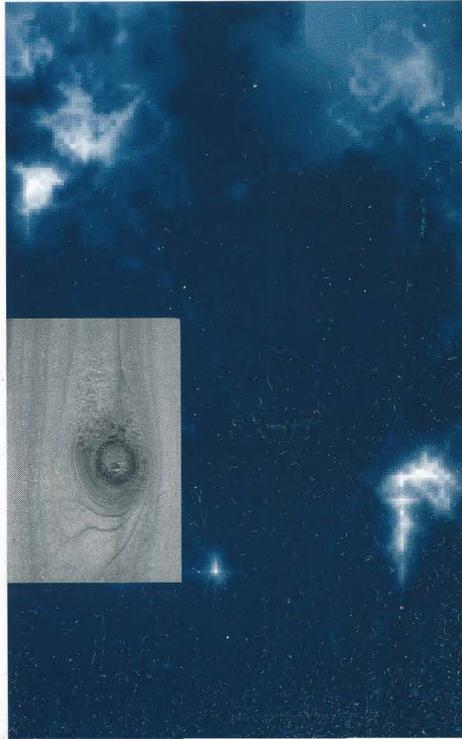




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B U L L E T I N



FAITH and THOUGHT

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Editorial

The current issue is almost entirely devoted to the prize-winning essay for 2003 - 2004, for which we congratulate the winner, John Warwick Montgomery. This latest competition raised quite an amount of interest, and evoked seven responses. Thanks are due to all those who rose to the challenge, even if they did not become winners.

By the time you read this our Symposium on Biblical Archaeology will have taken place. This will be the first symposium for a number of years, but we hope to make the effort a regular event - perhaps every two years. The proceedings of this year's symposium will, we hope, be available as a special supplement to *Faith and Thought*. Further news of this will be notified shortly.

Finally, and to repeat, we welcome comments in response to our publication. Write and let us know your thoughts!

Did Christ Die For E.T. As Well As For *Homo Sapiens*?

A Submission to the Victoria Institute

John Warwick Montgomery

The issue before us in this paper is the applicability - or non-applicability - of the salvatory work of Christ on earth to rational creatures on other worlds.

Introduction: The Danger of Speculation?

When such a topic is broached, the immediate reaction may well be: "How sad! Another example of the irrelevance of theological speculation! Will Christians never get beyond medieval theorising of the kind which endeavoured to determine the number of angels able to dance on the head of a pin?" Or one may think of the 18th century mystic Emmanuel Swedenborg, who provided remarkable detail concerning the spiritual nature of life on other worlds - all without a shred of supporting evidence for his "visions."¹

Indeed, even the kind of serious biblical discussion to follow might appear to attract the answer recounted by Augustine in his *Confessions* to the query, "What was God doing before he made heaven and earth?": "He was preparing hell for pryers into mysteries."²

However, it is well to observe that Augustine himself rejected such a cavalier approach to difficult issues, since they "elude the pressure of the question." And, as to our present discussion, two points are worth noting in its defence: (1) The meaning, significance, and extent of Christ's atonement can hardly be regarded as peripheral. Christocentric matters lie at the very heart of Christian faith. As Luther well put it, "The whole of Scripture is about Christ alone, everywhere." (2) The interest in space travel and other worlds continually increases as astronomical investigations and modern technology become more and more sophisticated,³ so such questions as that posed here may be of interest not just to Christian believers but also to secularists seeking a coherent worldview. It follows that we must not aprioristically rule out, as Aquinas did, following Aristotle, the very existence of other inhabited worlds⁴ - or the possibility of their needing a Saviour.

A preliminary caveat: in this paper we restrict ourselves to the theological question posed in its title. We do not treat the wider question of the plurality of inhabited worlds, or the history of the controversies concerning the existence of such worlds. For those more general topics, readers should consult the excellent published studies available in the history of ideas.⁵

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The Opposing Positions

Throughout the the Christian era, theologians have differed on the issue of whether Christ's redemption could apply to the rational inhabitants of other worlds. We shall illustrate with two representatives of the negative and two representatives of the positive viewpoint.

On the negative side, Philip Melanchthon, Luther's closest associate, the author of the Augsburg Confession (the first of the Protestant Confessions) and an educator and Renaissance classicist whose impact on subsequent theology and European church life was enormous:⁶

The Son of God is One; our master Jesus Christ was born, died, and resurrected in this world. Nor does he manifest Himself elsewhere, nor elsewhere has He died or resurrected. Therefore it must not be imagined that Christ died and was resurrected more often, nor must it be thought that in any other world without the knowledge of the Son of God, that men would be restored to eternal life.⁷

Isaac Watts, the great evangelical hymn writer of the 18th century, took essentially the same position - as have many others:

Thy voice produc'd the seas and spheres,
Bid the waves roar, and planets shine;
But nothing like thyself appears,
Through all these spacious works of thine.⁸

In contrast, the opposing viewpoint - that holding either the genuine possibility or the virtual certainty that Christ's atoning work on earth would also redeem extraterrestrial rational creatures - has had such representatives as the 17th century Christian philosopher Descartes and the late 19th century Roman Catholic popular theologian J. De Concilio. In a letter of 6 June 1647, Descartes wrote: "I do not see at all that the mystery of the Incarnation, and all the other advantages that God has brought forth for man obstruct him from having brought forth an infinity of other very great advantages for an infinity of other creatures."⁹ In the same spirit, but in much more specific terms, De Concilio argued that "when Christ died and paid the ransom of our redemption, He included [extraterrestrials] also in that ransom, the value of which was infinite and capable of redeeming innumerable worlds."¹⁰

Which of the two diametrically contrasting positions is correct? To answer this, we shall have to engage in some in-depth theological thinking.

Unfallen Worlds?

Why did Christ die? The Scriptures are unequivocal: *for the sins of the world*. Jesus is so named in the Gospels because "he shall save his people from their

sins.” And it is no exaggeration to say that Paul’s Epistle to the Romans and the Book of Hebrews (perhaps the most theologically systematic books of the entire Bible) have Christ’s sacrificial death for the sins of a fallen race as their central themes. It follows that Christ’s death could not be directly relevant to an *unfallen* world. “Those who are well,” Jesus taught, “have no need of a physician.” As Renaissance littérateur Tommaso Campanella, author of the utopia *City of the Sun*, recognised: “If the inhabitants which may be in other stars are men, they did not originate from Adam and are not infected by his sin. Nor do these inhabitants need redemption, unless they have committed some other sin.”¹¹

To be sure, Christ’s teaching and example could have positive influence on unfallen terrestrials. Thus Swedenborg argued that

It pleased the Lord to be born, and to assume the Human, on our Earth, and not on any other, THE PRINCIPAL REASON was for the sake of the Word, that it might be written on our Earth; and when written might afterwards be published throughout the whole Earth; and that, once published, it might be preserved for all posterity; and thus it might be made manifest, even to all in the other life, that God did become Man.¹²

Professor Crowe rightly notes, however, that “a striking feature of this is that Christ’s communicative function in his terrestrial incarnation seems to be given primacy over his redemptive role.”¹³ Not “seems” but “is”! Swedenborg, having rejected atonement as satisfaction for sin and having limited himself to a purely subjective view of redemption, replaces it with the “communicative” role of the Word.¹⁴ Our subject in the present essay is the potential impact of the *death* of Christ on other worlds - not the impact of the Second Person of the Trinity on the universe in any other respect; and his death would have no directly redemptive function for rational creatures on the other worlds if they were not, like us, fallen creatures.¹⁵

So is it likely that extraterrestrials would not in fact need the redeeming work of Christ? Were that the case, then the question posed in this essay would have already found its answer!

C.S. Lewis consciously produced his space trilogy as “ a kind of theologised science-fiction.”¹⁶ In the first two of these novels (*Out of the Silent Planet* and *Perelandra* - the latter published in America under the title, *Journey to Venus*), he employed the theme of fallen terrestrial invaders discovering unfallen rational beings on other worlds.¹⁷ This possibility of human space travellers corrupting unfallen worlds also pre-occupied Lewis in his non-fiction writings and in his letters.¹⁸ For example, in his essay “Religion and Rocketry” (published also under other titles), he wrote: “ I have wondered before now whether the vast astronomical distances may not be God’s quarantine precautions. They prevent the spiritual infection of a fallen species from spreading.”¹⁹

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Lewis's notion of other inhabited worlds being unfallen had prior support from both Protestants and Roman Catholics. Distinguished 18th century American astronomer David Rittenhouse wrote - with illustrations hardly designed to improve American-British relations then or now:

Happy people [on other worlds]! and perhaps more happy still, that all communication with us is denied. We have neither corrupted you with our vices nor injured you by violence. None of your sons and daughters ... have been doomed to endless slavery by us in America, merely because their bodies may be disposed to reflect or absorb the rays of light, in a way different from ours. Even you, inhabitants of the moon ... are effectually secured, alike from the rapacious hand of the haughty Spaniard, and of the unfeeling British nabob. Even British thunder impelled by British thirst of gain, cannot reach you.²⁰

Joseph Pohle (d. 1922), a distinguished German dogmatician of the Roman Church and one of the founding faculty of the Catholic University of America, wrote prolifically on the plurality of worlds. In his *Die Sternwelten und ihre Bewohner*, Pohle declared: "Concerning the dogma of the redemption of fallen men through the God-man Christ, it is not necessary to assume as probable also the fall of species on other celestial bodies. No reason ... obliges us to think others as evil as ourselves."²¹

Of course, we are not *obliged* to think in such terms; and E.T. is such a charming, apparently unfallen little fellow!²² But E.T. is not the only cinematographic extraterrestrial: there is also, for example, Alf - whose rapier sense of humour only thinly disguises a remarkably single-minded concern with his own interests, at the expense of the household with which he lives.²³ Why should we exclude the possibility - or even the likelihood - that other rational creatures (possessed of freewill as are all creatures of a loving God)²⁴ might have misused that freedom to violate the will of their Creator?

Thomas Rawson Birks, 19th century professor of moral philosophy at Cambridge and the earliest ally of William Whewell, argued in much stronger terms: since our actual knowledge extends to only two races, men and angels, and they are both fallen, the notion that "ours in the only world where sin has entered" violates "the plainest lessons of moral probability."²⁵ Twentieth century Roman Catholic theologian Teilhard de Chardin put the matter even more powerfully: the idea that "alone among all inhabited planets the earth has experienced original sin and needs redemption" is "scientifically *absurd* - since it implies that death (the theological index of the presence of original sin) could not exist in certain locations in the universe - in spite of the fact that those locations (and we know it for a fact) submit to the same physio-chemical laws as the earth does."²⁶

Is Sin on Earth Sin elsewhere?

Leaving aside the statistical question as to how many other worlds are fallen (*pace* Chardin, the universal application of the Second Law of thermodynamics and entropy hardly means that death must everywhere prevail in the cosmos!), we must surely entertain the hypothesis that we are not the only world which has disappointed its Creator. Would the atoning sacrifice of Christ on earth impact another fallen world? Answering that question requires us to deal with at least three fundamental underlying matters: the nature of *human sin*, the nature of *incarnation*, and the nature of the *atonement*.

Since Christ died “for sin”, we must determine whether biblical revelation views Christ’s sacrifice as touching only those who are genetically members of the human race. Put otherwise, is the sin for which Christ died the sin of humans - and their sin alone?

In a discussion of “Original sin and contemporary Anthropology”, a contemporary theologian summarises what “Scripture (both in Genesis and in Romans) requires”:

1. Man is accountable for what went wrong in the beginning. What does go wrong is inescapably part of his history.
2. What went wrong in the beginning is universal in its consequences.
3. All men are born alienated and breathe the air of alienation all life long.
4. Both original sin and personal sin conspire in the creation of the death we all inherit and ratify. The only way out of both is Christ.²⁷

This summary quite clearly points up the “human” dimension of the sin problem. But just how racially inherent is it? Here we need to listen to the major theologians of classical Christianity, both Catholic and Protestant.²⁸

Ludwig Ott’s standard, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, succinctly states the Roman Catholic view: “The Council of Trent says: *propagatione, not imitatione transfusum omnibus ...* As original sin is a *peccatum naturae*, it is transmitted in the same way as human nature, through the natural act of generation ... In each act of generation human nature is communicated in a condition deprived of grace.”²⁹ Sin, then, is not the product of imitating one who has already sinned; it is inherent to the race, following the sin of our first parent, and is communicated genetically by the act of generation.

The Lutheran position focuses more on the scriptural grounding of the doctrine, emphasising, for example, Acts 17:26 (God “has made of one blood all nations of men”), but differs little from that just stated. The great 16th century Lutheran theologian Martin Chemnitz - who, incidentally, was one of the chief opponents of the theologising of the Council of Trent³⁰ - wrote: “The guilt must not be understood as only on account another’s (i.e. Adam’s) sin, without any guilt of one’s own. Paul affirms that the world is guilty from the one sin of the first man;

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and because all have sinned they have all become sinners ... He describes the way in which original sin is propagated: 'Through one man,' he says. And because posterity is reckoned through men, carnal propagation is understood."³¹ Thus, guilt has its source in the original sin of Adam, compounded by the volitional acts of disobedience committed by his progeny, all of whom are identified with him.

The American Lutheran theologian Francis Piper reinforces this position in his standard work, *Christian Dogmatics*:

Original sin, which is the sin which is not committed but which is inborn in man since Adam's Fall, embraces two things: a) hereditary guilt (*culpa hereditaria*), the guilt of the one sin of Adam which God imputes to all men; and b) hereditary corruption (*corruptio humanae naturae hereditaria*), which by imputation of Adam's guilt is transmitted to all his descendants through the natural descent from the first fallen pair ...

With regard to hereditary depravity erroneous views are held ... by all those who deny it altogether when they assert that children do not inherit the corruption from their parents through their birth (*generatione*), but learn it by following the evil example (*exemplo*), which is contrary to John 3:6 "That which is born of the flesh is flesh."³²

Calvin's treatment of the matter is not dissimilar (whilst combined with a rather uncomfortable predestinarianism):

Adam, when he lost the gifts received, lost them not only for himself but for us all ... There is nothing absurd, then, in supposing that, when Adam was despoiled, human nature was left naked and destitute, or that when he was infected with sin, contagion crept into human nature. Hence rotten branches came forth from a rotten root, which transmitted their rottenness to the other twigs sprouting from them. For thus were the children corrupted in the parent, so that they brought disease upon their children's children. That is, the beginning of corruption in Adam was such that it was conveyed in a perpetual stream from the ancestors into their descendants. For the contagion does not take its origin from the substance of the flesh or soul, but because it had been so ordained by God that the first man should at one and the same time have and lose, both for himself and for his descendants, the gifts that God had bestowed upon him.³³

One of the very finest of 20th century evangelical dogmaticians was J. Oliver Buswell, Jr., the last years of whose career were spent on the faculty of the Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. On the basis of Scripture and classic theology, Buswell condemns what Charles Hodge termed "mediate imputation" -

the theory that all mankind have become sinners through the influence of Adam's sin, and that the guilt imputed to us is based, not immediately upon the original act of human sin, but mediately upon the sinfulness which has developed in us. This doctrine would imply that we are not guilty sinners because our representative sinned, but we are guilty sinners only because we ourselves are individually corrupt.

It is quite apparent that such an interpretation of the sin of Adam would destroy the analogy of original sin to the atonement of Christ. If we are not guilty sinners because our representative sinned, then we are not justified because our Representative, our Substitute, “bore our sins in His own body on the tree” (1 Peter 2:24).³⁴

From the systematicians of dogma just surveyed - and they are a fair sampling of those treating the subject through Christian history - one must conclude that the substitutionary sacrifice of Christ requires his identification with a race whose inherent corruption derives from the sin of its first member and the passing on of that corruption by natural generation. Adam’s sin is of course reinforced by the subsequent sinful decisions of his progeny, but it is their genetic connection with him which makes them what they are. (It is highly likely that the Hebrew word “Adam” is the generic word for “mankind.”) This does not of course deny the effects of a sinful environment as contributing to the sins of each subsequent generation; human sin is both hereditary and environmental. But it is the unity of the race in sin through our first parent which lies at the heart of the problem - and this is equally true if we choose to regard Adam as the perfect statistical sampling of the race and conclude that had we been in his shoes we would have done as he did.³⁵ The children’s primer is theologically quite correct: “In Adam’s fall, we sinned all.” The Second Adam (Christ) came to rectify what the first Adam had done; he accomplished this by taking the sin of Adam on himself, thereby expiating the sins of the human race.

We are now in a position to understand the virtually universal negative response of theologians to the question of whether Christ’s atoning sacrifice could have covered the sins of non-humans. Thus, it is maintained, fallen angels were not redeemed at the Cross, and neither were any (if they exist) fallen “intermediate beings” such as the races of dwarfs and fairies.³⁶

All of which would seem to afford little consolation to sinning extraterrestrials, since they, like angels and fairies, are not children of Adam. But, as we shall see later, the substitutionary understanding of the atonement is not the only way in which Scripture presents Christ’s work on the Cross.

How Many Incarnations?

If Christ as Second Adam, substituting his innocent death for the well-deserved death of human sinners, could not be applied to benefit fallen non-humans, what about the possibility of “incarnations” specifically for them? Is this perhaps a route by which God’s love for the fallen could be vindicated even if his incarnation on this earth could not be helpful to extra terrestrials? The Roman Catholic poets Aubrey de Vere and Alice Meynell certainly thought so:

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Judaea was one country, one alone:
Not less Who died there for all. The Cross
Brought help to vanished nations: Time opposed
No bar to Love: why the should Space oppose one?³⁷

... in the entities,
Doubtless we shall compare together, hear
A million alien Gospels, in what guise
He trod the Pleiades, the Lyre, the Bear.
O, be prepared, my soul!
To read the inconceivable, to scan
The million forms of God those stars unroll
When, in our turn, we show to them a Man.³⁸

However, the “million forms of God” have consistently given intractable problems to the theologians, as well as providing grist for pagan mills. Deistic sceptic Thomas Paine wrote in his *Age of Reason*: “Are we to suppose that every world in the boundless creation had an Eve, an apple, a serpent and a redeemer? In this case, the person who is irreverently called the Son of God, and sometimes God himself, would have nothing else to do than to travel from world to world, in an endless succession of death, with scarcely a momentary interval of life.”³⁹ Alexander Von Humboldt wrote to Gauss that Christian polymath William Whewell ageed: “The redemption (crucifixion) can not be repeated on the many millions of nebulae observed by Rosse.”⁴⁰

Paine’s statistical argument may be easy to answer, but the theological problems with multiple incarnations cannot so easily be dismissed. Thomas Rawson Birks, the earliest supporter of Whewel, rejects any “series of revelations” on the scriptural ground that Christ “is the son of God and the Son of man, in two distinct natures and one person, forever.”⁴¹ A 19th century contemporary of Whewell and Birks, Presbyterian William Leitch, principal of Queen’s College, Kingston, Ontario, was in full agreement: multiple incarnations cannot be reconciled with “Scripture, which declares that He [Christ] will forever bear His human nature.”⁴² Roman Catholic theologians of the time were no less decisive on the point; François Xavier Burque stressed the impossibility of sustaining multiple incarnations in the face of Hebrews 9 which teaches that Christ did not “suffer often since the foundation of the world [cosmos]” but rather was “once offered to bear the sins of many.”⁴³ In the next century C.S. Lewis would agree:

I do not think it at all likely that there have been many Incarnations to redeem many different kinds of creature. One’s sense of *style* - of the divine idiom - rejects it. The suggestion of mass-production and of waiting queues comes from a level of thought which is here hopelessly inadequate. If natural creatures other than Man have sinned we must believe that they are redeemed: but God’s Incarnation as Man will be one unique act in the drama of total redemption.⁴⁴

Doubtless, the Divine “style” is not the best way of deciding the issue (how much, really, do we know about the aesthetics of God?), but Lewis surely has a point. In commenting on a heterodox 18th century treatment of the question, which held that the Second Person of the Trinity “united to himself Jesus: and for the same or similar Ends he may have, and probably hath, united to himself other rational Creatures in other Planets,”⁴⁵ Professor Crowe rightly observed: “The idea of turning Christ into a cosmic Krishna was then, and remains, a notion that Christian theologians, as well as such critics of Christianity as Tom Paine, have judged to be irreconcilable with that religion.”⁴⁶

We can, then, agree with Frederick William Cronhelm when he dismisses “ a Bethlehem in Venus, a Gethsemane in Jupiter, a Calvary in Saturn.”⁴⁷ Such notions go well beyond William Blake’s query, “And was the holy Lamb of God on England’s pleasant pastures seen?” - since England (whatever Frenchmen may say) is indeed part of the human landscape and not an alien world!

But the refusal theologically to countenance multiple incarnations is not equivalent to saying that fallen extraterrestrials are per se without hope. Perhaps the atonement which occurred on our earth has larger dimensions than we ordinarily think.”

Is the Atonement Exportable?

Is the meaning of the redemptive sacrifice of Christ limited to substitution for the sins of humanity? Might the atonement not also operate on a level which would be transferable to races other than our own?

The most helpful modern treatment of atonement theory in the history of doctrine was achieved by the Swedish Lutheran theologian Gustaf Aulén in his book, *Christus Victor*. Because of the importance of the subject we have provided, in the appendix to this essay, a detailed review and analysis of this book.⁴⁹ Aulén describes three main atonement theories in the history of the church: (1) the “Christus victor” theory, maintained especially by the Patristic church and the Reformers, which stresses that on the Cross God-in-Christ monergistically conquered the evil powers arrayed against the fallen creature (those powers being sin, death, the devil, and the law); (2) the “Anselmian” or “substitutionary” theory, characteristic of the Medieval church, Anglo-Catholics and evangelicals, which sees the atonement as God the Father punishing God the Son as perfect representative man (the second Adam) who has taken on himself the sins of mankind and (3) the “subjective” or “Abelardian” theory, held by liberal and broad-church streams, to the effect that the atonement provided a basis for the “imitation of Christ” and the moral regeneration which would follow from it.

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Now it should be clear from inspection (and much more from the analysis provided in the Appendix material) that all three of these theories can be justified within Holy Writ - though their relative importance varies considerably. The second (substitutionary) theory has the most weight scripturally, being featured in Romans and Hebrews (and Hebrews shows the intimate connection between this theory and the entire history of sacrifice in the Old Testament). The first (Christus victor) theory receives second place, being clearly taught in diverse passages throughout the New Testament (Ephesians 4:8, Colossians 2:14-15, Revelation 12:9-11, etc.). The third (subjective) theory can be justified by way of a few verses (principally 1 Peter 2:21), but quite obviously receives the least of the three theories in biblical teaching.

As to the applicability of atonement to fallen creatures other than human beings, theory (3) would certainly work, since extraterrestrials could imitate the selfgiving of Christ just as we can. But, of course, they could only do so on receiving knowledge of what he had done on earth for the human race (cosmic evangelism through future space exploration from earth?).⁵⁰ Theory (2) could not apply to extraterrestrials, since Christ functions as *Second Adam*: he is a representative of the progeny of Adam and takes on the sin of Adam, not the sins of any other race. Theory (1) could embrace extraterrestrials insofar as the evil powers conquered on the Cross are understood in a broad or cosmic sense: sin, death, the law (as these would operate in other worlds), and the Book of Job and the Book of Revelation clearly teach that the devil's infernal activities are by no means limited to earth, but have cosmic repercussions.

The problem, however, is that biblically *all three of these theories* are correct - all provide valid understandings of the atonement. It might therefore appear that we are left with only two alternatives: *either* to say that since at least one of the theories (the one most emphasised biblically!) could not apply to extraterrestrials, the atonement per se could not do so; or to say that the atonement was only *partially* applicable outside the human sphere. But such a conclusion would not be required logically. One could better argue that for the atonement to be valid and applicable it is not necessary that *all* biblically justified theories of it apply in every context; it should be enough that any *one* correct theory genuinely apply. If, for example, the evil powers arrayed against the cosmos were successfully conquered through what Christ did on earth, would it really matter that some of the beneficiaries could not place themselves within the ambit of the race identified with the Second Adam?

An Answer for E.T.

What can be done for a fallen E.T.? Not an incarnation in his world; and the substitutionary aspect of the atonement for humankind on our earth would not help him. But surely a positive solution can be arrived at?

We should expect so, on the basis of the character of God, as revealed in the Holy Scriptures. The God of the Bible is a God of love who weeps over Jerusalem and “will have all to be saved and to come unto a knowledge of the truth” (1 Timothy 2:4). It follows that the burden of proof should lie with those who would argue against any salvation for fallen inhabitants of other worlds, not with those suggesting positive solutions.

But what can be said concretely? We begin with a general consideration and then move to a more specific solution.

Even if we were to hold that the Anselmian, substitutionary understanding of the atonement must be essential to any efficacious application of the Cross, and therefore that Christ’s work on earth could not be directly relevant to the sinful plight of extraterrestrials, it would not follow that fallen creatures on other worlds could not be saved. To hold otherwise is tantamount to maintaining that God is limited to only one means of redemption. But the God of the Bible declares: “As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts” (Isaiah 55:9).

This point has been made by a number of students of the matter. Rittenhouse writes: “Neither Religion nor Philosophy forbids us to believe that infinite wisdom and power, prompted by infinite goodness, may throughout the vast extent of creation and duration, have frequently interposed in a manner quite incomprehensible to us, when it became necessary to the happiness of created beings of some other rank or degree.”⁵¹ Pohle’s opinion is similar: “Even if the evil of sin had gained its pernicious entry into those worlds, so would it now follow from it that also there an Incarnation and Redemption would have to take place. God has at his disposal many other means to remit a sin that weighs either on an individual or on an entire species.”⁵²

And C.S. Lewis: “To different diseases, or even to different patients sick with the same disease, the great Physician may have applied different remedies; remedies which we should probably not recognise as such even if we ever heard of them.”⁵³ Lewis deals with the matter in more detail elsewhere:

We might find a race which, like ours, contained both good and bad. And we might find that for them, as for us, something had been done; that at some point in their history some great interference for the better, believed by some of them to be supernatural, had been recorded, and that its effects, though often impeded and perverted, were still alive among them. It need not, as far as I can see, have conformed to the pattern of Incarnation, Passion, Death and Resurrection. God may have

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other ways - how should I be able to imagine them? - of redeeming a lost world. And Redemption in that alien mode might not be easily recognisable by our missionaries, let alone by our atheists.

We might meet a species which, like us, needed Redemption but had not been given it. But would this fundamentally be more of a difficulty than any Christian's first meeting with a new tribe of savages? It would be our duty to preach the Gospel to them. For if they are rational, capable of both sin and repentance, they are our brethren, whatever they look like ...⁵⁴

In short, God is certainly capable of redeeming other fallen worlds by means entirely different from the one he has used on earth to save fallen humanity. A loving God may well provide other means of redemption totally beyond our ken.

But there may be a solution for E.T. which follows directly on what God in Christ has done for us on earth. That is to say, God's redemptive work in Christ on earth may itself have a secondary salvatory impact on other worlds.

We have already suggested that the "Christus victor" dimension of the atonement could have significance beyond our own world. Biblical passages such as Colossians 1:19-20 and Ephesians 1:10 seem to say that the effect of the Cross was not limited to our human situation: "It pleased the Father that in him [Christ] should all fulness dwell; and, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven." "In the dispensation of the fullness of times he [God the Father] might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth."⁵⁵ And the Greek word *cosmos* in the phrase, Christ died "for the sins of the *world*" - though generally taken to mean "the earth" or "humanity, fallen creation, the theatre of salvation history" - may linguistically have a wider referent ("the universe, the sum of all created being").⁵⁶

Even the "subjective", Abelardian understanding of the atonement - though hardly adequate by itself - might extend the application of the atonement to other worlds. Eighteenth-century Scottish moral philosopher and poet James Beattie argued that extraterrestrials

will not suffer for our guilt, nor be rewarded for our obedience. But it is not absurd to imagine, that our fall and recovery may be useful to them as an example; and that the divine grace manifested in our redemption may raise their adoration and gratitude into higher raptures and quicken their ardour to inquire ... into the dispensations of infinite wisdom.⁵⁷

The "French Burke", Count Joseph de Maistre (d. 1821), argues eloquently for the wider application of Christ's redemptive work in the course of refuting "certain theologians" who could not stomach the idea of other inhabited worlds:

If the inhabitants of the other planets are not like us guilty of sin, they have no need of the same remedy, and if, on the contrary, the same remedy is necessary for them, are the theologians of whom I speak then to fear that the power of the sacrifice which has saved us is unable to extend

to the moon? The insight of Origen is much more penetrating and comprehensive when he writes: "The altar was at Jerusalem, but the blood of the victim bathed the universe."⁵⁸

C.S. Lewis goes considerably further along the same line:

It might turn out that the redemption of other species differed from ours by working through ours. There is a hint of something like this in St. Paul (Romans 8:19-23) when he says that the whole creation is longing and waiting to be delivered from some kind of slavery, and that the deliverance will occur only when we, we Christians, fully enter upon our sonship to God and exercise our 'glorious liberty'.

On the conscious level I believe that he was thinking only of our own earth: of animal, and probably vegetable, life on earth being "renewed" or glorified at the glorification of man in Christ. But it is perhaps possible - it is not necessary - to give his words a cosmic meaning. It may be that Redemption, starting with us, is to work from us and through us.⁵⁹

Would the extraterrestrial need to have knowledge of salvation history on earth to benefit from it? Not in the "Christus victor" understanding of the atonement, for the victory over the evil powers is an objective fact whether one knows of it or not. Pierre Courbet (admittedly from a Roman Catholic, sacramentarian standpoint) maintained that "extraterrestrials would not need to know of these actions to derive their benefits, any more than the infant must understand baptism."⁶⁰ Such an approach must not be allowed to descend into *ex opere operato* formalism, but the point is sound that Christ's victory is objective and its effects should not depend on specific knowledge of it. In contrast, the Abelardian, "imitation" interpretation of the atonement would require that the extraterrestrial know what Christ had suffered on earth for humankind, for without such knowledge "following Christ's steps" would be impossible.

And so, in sum, there is indeed hope for a fallen E.T. We have excellent reason to agree with the 19th century Anglican clergyman Robert Knight, who declared that although the Scripture teaches us that the "Incarnation is unique", it gives us every reason to believe that its "influences are universal".⁶¹

Perhaps the best illustration of this great truth - and a fitting conclusion to this essay - is the Resurrection panel of Grunewald's great Isenheim alterpiece, now in Unterlinden Museum in Colmar, France. Here, Christ having conquered the powers of death, rises in triumph from the tomb. The grave clothes fall away from the sheer power of his victory, and the nimbus around his head has been expanded so as to show that the effects of the victory spread out into the starry heavens, even to the limits of the universe.⁶²

References

- 1 Swedeborg, *Earths in the Universe* (London: Swedenborg Society, 1970)
- 2 *Confessions*, xi. 14.
- 3 Cf. Ronald N. Bracewell, *The Galactic Club: Intelligent Life in Outer Space* (San Francisco: W.H. Freeman; New York: Scribner's, 1975)
- 4 *Summa Theologica*, Pt I, Q. 47, Art.3. Needless to say, Aquinas was not adverse to undemonstrable theological speculations - for example his assertion, again following Aristotle, that the male receives his "rational soul" forty days after conception whilst the female has to wait eighty days for hers (cf. John Warwick Montgomery, "The Christian View of the Fetus" in: W.O. Spitzer and C.L. Saylor (eds.), *Birth Control and the Christian* (London: Coverdale House; Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House, 1969), p.69.
- 5 In particular: Steven J. Dick, *Plurality of Worlds: The Origins of Extraterrestrial Life Debate from Democritus to Kant* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982); and Michael J. Crowe, *The Extraterrestrial Life Debate 1750-1900* (reprint ed. with addendum; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988). Professor Crowe's work is especially valuable, and has been of great assistance in the preparation of this paper, since (quite obviously as a believing Christian) he fully appreciates the theological aspects of the question as to the existence of intelligent life on other worlds.
- 6 See Clyde L. Manschreck, *Melanchthon: The Quiet Reformer* (New York and Nashville: Abingdon, 1958); John Warwick Montgomery, "Luther, Libraries, and Learning", in his *In Defense of Martin Luther* (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1970), pp. 123-25; and Montgomery, *Heraldic Aspects of the German Reformation* (Bonn: Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft, 2003).
- 7 Trans. and quoted by Dick, *op. cit.* p. 89.
- 8 David P. French (ed.), *Minor English Poets 1660-1780*, Vol. III (New York, 1967), p. 635. See also, on Watts's lines, A. J. Meadows, *The High Firmament: A Survey of Astronomy in English Literature* (Leicester, 1969), p. 131.
- 9 *Oeuvres*, ed. C. Adams and P. Tannery, Vol. V (Paris, 1903), p. 54.
- 10 J. De Concilio, *Harmony Between Science and Revelation* (1889), p. 232. See also Concilio, "The Plurality of Worlds" 9 *American Catholic Quarterly Rev.* 193-216 (April 1884).
- 11 Tommaso Campanella, "The Defense of Galileo", trans. Grant McColley, 22/3-4 *Smith College Studies in History* 66 (1937).
- 12 Swedeborg, *op. cit.*, para. 113.
- 13 Crowe, *op. cit.*, p. 100.
- 14 See Walter R. Martin's treatment of the Swedenborgianism in the first edition of his classic, *The Kingdom of the Cults* (London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1967), chap. 11, pp. 241-51. (Unfortunately, this chapter was dropped in later editions of the book.)
- 15 *Indirect* redemptive benefits, however, might exist for unfallen extraterrestrials; see below, note 59.
- 16 C.S. Lewis, *Letters* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1966), p. 260.
- 17 Cf. Martha C. Sammons, *A Guide through C.S. Lewis Space Trilogy* (Westchester, Illinois: Cornerstone Books, 1980). Cf. John Warwick Montgomery (ed.), *Myth, Allegory and Gospel: an Interpretation of J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis, G.K. Chesterton, Charles Williams* (Minneapolis: Bethany, 1974).

- 18 See the following writings by Lewis: *God in the Dock* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1970), p. 267; *Reflections on the Psalms* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1958), p. 103; *Letters* (op. cit.), p.210; *Problem of Pain* (New York: Macmillan, 1978), pp. 62-64, 85.
- 19 C.S. Lewis, *Fern-seed and Elephants and Other Essays on Christianity* (London: Fontana/HarperCollins, 1975), p. 93. This essay also appeared under the title, "Will We Lose God in Outer Space?", 81 *Christian Herald* (April, 1958), and was published under a similar title as a pamphlet by S.P.C.K. in 1959. It also appears in Lewis's *The World's Last Night*.
- 20 David Rittenhouse, *An Oration* (Philadelphia, 1775), pp. 19-20; see the facsimile reprint in Brooke Hindle (ed.), *The Scientific Writings of David Rittenhouse* (New York, 1980).
- 21 Joseph Pohle, *Die Sternenwelten und ihre Bewohner* (2d ed.; Köln: Bachem, 1899), pp. 457-58
22. E.T.'s winning character is one of the chief factors in the great appeal of Steven Spielberg's 1982 film.
23. Alf (from the planet Melmac) was the subject of highly successful American TV series (NBC, 1986-90) and at least one motion picture (shown also in a German version). His magazine was published for several years in the United States. The dubbed French version of his television series is still shown on French TV in the afternoons; and his popularity extended to the Scandinavian countries and to Italy. Recently, he has been revived in American television commercials.
24. A point powerfully made by C.S. Lewis in his *Problem of Pain*: genuine love logically implicates freedom of choice as to whether to love in return - or not.
25. Thomas Rawson Birks, *Modern Astronomy* (London, 1850), pp. 53-54.
26. This passage appears in an essay of Teilhard de Chardin on the plurality of inhabited worlds; it is dated 5 June 1953 and was left unpublished at his death in 1955. Chardin's essay was published for the first time by Henri Duquaire in his book, *Si les astres sont habités ...* (Paris and Geneva: La Palatine, 1963); the passage we have translated appears on pp. 120-21.
27. Anthony T. Padovano, *Original Sin and Christian Anthropology* ("Corpus Papers"; Washington, D.C.: Corpus Books, 1969), pp. 6-7.
28. But not to modern representatives of the craft whose views of biblical reality are so critical that we cannot be sure that they are endeavouring to determine "the whole counsel of God" on the matter in question. Thus we omit from our overview such well-known names as Karl Barth (who held that sin was an "absence" of good - like a "hornet without a sting") and Paul Tillich (whose ontological God - "Being Itself" - leaves us with a strange identification of sin with idolatry, including the "idolatry" of taking the Bible or Jesus as infallible truth). See John Warwick Montgomery, *The Suicide of Christian Theology* (Newburgh, Indiana: Trinity Press, 1998), and *Where is History Going?* (Minneapolis: Bethany, 1969). For an interesting treatment of the shift from classical to modern views, see H. Shelton Smith, *Changing Conceptions of Original Sin: A Study in American Theology since 1750* (New York: Scribner's, 1955).
29. Ludwig Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, trans. P. Lynch, ed. J. Bastible (St. Louis, Missouri: B. Herder, 1958), p. 111.
30. Cf. John Warwick Montgomery, "Chemnitz on the Council of Trent: An Evaluation of Chemnitz's *Examen Concilii Tridentini*," in R.C. Sproul (ed.), *Soli Deo Gloria: Essays in Reformed Theology; Festschrift for John H. Gerstner* (Nutley, N.J.: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1976), pp. 63-94; also Montgomery, *Heraldic Aspects of the German Reformation* (op. cit.).

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31. Quoted in Herman A. Preus and Edmund Smits (ed.), *the Doctrine of Man in Classical Lutheran Theology* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1962), pp. 144-45.
32. Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics* (4 vols.: St. Louis, Missouri: Concordia, 1950-1957), I, 538-42. In support, Pieper cites Rom. 5:18-19 and Ps. 51:5.
33. John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, II i. 7; trans. F.L. Battles, ed. J.T. McNeill ("Library of Christian Classics"; 2 vols.; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960), I, 249-50.
34. J. Oliver Buswell, Jr, *A Systematic Theology of the Christian Religion* (2 vols.; Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1962-1963), I, 298.
35. See John Warwick Montgomery, *Tractatus Logico-Theologicus* (2d printing with corrections; Bonn: Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft, 2003), para. 4.84 ff.
36. Cf. John Warwick Montgomery, *Principalities and Powers: The World of the Occult* (3d rev. ed.; Edmonton, Alberta, Canada: Canadian Institute for Law, Theology and Public Policy, 2001), especially chap. 5, pp. 132 ff. To be sure, the question of the redemption of J.R.R. Tolkien's hobbits (such as Bilbo and Frodo) remains an open question, since they are clearly semi-human!
37. Aubrey de Vere, "The Death of Copernicus," 57 *Contemporary Review* 421 f. (September, 1889).
38. Alice Meynell, *Poems* (New York: Scribner', 1923), p.92.
39. Thomas Paine, *Age of Reason* (New York: Freethought Press Association, n.d.), p. 57.
40. Kurt R. Biermann (ed.), *Briefwechsel zwischen Alexander von Humboldt und Carl Friedrich Gauss* (Berlin, 1977), p. 116. There is some question as to the accuracy of Von Humboldt's characterisation of the views of Whewell, which underwent a sea change from supporting a plurality of worlds to opposing that position. It was, incidentally, Whewell's opposition to employing the physical sciences and mathematics apologetically which led Charles Babbage, the great precursor of today's computer revolution, to produce his great *Ninth Bridgewater Treatise*.
41. Birks, *op. cit.*, p. 55.
42. William Leitch, *God's Glory in the Heavens* (3d ed.; London: Strahan, 1866), pp. 322 ff.
43. François Xavier Burque, *Pluralité des mondes habités considérée au point de vue négatif* (Montréal, 1898), pp. 246 ff.
44. C.S. Lewis, *Miracles* (New York: Macmillan, 1960), pp. 51 ff.
45. William Hay, *Religio Philosophi* (London: R. Dodsley, 1753), p. 139.
46. Crowe, *op. cit.*, p. 87. Cf. Charles Davis, "The Place of Christ," 45 *Clergy Review* 706-718 (1960).
47. Frederick William Cronhelm, *Thoughts on the Controversy As to a Plurality of Worlds* (London, 1858), p. 17.
48. There is also, to be sure, the slim possibility of employing the motif of "multiple universes" (as discussed in contemporary cosmology) to get around the limitation on multiple incarnations created by such biblical teachings as that Christ is "the same yesterday, today and forever" and that his human incarnation is permanent (since "this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven"). The seemingly insurmountable problem with such theological speculation (and it remains pure speculation in secular cosmology as well) is that it would seem to produce "multiple" Deities - as against the overwhelming biblical prohibitions against all forms of polytheism ("Hear, O Israel: the Lord

- our God is one Lord"). On a "proliferation of universes" see John Gribbin, *Schrödinger's Kittens and the Search for Reality* (London: Orion Phoenix Books, 1996), pp. 160-66.
49. First published in *Chytraeus on Sacrifice: A Reformation Treatise in Biblical Theology*, ed. J.W. Montgomery (2d ed.; Malone, Texas: Repristination Press, 2000), pp. 139-46.
 50. See below, our text at note 60.
 51. Rittenhouse, *loc. cit.*
 52. Pohle, *loc. cit.*
 53. Lewis, *Fern-seed and Elephants* (*op. cit.*), p. 90.
 54. Lewis, *Christian Reflections* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1967), p. 175 (cf. the entire discussion, pp. 173-76).
 55. Abbott, in the respected *International Critical Commentary* series, suggests that the "things in the heavens" in Col. 1:21 (the Greek is in the plural) may be inhabitants of other worlds. A.S. Peake, commenting on the same passage in W. Robertson Nicoll's *Expositor's Greek Testament* (15 vols., reprint ed.; Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1951), III, 509; cf. pp. 261-62), observes: "The natural sense is that this reconciliation embraces the whole universe, and affects both things in heaven and things on the earth, and that peace is made between them and God (or Christ)."
 56. Gerhard Kittel, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, trans. and ed. G.W. Bromiley (6 vols; Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1964-1968), III, 868 ff. (art. *Kosmos*).
 57. James Beattie, *Evidences of the Christian Religion* (Annapolis, 1812), p. 184. This work is a refutation of David Hume; it employs in its apologetic the Scottish Common Sense philosophy of Thomas Reid.
 58. Joseph de Maistre, *Soirées de Saint-Petersbourg*, Vol. II (Paris, n.d.), pp. 3119-20.
 59. Lewis, *Fern-seed and Elephants* (*op. cit.*), pp.90-91. In his book *Miracles* Lewis even hypothesises that redemption on earth could positively influence *unfallen* worlds: It would be all of a piece with what we already know if ninety-and-nine righteous races inhabiting distant planets that circle distant suns, and needing no redemption on their own account, were remade and glorified by the glory which had descended into our race" (*loc. cit.*). This point was earlier made *in extenso* by the 18th century German Christian poet Klopstock: "The triumph of Christ extended to the stars of innocent persons/And of immortals" (*Der Messias*, XX, 578-579).
 60. Crowe, *op. cit.*, p. 417. The reference is to Courbet's essay, "De la redemption et de la pluralité des mondes habités," *Cosmos*, 4th Ser., 28 (19 May 1894), 208-211; (2 June 1894), 272-76.
 61. Robert Kight, *The Plurality of Worlds: The Positive Argument from Scripture* (2d ed.; London, 1878), p. 16. We should, however, guard against explaining that "universal influence" in the terms of Teilhard de Chardin's mystical "hyperphysics", wherein the Incarnation impacts cosmic history by a built-in evolutionary development (absorbing and counteracting the entropic effect of the Second Law of Thermodynamics !) and the entire universe evolves to an ultimate "Omega-point" in Christ (see Chardin in Duquaire, *op. cit.*, p. 122; also J.E. Jarque, *Foi en l'homme: l'apologétique de Teilhard de Chardin* (Paris: Desclée, 1969); and John Warwick Montgomery, *The Suicide of Christian Theology* [*op. cit.*], pp. 8, 124, 171).
 62. A reproduction of this work can be found in Marcel Brion, *Les Peintres de Dieu* (Paris: Philippe Lebaud, 1996), facing p. 89.

APPENDIX
 A SHORT CRITIQUE
 OF GUSTAF AULÉN'S *CHRISTUS VICTOR*

*Evaluation of the Three Atonement Theories
 as Characterized by Aulén*

In order to offer the clearest possible picture of Aulén's argument in *Christus Victor*, we present the following tabular schema of the three atonement theories with which he deals. It should be emphasized that the data given in the table represent Aulén's descriptions of these atonement theories¹ and that these descriptions are not necessarily accepted as factually accurate or complete by the present author.

<i>"Classic"</i> theory (Fathers, Luther)	<i>"Latin doctrine"</i> (Anselm, Lutheran Orthodoxy)	<i>"Subjective"</i> view (Abelard, Schleiermacher, Ritschl)
1. Continuity of divine operation	1. Discontinuity of divine operation	1. Human operation (conversion or amendment)
a. Atonement planned by God	a. Atonement planned by God	a. No consistent stand taken on the source of the "atonement" plan
b. Accomplished by God in the person of Christ	b. Accomplished by Christ as sinless Man suffering God's wrath against sins of the world	b. Accomplished by Jesus as exemplary Man
c. God approaches (▼) man	c. Man approaches (▲) God	c. Man approaches (▲) God

¹ The data in the table are derived principally from pp. 145—158 of *Christus Victor: An Historical Study of the Three Main Types of the Idea of the Atonement*, trans. A. G. Hebert (New York: Macmillan, 1956). The reader is referred to this section for detailed explanations of assertions in the table. Helpful collateral reading may be found in Aulén's *Faith of the Christian Church*, trans. E. H. Wahlstrom and G. E. Arden (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1948), pp. 223—241, and in Nels F. S. Ferré's *Swedish Contributions to Modern Theology, with Special Reference to Lundensian Thought* (New York: Harper, 1939), pp. 153—165 ("The Religious View of the Atonement"). Bishop Aulén himself, incidentally, read portions of Ferré's manuscript and offered suggestions on it before its publication.

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|---|---|--|
| d. Incarnation and atonement closely related | d. Incarnation separated from atonement | d. Neither incarnation nor atonement stressed; Jesus the Pattern Man |
| e. Atonement, justification, sanctification seen as different aspects of virtually the same thing | e. Atonement, justification seen as successive, separate operations | e. Sanctification stressed, with atonement and justification playing little part |
| 2. Discontinuity of merit and justice; grace and love stressed | 2. Continuity of merit and justice; Law stressed | 2. Neither justice nor grace receive much emphasis; human love stressed |
| 3. Dualistic emphasis — ransom paid to the devil (yet God all-sovereign) | 3. Monistic emphasis — ransom paid to God | 3. Monistic emphasis — devil not regarded with much seriousness |
| a. The sinner freed from the power of sin, death, devil | a. Christ's merits imputed to the sinner | a. Man given a new motive for obedience |
| b. Sin, death, devil all stressed as powers to be dealt with | b. Sin stressed as the power to be dealt with | b. Little stress on evil power |
| c. Triumphant, positive emphasis | c. Negative emphasis (man's penalty legally removed) | c. Optimistic emphasis |
| 4. Paradoxical tensions maintained | 4. Attempt at rational construction | 4. Attempt at rational construction |

What light will an examination of Scripture shed on the truth value of these three atonement doctrines? Let us consider in turn each of the four main characteristics of these theories: (1) In a larger sense, *sub specie aeternitatis*, the atonement was surely a continuous work of God, as the "classic" doctrine asserts. Acts 2:22, 23: "Jesus of Nazareth . . . being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken and by wicked hands have crucified." John 6:38: "I [Christ] came down from heaven, not to do Mine own will but the will of Him that sent Me." Luke 22:42: "Father, if Thou be willing, remove this cup from Me; nevertheless not My will but Thine be done."

However, in a more narrow (but no less real) sense, Scripture presents a sharp discontinuity which reaches its climax in the agonized words of Christ on the cross: ὁ θεός μου ὁ θεός μου, εἰς τί ἐγκατέλιπές με; Christ did in fact, as man, suffer the full effect of God's wrath directed against the sins of the world. 2 Cor. 5:21: "For our sake He [God] made Him [Christ] to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God." 1 Peter 3:18: "Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He

might bring us to God." Gal. 3:13: "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us." There is perhaps no clearer doctrine expressed in Scripture than Paul's delineation of Christ as the "Second Adam" — as the Representative Man who reconciled the race to God. 1 Cor. 15:45: "The first man, Adam, was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit." Rom. 5:15: "If through the offense of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one Man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many." In this (admittedly secondary) sense, man did approach God in the atonement. Moreover, though incarnation, atonement, justification, and sanctification are generally presented in Scripture as mere aspects of a single great plan, the very fact that separate words such as *δικαίωσις* and *ἀγιασμός* are employed indicates that these concepts are sometimes thought of as separate, discrete operations (cf. Rom. 8:30).

And when we consider the "subjective" doctrine, we find not merely the inadequacies which Aulén sees in it but definite Scriptural merits as well. Charles M. Sheldon (*In His Steps*) has shown beyond a doubt the power in that Scriptural text which reads: "Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps" (1 Peter 2:21). The "subjective" view rightly sees that Jesus' work on the cross is of no value to an individual or a society without repentance and faith. Luke 13:3: "I tell you . . . Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." Acts 16:31: *πίστευσον ἐπὶ τὸν κύριον Ἰησοῦν, καὶ σωθήσῃ σύ.*² Finally, the "subjective" theory places an emphasis on sanctification which is very Scriptural and very healthy. 1 Thess. 4:3: "This is the will of God, even your sanctification." James 2:26: "Faith without works is dead."

It thus becomes evident that with regard to point (1) each of the atonement theories as presented by Aulén has definite values not possessed by the others. Conversely, each lacks emphases which are Scriptural and vital — for the "classic" view does not sufficiently stress Christ as Representative Man offering Himself to God for the sins of the world; the "Latin doctrine" myopically fails to see the all-over continuity of the divine redemptive plan; and the "subjective" view, as the word "subjective" indicates, superficially misses the objective and profoundly efficacious character of the atonement as it is presented in Holy Writ.

(2) As in the preceding case, the atonement doctrine which Aulén terms "classic" presents the more ultimate Scriptural truth: Grace and love did in fact triumph over law and justice on the cross. The words of Hugh of St. Victor cross the centuries with undiminished power: "Non quia reconciliavit amavit, sed quia amavit reconciliavit."³ But this is hardly the whole story. Law and

² Note the aorist imperative and future passive indicative. Both the aorist and future tenses have punctiliar *Aktionsart*, and the indicative in the apodosis of this implied condition carries with it a feeling of great certainty and definiteness.

³ Quoted on the title page of George Cadwalader Foley, *Anselm's Theory of the Atonement* (New York: Longmans, 1909).

justice had profound roles to play in the drama whose last act (or rather, next-to-last act!) was played out on Golgotha. Christ did act as a substitute for sinful mankind, as we have already pointed out (2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Peter 3:18; Gal. 3:13). He fulfilled the demands of the Law and then died so that those who had broken the Law might not have to die. Unless substitutionary, "legalistic" (if you will) sacrifice is retained as an element in the atonement, the New Testament book of Hebrews becomes meaningless, and the vital connection between the Old Testament sacrificial system and the perfect sacrifice of Christ in the New Testament is lost. One who doubts the deep significance of the "Latin doctrine" in this regard need only read James Denney's *Death of Christ*.⁴ The "subjective" doctrine again stresses the necessity of human response to the act of God in Christ, but needless to say, it runs the risk of perverting the total atonement picture, because Law and grace are not emphasized as well.

(3) When we come to matters of dualism-monism, we find Scripturally that the "Latin doctrine," rather than the "classic" theory, provides the more ultimate interpretation. The existence of a personal devil and a host of evil forces is clearly asserted in Scripture (temptation of Christ passages; Eph. 6:12), but these powers of darkness are never viewed as eternal opposites to God, as was Ahriman in Zoroastrianism. The evil forces in the universe exist only because God permits it; here the opening chapters of the Old Testament book of Job can be consulted profitably and compared with New Testament passages such as Col. 1:16. Thus, even though some of the fathers do say that Christ paid His ransom to the devil, yet in a more fundamental sense the ransom was paid to God (Heb. 9:14), who, in His *opus alienum*, allowed the evil powers to gain a certain legitimate sway over sinful mankind.

The "classic" view rightly stresses the unholy triad of evil influences—sin, death, and the devil; and not to do so is to restrict the scope of the Biblical plan of salvation (Heb. 2:14-17). On the other hand the "Latin doctrine" is very correct in centering attention on the sin factor, for unless this is done, one's conception of the atonement becomes grossly "physical" (where death is emphasized), or the vital issue of personal human responsibility for sin becomes neglected (where satanic activity is stressed). The triumphal, positive mood of the "classic" theory is of course thoroughly Biblical and is illustrated in such magnificent New Testament passages as Rom. 8:37-39; 1 Cor. 15; and Rev. 20 and 21.

(4) The "classic" theory sees deeply into Scriptural doctrine when it makes no attempt rationally to resolve the paradoxical character of the

⁴ E. g., as edited by Prof. R. V. G. Tasker of the University of London (Chicago: Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship, 1952). Cf. Eugene R. Fairweather, "Incarnation and Atonement: An Anselmian Response to Aulén's *Christus Victor*," *Canadian Journal of Theology*, VII (July 1961), 167—175.

atonement. Isaiah, shortly after giving us his great "substitution" chapter (Is. 53), utters one of the profoundest sentences in all of Scripture: *לֹא מִחְשָׁבוֹתַי*: *הָיָה*: *מִחְשָׁבוֹתֵיכֶם וְלֹא דְרָכֵיכֶם דְּרָכֵי יְהוָה* (Is. 55:8). And yet (existentialism notwithstanding) paradoxes are not to be made more severe than Scripture makes them. There is no utility in a contradiction *qua* contradiction. The "credo quia absurdum" type of theology is repugnant not only to the serious believer but also to the inquiring unbeliever. Both the "substitutionary" and the "new motive" rationales for the atonement are clearly present in Holy Writ, as we have attempted to show, though they are not intended to remove the ultimate "offense of the cross" (1 Cor. 1:22-25). In explaining the atonement to the Galatians by means of legal analogy, Paul clearly states the limitations of his explanation, but the fact that limitations necessarily exist does not prevent him (as it does many moderns) from giving any explanation at all. Paul writes: "Brethren, I speak after the manner of men: though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth or addeth thereto" (Gal. 3:15; note the context of this verse). The "Latin doctrine" and the "subjective" view do not become unbiblical simply because they attempt to understand the atonement; they do, however, lose their right to speak authoritatively when they assert or imply that their rational explanations constitute the total picture. Any "explanation" of kerygmatic doctrine must always, by the nature of the case, "speak after the manner of men."

*Aulén's Cross-Division
The Crucial Difficulty in Lundensian Theology*

The preceding discussion has made rather clear that Aulén's partiality for what he calls the "classic" atonement doctrine is not fully justified on Scriptural grounds. On issues (1), (2), and (4) the "classic" doctrine states the more ultimate truth — *sub specie aeternitatis*; but this does not mean that the emphases of the other two theories on these very issues do not have Scriptural sanction. On the monism-dualism problem we have in the "Latin doctrine" (and to a lesser extent in the "subjective" view) a more fundamental Biblical viewpoint presented than that given by the "classic" theory; yet on this issue as well, the "classic" view offers healthy insights. The point we wish to make is that no one of the three theories delineated by Aulén contains the whole Biblical picture of the atoning work of Christ.

Now since our author is more interested in the truth value of atonement theories than in the bare historical presentation of them, we have in *Christus Victor* a patent case of what the logicians, taxonomists, and library classifiers term "cross-division" or "cross-classification." Let us hear L. S. Stebbing on the theory of classification:⁵

The basis of division (i. e., the differentiating characteristics) is

⁵ L. Susan Stebbing, *A Modern Introduction to Logic* (London: Methuen, 1930), p. 435.

often called by the Latin name "*fundamentum divisionis*." The principles regulating a logical division are usually summed up in the following rules:

1. There must be only one *fundamentum divisionis* at each step.
2. The division must be exhaustive.
3. The successive steps of the division (if there be more than one) must proceed by gradual stages.

From Rule 1 there follows the corollary that the classes must be mutually exclusive. Violation of this rule results in the fallacy of *cross-division*, or overlapping classes. For example, if *vehicles* were divided into *public vehicles*, *private vehicles*, *motor-cars* and *lorries*, there would be more than one basis of division, with the result that the classes would overlap.

Bishop Aulén has inadvertently allowed himself two *fundamenta divisionis* at his first step of classification — the *fundamentum* of theological truth and the *fundamentum* of historical coherence. In attempting two things at once, he has really succeeded in neither. As we have said, we are concerned more chiefly with the truth-value issue, but it is well to note in passing that purely from a historical standpoint the three atonement views given by our author cannot be considered as distinct as he would have us believe. Luther did not present solely "classic" ideas of the atonement,⁶ nor was Anselm entirely free from "classic" influences in *Cur Deus Homo*;⁷ and the same could be said for practically all other writers on the atonement through Christian history. The reason for this is obvious: the ultimate source of atonement doctrine is Holy Writ, and Holy Writ is not exclusively "classic," "Latin," or "subjective" in its view of Christ's work on the cross.

Since he is primarily interested in the truth value of atonement theories, our author should certainly have used "Scriptural soundness" and "Scriptural unsoundness" as his two main genera of classification, and then (if he wished) various "historical types" of atonement theory as species under each of these

⁶ Read, for example, Luther's exposition of Ps. 51:7 (in *Luther's Works*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan, XII [St. Louis: Concordia, 1955], 359—367). In this exposition both "Latin" and "subjective" elements are clearly present.

⁷ Note, e. g., Bk. I, chaps. 5 and 6, whose titles are respectively: "How the redemption of man could not be effected by any other being but God"; "How infidels find fault with us for saying that God has redeemed us by his death, and thus has shown his love toward us, and that he came to overcome the devil for us" (St. Anselm, *Cur Deus Homo?*, trans. Sidney Norton Deane [Chicago: Open Court, 1903], pp. 184 to 186). Walter Marshall Horton is of course correct when he says (*Our Eternal Contemporary*) that Aulén considers the "classic" atonement view to be more inclusive than the others, rather than completely distinct from them; yet in the last analysis *Christus Victor* is Aulén's attempt to separate the "classic" theory from the two theories which have held the field in the past and to place the "classic" view on a par with them — treating it as the "genuine, authentic Christian faith" (p. 159).

two genera. Yet he did not do this; in fact, no thorough Biblical analysis of atonement theories appears in *Christus Victor*. There is no chapter at all devoted to the "Old Testament," and the "New Testament" chapter appears — and this is very significant when we consider Aulén's attitude toward patristics — after a chapter on "Irenaeus" and one on "the Fathers in East and West." At this point we begin to grasp a basic problem both in Aulén's theological approach and in that of the Lundensian theology of which he has been a prime spokesman.⁸

Aulén's blunder of "cross-division" is due to the lack of a clear-cut Biblical standard of theological evaluation — and this same difficulty plagues all of modern Lundensian thought. The Lundensians refuse to employ the historical criterion of conformity to the Christian Scriptures as interpreted by the *analogia fidei*. Anders Nygren writes:⁹

The reason that historical truths are insufficient as a foundation for faith is their relative degree of certainty. Even the facts most definitely ascertained possess but relative certainty, while the very nature of faith requires absolute certainty for its foundation. . . . Only the a priori has apodictic certainty.

And what is the principal a priori involved in Lundensian thought? It is the concept of *sola gratia* and its motivating force, agape love (as Nygren's *Agape and Eros* clearly states). When one realizes this, it becomes easy to see why Aulén stresses the atonement characteristics he describes as "classic": all four of the "classic" characteristics, as we have listed them above, emphasize God's unmerited grace and love toward His fallen creatures. We should note that the inadequacy of our author's position becomes evident at this very point where its greatest strength lies; for even if we admit (as we in fact do) that agape-motivated grace is the most fundamental and ultimate theological principle, this principle is *not* the whole theological story, and therefore, if it is taken completely by itself, it will inevitably pervert one's conception of the divine plan of salvation.¹⁰

It was not for nothing that the Reformers employed three great theological principles — not only *sola gratia* but also *sola fide* and *sola Scriptura*. The only effective counteractant to Lundensian one-sidedness is to return to the historical Scriptures (and to the *historical* Christ on whom they center) as the formal

⁸ "Gustaf Aulén, whose imprint on Lundensian ideology is in certain aspects the heaviest. . . ." (Ferré, op. cit., p. 26)

⁹ In *Religiöst apriori*, pp. 15, 16 (quoted by Ferré, op. cit., p. 55).

¹⁰ We are of course acquainted with the fact that the Lundensian school arose "as a reaction to the indefiniteness of a confused liberalism" which manifested "bewildered relativism" (Ferré, op. cit., p. 23). Thus the Lundensian position was itself a healthy counteractant to a far more theologically questionable extreme; yet two wrongs do not make a right, even when considered from the standpoint of Hegel's thesis-antithesis-synthesis dialectic!

principle—the source and norm—of all theological doctrine;¹¹ and to return to the *sola fide* principle as the means of appropriating the grace of God in individual lives. Had Aulén stressed Scriptural authority more, he would not have passed such a negative verdict on the substitutionary “Latin doctrine” of the atonement; had he stressed the *sola fide* principle more, he would have seen more clearly the profound truth resident in the “subjective” theory, namely, that “without faith it is impossible to please Him.”

In conclusion, then, we give credit to our author where credit is due—we praise his insight into the fundamental and vital “classic” aspects of the atonement; but at the same time we plead for a return to the complete Reformation motto of *sola gratia, sola fide, sola Scriptura*. Only when such a return is made will we avoid the theological blunder of pitting good things against each other, and only then will we be willing to accept all the facets of evangelical Christian doctrine.

¹¹ We should fully realize that, unless the Scriptures are taken as the theological *principium cognoscendi*, Aulén's a priori of *sola gratia* cannot be defended against any other theological a priori (for example, the exact opposite of *sola gratia*, Pelagio-Arminian synergism!).

Book Reviews

Colin J. Humphreys

The Miracles of Exodus

London and New York: Continuum, 2003. vi + 362pp, hb, £16.99.

ISBN 0-8264-6952-3

Reviewed by Ernest Lucas.

The subtitle of this book is, *A scientist's discovery of the extraordinary natural causes of the biblical stories*. Colin Humphreys is Professor of Material Science at Cambridge University and a physicist of international standing. Being an expert in one field doesn't necessarily qualify someone to be an expert in a different field. What Humphreys brings to the study of the exodus stories are such characteristics of a good research scientist as: an analytical mind, good problem-solving ability and the open-mindedness to question accepted ideas. The result is a fascinating study of the events surrounding the exodus of the Hebrews from Egypt which presents some interesting new interpretations and conclusions.

Sometimes Humphreys builds on other scholars' work, though often making his own modifications, for example with regard to the causes of the ten plagues, the parting of the sea by the 'strong east wind', and the general location of Mt. Sinai. What is new is his identification of many of the 'camps' on the route the Hebrews took from Egypt to Mt. Sinai and his suggested 'natural causes' for some of the miracles.

Humphreys contends that all the miracles recounted in the exodus stories have a natural explanation. They are extraordinary events but not 'supernatural' in the sense that they lack a natural cause. Their 'miraculous' nature lies in the timing of the events and the fact that they also happened together in the way they did. It is in this that we can see the guiding hand of God. He points out that in the Bible events regarded as 'acts of God' are sometimes explicitly ascribed to natural causes, such as the parting of the sea and of the Jordan. While I hope he would agree that not all the 'acts of God' reported in biblical stories can be explained in this way, he is right to make the point that in the Bible the lack of a natural explanation is not essential for an event to be attributed directly to God, who is the author and upholder of the 'laws of nature'. What we call 'miracles' the Bible refers to using the terms 'sign', 'wonder', and 'mighty deed'. 'Mighty deed' focuses attention of the cause of the event in the power of God, which may include his control of 'natural forces'. 'Wonder' refers to its *effect* on people. 'Sign' stresses that it has a *meaning*. The last is the most important of

the three words, as shown by the fact that the other two are rarely used without it. The meaning of the event usually comes from its context (which may include its timing) rather than whether its cause is 'natural' or 'supernatural'.

Since the book is written like a detective story, it would be unfair to give away the new conclusions in this review. The book is easy to read, and is well worth reading. Read it with an open, but critical, mind. Some of Humphreys' interpretations and conclusions are more convincing than others. In particular, I am not convinced by his treatment of Exod. 14;19.

M.A. Jeeves and R.J. Berry

Science, Life and Christian Belief - a survey and assessment

Apollos, 1998. 254 pp., notes 25pp., historical literature review, bibliography, index. ISBN 0-85111-459-8

Reviewed by Duncan Vere

Though now five years old, this book remains a valuable and notable overview of the scientific and Christian understandings of a wide variety of areas where these interface. Described on the flyer as an "indispensible guide", this is indeed true. The sciences are now so strongly developed that it is difficult for someone who is not a practising scientist to write about this subject adequately; both authors of this work are distinguished scientists and also committed Christians. But it is written with admirable lucidity; even ideas which seem barely comprehensible in their original propositions are set out with a clarity which renders them accessible to everyone including clergy, new graduates and students. It addresses areas of faith struggle for many of them.

There is extensive reference to literature, an excellent bibliography and a clear index, making it easy to pursue topics amongst the many issues raised, whether current or historical.

As with any overview it does not give detailed argument in most areas, though the chapter on Brain, Mind and Behaviour is detailed; it needs to be by reason of new advances in brain science and because the ideas and conflicts involved here have been many and diverse.

The text covers first a history of the various influences on the rise of modern science, the relationship of God to his creation including natural law and miracle, a discussion of what scientific method is and is not, of how ideas are modelled in scientific and religious accounts and the nature of explanations. There are then three chapters on the relationship of God to the physical universe, with descriptions of creation and evolution. Next come four chapters on human nature, biology and psychology, with discussion of the body, soul and spirit aspects of humanity

and the meanings of future states and resurrection. The biology of genetics and reproduction are well discussed, with areas which impact upon ethical decisions. The book ends with two chapters which review the future of mankind, current religious views which relate to human stewardship and obedience, 'green religion', New Age, the implications of the fall and the notion of human responsibility. There is a review summary of key attitudinal areas for Christians in relation to the natural world.

The notes section at the end is remarkably helpful, both as a guide to ideas and as explanation.

Inevitably an overview cannot cover detailed argument in areas of dispute and doubt, though this text achieves remarkable balance in their presentation nonetheless. The age long areas of dispute still emerge, albeit much changed in context and cognition from the common position of just twenty years ago. There is an outstanding explication of complementarity in relation to several areas, evolution and creation, brain and mind, the body now and future. Unresolved areas include non-miraculous divine agency in the cosmos, where complementarity helps but does not remove the dilemmas fully. To be sure, there is no way in which we will ever understand how divine agency may operate, but since all effects within nature that have ever been detected involve energy transfers, including the passage of information, and since no energy transfers have been detected so far which are not accountable in known biophysical terms, there remains a problem which is not resolved fully whether by the possibilities invoked by chaos theory, nor by quantum fields, even though these do show that former assumptions of mechano-electrical determinism cannot hold.

Determinism has reappeared in genetics and for brain mechanisms; both are well shown to be false reductionist assumptions here. Similarly, reductionist assumptions in psychology and psychotherapy are well exposed.

An excellent aspect of this book is its discussion of the implications for faith of Christian duty. Religion concerned purely with worship, in the restricted sense of things that Christians say and do together is shown to be false; our duties toward nature and fellow men are explained and well discussed.

Another problem area is that of divine design and purpose in nature, particularly its inner problem of suffering and human evil, both for one another and for animals. In what senses may God be held to be 'in control' of natural and of human events? These topics are mentioned briefly; nature seems to both Christians and to some unbelieving scientists to be 'designed' in many ways. But all the evidence from the mechanisms of evolution, whether genetic, palaeontological or pathological seems consistent with continuous contingency, a succession of haphazard and non-purposeive adaptive steps. These were the

ideas which, in primitive form, drove Darwin from Christian belief and the mass of evidence which has accrued since has not dispelled the problem. This text reviews the field well, with a faithful commitment to core evidence, the perfect witness to the Godhead in the person of Jesus himself, the deity incarnate. To the range of problems so clearly expressed by David Hume when he wrote,

‘Is God willing to prevent evil, but not able? Then he is impotent. Is he able but not willing? Then he is malevolent. Is he both able and willing? Whence then is evil?,

this account remains faithful to a theology which embodies mystery. It pivots upon a Christ who was ‘manifest in flesh’, who practised economy of miracle, who was tired, thirsty and afflicted, who was committed to suffering. ‘We see not yet all things put under Him’. The text gives a true discussion of complementary but different levels of explanation using the twin books of Scripture and nature, making neither reason nor human interpretations of revelation the sole arbiter of meaning and ideas. In this it also refers to the work of the evil one, whose acts and entity are discussed throughout scripture and especially by Jesus Himself, but which seem oddly omitted from most contemporary attempts at theodicy.

In sum, a book to keep and to use for continual reference.

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