uniformity in his conduct before making changes in it according to every sort of particular emergencies.’ [2, p.137]

In other words, miracles are, in a sense, inferior phenomena. Leibniz developed the argument that the occurrence of miracles reflected a *weakness* in God. Leibniz had a long-running feud with Isaac Newton who believed that the planets operate according to natural laws instituted by God at creation. However, the interaction of planets and other bodies produces irregularities over time that God miraculously corrects. Leibniz argued that if God created things properly to begin with, he wouldn't have to intervene for periodic adjustments. For Leibniz, miracles became “the very thing which all men endeavour to avoid in philosophy” [2, p.143]. He shunned miracles for two reasons: first, their occurrence reflected a failure by God to create “the best of all possible worlds” in the first place; and second, their acceptance compromises the philosophical/scientific effort to explain the world by orderly principles.

In the course of the modern era, man's way of thinking departed farther and farther from biblical Christianity. Aquinas, Luther, and Calvin had thought of God as personally and intimately involved in a transcendent and mysterious way in every detail of the world's operation. Later, philosophers and theologians took the view that clear thinking about God could provide a basis for a rational, stable, and humane social order. “Clear thinking about God” led to the deistic view that God, for the most part, relates passively to the world via natural laws, with only rare miraculous interventions. In time, many came to doubt the occurrence of any miracles, and, finally, some came to doubt the existence of God. Placher's thesis is that the root cause of this drift away from Christian faith was the idea that, independently of Scripture and the Holy Spirit, man can think clearly about God. In the process, even those who continued to believe lost the profound sense of God's transcendence.

The Creation-Science Agenda

Seventeenth century philosophers presumed they could think clearly about God apart from Scripture. Today, many philosophers and scientists do not believe there is a God to think clearly about, and among leading thinkers, the Bible is thoroughly discredited as having any authority on matters of faith and origins. Even among Christian creationists, some have adopted secular wisdom to the extent that they believe they can think clearly about origins apart from (a) Scripture and (b) prior clear thinking about God based on Scripture.

Ironically, the creation-science movement is at once a reaction against the modernist trends elucidated by Placher, and a child of them. On the one hand, creationists seek evidence of design in nature to critically

challenge the prevailing evolutionary view, but in doing so, they often adopt the view that, independently of God and Scripture, man can reason, via the evidences, back to Scripture and the God of Scripture.

One prominent creationist thinker who would be sympathetic with Placher's concerns and has written eloquently against uncritical intrusions of modernist methodology into the creation-science agenda is Ellen Myers.

Biblical philosophy is "to think God's thoughts after Him" and agrees that "the fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom" (Proverbs 1:7). Its starting point for evaluating all things is God as CREATOR "of whom, and through Whom, and to Whom are all things" (Romans 11:36). It strives to be faithful in all respects to God's infallible revelation of Himself in the Bible (Isaiah 8:20; Jeremiah 8:9). Non-biblical philosophy, on the other hand, is "to think on one's own," and its starting point is ultimately the self of each thinker. [4, p.159]

The elements of Myers' statement are clear enough and provide a guideline for the development of a creation-science model more consistent with the pre-seventeenth century Christian vision. In that vision, a proper creation model does not flow from our own independent scientific thought, a proper creation model flows from Scripture. A proper creation model reflects an appreciation of God's transcendence. For a proper creation model, the power of empirical data to influence the model is based on Christian character and love of truth, not supposed objectivity and neutrality. For a proper creation model, not only the content of the model, but the rationale for developing the model starts with Scripture.

Creation, Miracles, and God's Transcendence

How may we understand God's act of creation in the context of what Scripture reveals to us about His power and transcendence? Consider miracles, combining what we know from Scripture and our best understanding of the created world. On the basis of our best science, we understand the things of God's creation as existing in a nested hierarchy of levels. An animal is made up of interconnected organs, which in turn consist of sub-organ systems down to the cell, which itself is made up of sub-cellular systems, and so on. All systems and sub-systems within and between levels are mutually interdependent so that a change in one system reverberates to other systems and levels.

As for miracles, God's wondrous acts in Scripture are relational and personal with respect not only to persons, but every created thing. God speaks the creation into existence. (Genesis 1) He declares the serpent to be cursed—and thereby transformed (Genesis 3:14). He curses a fig tree, and it withers (Matthew 21:19). He speaks to the storm to be still (Mark 4:39). He calls Lazarus' dead body to life and to come forth out of the tomb (John 11:43-44). He declares on his triumphal entry into Jerusalem that if the adoring throng were to stop worshipping him, the very stones would cry out (Luke 19:40).

At the same time, God is all powerful and with Him all things are possible. Myers, as a representative modern creationist, fully embraces this doctrine,

God is omnipotent and omniscient, in full control of everything, and His will is the ultimate cause of every event in history. He uses everything and everyone, even His enemies, for His purpose. This does not mean that the efficiency of secondary causes, including men's wills, thoughts and deeds, is abrogated. [5, p.392]

Joining what we know about God, based on Scripture, and what we understand about nature, based on current scientific knowledge interpreted in the context of Scripture, something amenable to Placher's valid Christian concerns would seem to follow. It would look something like this. In the course of post-fall events, the various systems, sub-systems, and levels typically operate interactively in a harmonious, cause-and-effect manner. God is in His rest from the seventh day of creation (Genesis 2:2). But every system and sub-system across the range of created levels is vigilant in case its Creator should call. At the Creator's personal call, all called things cease operating in relation to one another—hating their father, mother, brothers, and sisters (Luke 14:26)—and commence operating in direct, personal obedience to God. At God's command the earth may bring forth living creatures; the firmament may bring forth sun, moon and stars; blind eyes may see; the storm may be stilled; and stones might speak.

Scripture says that with God all things are possible (Matthew 19:26), but that he "cannot lie" (Titus 1:2), and he cannot "deny himself" (2 Timothy 2:13). Scripture teaches that nothing is physically impossible with God, but there are some things God would never do. If this is the case, then, however absurd it may strike us, God

must be able to cause some historical event in His created world, as it were, to not have happened. How might we scientifically describe such an occurrence? The universe exists as a digital, or perhaps inscrutably probabilistic configuration of atomic and sub-atomic particles. God might command that the Kennedy assassination be removed as an event in history. At the moment of His command, the atomic and sub-atomic particles of the universe might reconfigure such that the assassination never occurred. What prevents such things from happening, according to Scripture, is not any physical necessity for God, but His personal character. For God to rewrite history would not be a lie, but it would appear to be a denial of Scripture and of himself—God is not one who has to change His mind (Numbers 23:19). Again quoting Myers,

According to the Bible, history is linear and has a definite beginning and end. It began with creation about 6,000 years ago as shown by the biblical genealogies, and will end with our Lord's return and His final judgment of the quick and the dead (Matthew 25:31-46). [5, p.392]

Meditations on God's transcendent power raise a fundamental question for those trying to develop a creation model of origins. If God's actions in creation are relational and personal, and if with Him all things are possible, then why should the cosmos be scientifically comprehensible at all? This, the reader will recall, was a major issue for Descartes and the other seventeenth century philosophers. On the basis of Scripture, one thing should be clear. If the cosmos is scientifically comprehensible—that is, a viable scientific model of origins and operations is possible—it is not so out of *necessity*. The transcendent God who performs miracles is not constrained by the "laws of nature" by which we predict and control our everyday lives. For one operating on biblical faith and presuppositions, a scientifically comprehensible cosmos, allowing the development of viable models for the events described in Genesis, must be assigned to Divine *choice* and *purpose*, not Divine necessity.

If this is so, we may then ask, what is the purpose of God in Creation? The purpose must not be to imply that we can live without Scripture, for Scripture states, "Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4). Construction of an empirically viable understanding of origins apart from Scripture would seem to be in conflict with this fundamental principle of Scripture. Therefore, I propose that it is impossible that an empirically adequate, systematic model of the universe and its origins can be constructed independent of Scripture. A universe that would allow such would send a message contradictory of Scripture.

MESSAGE THEORY

The idea of conceiving of the universe as communicating a message has been developed by Walter ReMine [6] [7], and the thesis of this paper is that his biotic message theory is the most promising of current creation models in satisfying Placher's Christian reservations about modernist thought. The desire to transmit and receive messages "is a longing we feel, an emotion we understand" [7, p.20]. ReMine uses our longing to announce our presence and detect the presence of others as the central metaphor of message theory. Like a message in a bottle washed up on a beach, life forms invite our interest and curiosity. We cannot resist studying them, any more than we can resist opening the bottle to examine the note inside. As we study living systems, we discover a boggling complexity of design. Not only is each life form marvelously suited to its own mode of living, but, taken together, individual life forms function collectively as vast ecological systems capable of maintaining a stable balance, disposing of vast quantities of waste and decomposition, and reestablishing equilibrium after environmental perturbations.

But, beyond the insuperable design evident in the living world, biotic message theory claims there is a specific and intentional message. Like marks on the paper in the bottle on the beach, we notice peculiar features in living forms. We cannot help but note curious similarities that link all the forms together. Obviously, there is some connection between them. At the same time, we discover differences which make each life form unique. Is there some sense to the pattern of these similarities and differences? Indeed, living forms were reasonably designed for survival, but there is more. With the bottle on the beach, we discover that the marks on the paper are writing, and the writing spells out a message. We read the message and communicate with the intelligence that sent it. According to biotic message theory, the pattern of similarities and differences in life forms constitutes an intentional message to be received and understood. In the words of ReMine,

Life was reasonably designed for survival and for communicating a message that tells where life came from. The biotic message says, "Life is the product of a single designer—life was intentionally designed to resist all other interpretations of origin." [7, p.20]

To see life as a message is to see life in a new way. [7, p.23]

According to ReMine's thesis, the language of the message woven into life forms, and, indeed, the fabric of the universe, is the language of *similarities* and *differences*. Similarities serve to tie diverse things together as having a common source, much as the signature and stylistic particulars of an artist identify his or her works. At the same time, the distribution of similarities and differences found throughout nature frustrates attempts to explain the origin of things as the product of a naturalistic process. Humans and octopuses, for example, have eyes that are eerily similar. There must be a connection between them. Yet, the eyes exist in widely divergent creatures, and are different in certain ways such that their similarity cannot reasonably be attributed to evolution from a common ancestor. The message-theory interpretation is that the similarity of the human and octopus eyes is due to the fact that they share a common creator. The corresponding differences, say, between the human and the octopus, frustrate attempts to explain the similarities by common naturalistic ancestry. Woven together, the pattern of similarities and differences has the character of an intentional message. An intentional message frustrates the idea of creation by an impersonal, pantheistic divine force, and the particulars of the message (universal features and similarities across the range of life forms) frustrates the idea of multiple, independent creators.

REFLECTING GOD'S TRANSCENDENCE

In the interest of a profoundly-biblical creation model that reflects God's transcendence, and is also scientifically productive, it seems that a message or communication approach is superior to one based merely on the design and engineering metaphor. Of course, a message paradigm encompasses arguments for intelligent design in nature, but it goes farther in appreciating the biblically personal and relational dimensions of God's relation to the world. It also offers a plausible explanation of troublesome cosmic features such as, for example, the apparently immense light-year distances to the stars and galaxies that have perplexed the more traditional design and engineering creationist apologetic. To see why, consider a scripture that appears to identify the fundamental components of creation's message.

... the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his *eternal power* and *Godhead*... (emphasis added)
(Romans 1:20)

Creation declares God's "eternal power and Godhead." As for God's "eternal power," we would expect a universe that communicates that God is sovereign over all of creation, including the most fundamental aspects of nature. Gravity, light, the physical "constants," time itself must be as responsive to God's voice as wind, water, and storm. As the patterns of similarities and differences in life forms frustrate naturalistic theories of evolutionary descent, so might the pattern of astronomical observations frustrate naturalistic theories of the origin of the cosmos, such as big bang and steady state. For instance, consider the following cosmological findings: according to our best and latest reckonings, the universe is expanding at a rate that would afford a *maximum* natural process age of 8-12 billion years [3, p.A12]; however, the universe contains stars with a *minimum* natural process age of 16 billion years [3, p.A12]; and immense gravitationally bound galaxy clusters having a *minimum* natural process age of 60 billion years [1, p.124]. Thus, in terms of natural process considerations alone, the universe appears to contain objects older than itself. Such observations frustrate not only naturalistic origin theories, but, also, mere intelligent-design theories of origin. They frustrate the latter, because, what possible design function is served by such paradoxical mixes of observed values? Yet, such observations are consistent with the "eternal power" component of creation's message, or what ReMine refers to as the "non-naturalistic message" [7, p.22].

The second component of creation's communication, identified in Romans 1:20, is the "Godhead" message. Our ability to understand and perform meaningful calculations on the phenomena of deep space testify that our knowledge of physical and chemical processes in the vicinity of earth generalizes to those distant regions. The fact that we can comprehend the operation of diverse phenomena throughout the universe, using a single, familiar set of principles, speaks eloquently of the Godhead. There is one Creator, not five or fifty, and the unity of nature communicates that truth. All of creation, from atoms to living creatures to the dust and galaxies of deepest space appear to carry the signature of a common Creator [6] [7].

CONCLUSION

A “message” perspective on creation and origins, as developed by ReMine, seems straightforwardly biblical. It is also fruitful for scientific investigation. Most importantly for the present paper, however, it is more reflective of God’s transcendent nature than the traditional “design and engineering” metaphor. The design and engineering perspective implies the possibility that God is limited by “natural laws” and creates in particular ways by necessity. A message perspective incorporates design evidences, but goes beyond to touch on the relational and personal intentions of the Creator. A message paradigm is more consistent with the God of the Bible, who reveals himself in Scripture and in the incarnation, who walks and talks to His creation and, most particularly, to man, the creature in His image.

If the universe is merely designed (intelligently engineered) with its particulars governed by the requirements of physical law, then it might or might not be the Creator’s will for there to be a creation-science. But if the creation is sensible in terms of normal scientific understanding of laws and operations by Divine purpose rather than necessity, and also is framed in the form of a message, then, it seems, there must be a creation science. A message is meant to be received, and an appropriate creation-science plays a part in completing the communication event.

Given what has been revealed in Scripture, we may summarize that a necessary and proper scientific creation model should be mindful of God’s transcendence, and should start with God and Scripture rather than human reason. We should *not* expect a proper creation-science to dispel all mystery, negate the miraculous, or achieve completeness or closure. Such outcomes would contradict the Creator’s most intimate revelations about himself in Scripture.

Many, O LORD my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done, and thy thoughts which are to us-ward: they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee: if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered. (Psalms 40:5 KJV)

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. (Isaiah 55:8-9 KJV)

O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? (Romans 11:33-34 KJV)

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