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RETHINKING THE AUGUSTINIAN FOUNDATION OF THE THEOLOGY-AND-SCIENCE DIALOGUE

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Introduction

Religion-and-science discourse[1] has become increasingly important in the last twenty years as scholars have attempted to come to terms with complex problems such as the environment, genetic engineering, and other concerns related to the health and welfare of humans and their habitat. From a more narrow scope of research, Christianity, in the new and burgeoning field of theology-and-science interdisciplinary studies, seeks to find common ground upon which to build bridges across the gaps that separate the various disciplines. It appears that the foundational principle upon which this interdisciplinary dialogue is grounded is, ultimately, a theological one, even though the arguments often seem to be stated more in the languages of science and philosophy than in terms of theological affirmation and interpretation. Within this theological construct, a unifying and common ground for the interpretation of humanity, the problem of evil, and the meaning of history is found in the Augustinian tradition. The Augustinian tradition, as we shall discuss, transcends the denominational boundaries of mainstream evangelicalism, including Roman Catholicism,[2] Anglicanism,[3] and

[1]Religion-and-science discourse is differentiated here from theology-and-science dialogue, meaning that the term "religion" refers to the wider spectrum of discussion beyond traditional Christianity, especially to Eastern and Native American religions, which have become increasingly important to less-conservative Christians. This often takes the form of "nature romanticism or neoanimism" (cf. Anna Case-Winters, *Reconstructing a Christian Theology of Nature: Down to Earth* [Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2007], 28, 77). Here, the term "theology" refers specifically to Christian theology.

[2]Augustine's perspective of "signs" and "things" became standard hermeneutics for the Middle Ages. Peter Harrison notes that "God was not to be found," according to Augustine, "in the creatures that he had made, despite their compelling beauty, but in the innermost recesses of the human heart. Here, in the mind, was the gateway to the invisible world, and those who would know God were directed by Augustine to look inwards, rather than outwards. It was the counsel of the Oracle at Delphi—'Know Thyself'— that was ultimately to issue in knowledge of the divine" (*The Bible, Protestantism, and the Rise of Naturalism* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998], 31).

[3]E.g., Alister E. McGrath demonstrates his loyalty to the Augustinian tradition throughout his *Scientific Theology*. It appears that he came to Augustine through a deep study of Karl Barth's *Church Dogmatics* (*A Scientific Theology: Nature* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001] xv).

the Protestant/Reformed traditions,[4] and, significantly, even the foundations of science.[5] This interdependence is deeply rooted in the classical Greek roots of Western society, which acknowledged that Providence lies at the foundation of all thought. Thus theology plays not only a grounding role in religion, i.e., myth (*theologica fabulosa*), but also in civic, i.e., political (*theologica civilis*), and natural, i.e., scientific (*theologica naturalis*) law.[6]

[4]Karl Barth, speaking from the realm of Reformed/Calvinist tradition, notes of Augustine: "We cannot be in the church without taking responsibility of the theology of the past as much as for the theology of the present. Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, Luther, Schleiermacher and all the rest are not dead but living. They still speak and demand a hearing as living voices, as surely as we know that they and we belong together in the church" (*Die protestantische Theologie im 19. Jahrhundert: Ihre Vorgeschichte und ihre Geschichte*, 2d ed. [Zurich: Evangelischer Verlag, 1952, 3], cited in McGrath, xv).

[5]See Harrison, 29: "When, in the sixteenth century, the Protestant reformers began to dismantle this fertile and fecund system of allegorical interpretation [of Augustine], they were unwittingly to precipitate a dramatic change in the way in which objects in the natural world were conceived." This process of deconstruction did not stop with the ending of the sixteenth century, but was employed by Charles Darwin as well. See my article "The Creation of the Soul, the Creation of the Body: Dual Creations in Christian Tradition," *AUSS* 49 (2011): 67-87. While I examine only the issue of the immortal soul in this article, Darwin also challenged the Augustinian conceptions of history and the problem of evil as well. See my dissertation, ""Toward a Holistic Interdisciplinary Causal Model: A Broadened Conception of the Anthropic Cosmological Principle: Life History and Teleology—'From the Starry Heavens above to the Moral Law Within'" (Ph.D. dissertation, Andrews University, forthcoming). While Seventh-day Adventists are not willing to accommodate their theology to science, they do, nevertheless, support the notion that nature is God's second great book of revelation and thereby seek to understand nature scientifically from this perspective. There are, of course, a spectrum of beliefs within Adventist theology on this issue.

[6]Alister E. McGrath, *A Fine-Tuned Universe: The Quest for God in Science and Theology*, The 2009 Gifford Lectures (Louisville; Westminster John Knox, 2009), 24ff. For further discussions of the impact of antiquity, including the Judeo-Christian, Greek, and Roman traditions, see, e.g., Giambattista Vico, *On the Study Methods of Our Time*, trans., intro., and notes Elio Gianturco with a translation of *The Academies and the Relation between Philosophy and Eloquence*, trans. Donald Philllip Verene (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990); and idem, *The First New Science*, Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought, ed. Leon Pompa (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, 50th anniversary ed., trans. Willard R. Trask, intro. Edward W. Said (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003); Karl Löwith, *Meaning in History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949); Jacob Taubes, *Occidental Eschatology*, trans. and preface David Ratmoko (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009); and Oswald Spengler, *The Decline of the West: Form and Actuality*, authorized trans. Charles Francis Atkinson (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1927); and Rudolf Bultmann, *History and Eschatology: The Presence of Eternity*, The 1955 Gifford Lectures (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1957).

Increasingly, however, theologians and scientists, who are working within the theology-and-science dialogue, are offering serious critiques and even reconstructions of natural theology that is grounded in the Augustinian worldview. In this article, we will examine two such attempts by, respectively, Anna Case-Winters and Rudolf Bultmann before attempting to articulate a non-Augustinian view based upon Seventh-day Adventist theology.

The larger question, addressed in this article, however, is where do Seventh-day Adventists fit within this discussion? Do they follow the evangelical model, especially when defining humanity, the problem of evil, and the meaning of history? Or do they find a non-Augustinian foundation from which to ground their beliefs?

Seventh-day Adventism and Evangelicalism

When entering the theology-and-science dialogue, the temptation has been, for many scholars, including Seventh-day Adventists, to critique Darwinian-based science rather than focusing on the pertinent methodological issues that have their roots in the Augustinian tradition that anticipate the theological, and, significantly, scientific interpretations. Adventists believe strongly in the sixteenth-century rejuvenation of Bible study out of which Protestant/Reformed and Radical Reformation traditions emerged, and trace many of the church's statements of belief to these periods of doctrinal development.[7]

[7]For further discussion on this point, see Denis Fortin, "Nineteenth-Century Evangelicalism and Early Adventist Statements of Belief," *AUSS* 36 (1998): 51-67. As Fortin, 52, notes, Millerites, the millennarian movement from which Adventism came, "were not substantially different from other nineteenth-century Protestant denominations. In fact, as demonstrated by many studies in the last decades, it was Millerism's resemblance to other denominations that had been a cause of tensions with them. The common denominator to these studies is that Millerism was the product of nineteenth-century American evangelical Protestantism and revivalism. . . . 'Millerites were, in their origins, good evangelical Protestant Americans.'" Fortin notes, however, of early Adventists that "A theological comparison with evangelicalism is needed to get a fuller picture of Adventism's position within this heritage." Some early Adventist groups, he contends, "dissented from evangelicalism" (ibid., 53). Fortin, 54, bases his analysis on four distinctive foci held in common by nineteenth-century evangelicals—"the new-birth experience, the centrality of the Bible to shape its message, mission, and the millennium"—, which he views "more as a religious temperament than as a theological system." This helps to partly explain why Adventists of the 1950s were not so concerned to demonstrate their unique contributions to doctrines such as creation that were held in common with other Christians (see further discussion below).

Fortin, 64, finds that Seventh-day Adventists, while cherishing many of the beliefs of mainstream evangelicals, differ from them in the following ways: (1) Its early

Further, the apparent acceptance of Seventh-day Adventism as a part of the evangelical movement was at least partially settled by conversations between evangelicals Walter Martin and Donald Grey Barnhouse and certain appointed Adventist leaders in the 1950s. The book that resulted from these conversations, *Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine* (1957),[8] was heralded by one of its authors, LeRoy Edwin Froom, as a document that "completed the long process of clarification, rectification of misconceptions, and declarations of truth before Church and world, presenting our united and truly authoritative position on these long-misunderstood points."[9]

While it is possible to understand this declaration to be one of wholesale acceptance of and by evangelicalism of all Seventh-day Adventist beliefs, Froom actually was referring specifically to three areas, identified in the previous paragraph under the category "Definitive Spirit of Prophecy Declarations Assembled":

> To complete the rather comprehensive presentation, and to give it maximum weight, complete search was made for all pertinent Spirit of Prophecy statements, through the years, bearing on the vital questions of (1) the eternal pre-existence and complete Deity of Christ, and His relation to the Trinity; (2) His sinless nature during the Incarnation—without our sinful propensities; and (3) the broader, *twofold* truth of the Atonement—as the

statements of belief showed "theological innovation," centering its theology around "its doctrine of the sanctuary and the progressive work of Christ's atonement." (2) The conditional immortality of human beings and the annihilation of the wicked after the last judgment. "This view of the nature of the soul is fundamental to their eschatological interpretation of Christ's ministry in the heavenly sanctuary, their understanding of the character of God, and the type of life the redeemed will enjoy in the hereafter." (3) "Furthermore, even though Seventh-day Adventists believe in the Holy Spirit and his active participation in the plan of salvation," there was no separate article in early Seventh-day Adventist statements of belief on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, the Trinity, or the divinity of Christ. (4) In addition, many early Seventh-day Adventists were Arians. Fortin, 66, concludes that "These theological differences are sufficient to question to what extent nineteenth-century Seventh-day Adventists were theologically within evangelicalism in the official expression of their doctrines."

By contrast, in Germany, as Daniel Heinz points out, Adventists made greater progress by emphasizing their evangelical roots that were especially evident in their pietism ("The Pietist Roots of Early German Adventism," in *Parochialism, Pluralism, and Contextualization: Challenges to Adventist Mission in Europe [19th-21st Centuries]*, ed. David J. B. Trim and Daniel Heinz [Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2010], 91).

[8]*Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine: An Explanation of Certain Major Aspects of Seventh-day Adventist Belief*, prepared by a representative group of Seventh-day Adventist Leaders, Bible Teachers, and Editors (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1957). A new annotated version has recently been published: *Questions on Doctrine*, Adventist Classic Library, ed. George R. Knight (Berrien Springs: Andrews University Press, 2003). All references to *Questions on Doctrine* will be taken from the first edition.

[9]LeRoy Edwin Froom, *Movement of Destiny* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1971), 484.

> completed sacrificial *Act* of Atonement on the Cross, and Christ's *application* of its benefits through His subsequent High-Priestly Ministry, climaxing with the closing events of the antitypical *Day* of Atonement, or Judgment Hour. These are the three crucial areas.[10]

These "three crucial areas" were those that were especially brought under close scrutiny by Martin and Grey Barnhouse as distinguishing Seventh-day Adventists from other Christian theologies and were considered so vital to the discussion that they were further highlighted in three appendices by the authors of the book. Froom notes that "The relationship of the Spirit of Prophecy to the Bible was carefully and satisfactorily explained,"[11] thereby fulfilling "one of the main burdens and missions" of *Questions on Doctrine*—"to clear away any misconception of relationship between the two categories that we emphasize—the Commandments of God and the Faith of Jesus." He then pointed out that "Sections I and II of *Questions* therefore first deal with those doctrines that Seventh-day Adventists share in common with other Christians. That point is basic, but had rarely ever before been stated in a comprehensive way."[12]

The goal of *Questions on Doctrines* was, then, to illustrate especially those particular statements of belief in which Adventism differed from mainstream evangelicalism and to state briefly those points that Adventists saw themselves holding in common or maintaining a similar position to other Christians.[13]

[10]Ibid., emphasis original.

[11]Ibid., 485.

[12]Ibid., 484-485.

[13]Sections 1 and 2 of *Questions on Doctrines*, which demonstrate Adventism's similarity to other evangelicals, comprise less than ten percent of the entire book (Section 1 covers pp. 21-32 and Section 2 covers pp. 33-86). These sections are preceded by a statement of the "Fundamental Beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists." Seventh-day Adventists prefer to use the terminology "statement of belief" to describe their theological position, rather than the term "creed," to affirm their understanding that the process of revelation-inspiration is ongoing, building on the theological foundations of the past, but also understanding that human knowledge, due to its epistemological limitations, must continue to learn and deepen in its search for truth. It, therefore, takes seriously the preservation of truth discovered throughout the course of human history, as well as the continuing task of affirming that truth at deeper levels of understanding. The Preamble to the Seventh-day Adventist Statement of Fundamental Beliefs proposes: "Seventh-day Adventists accept the Bible as their only creed and hold certain fundamental beliefs to be the teaching of the Holy Scriptures. These beliefs, as set forth here, constitute the church's understanding and expression of the teaching of Scripture. Revision of these statements may be expected at a General Conference session when the church is led by the Holy Spirit to a fuller understanding of Bible truth or finds better language to express the teachings of God's Holy Word" (http://www.adventist.org/beliefs/fundamental/index.html). The church takes this issue seriously, periodically adding to or revising its statement of belief.

Nevertheless, in spite of these good intentions, fifty years after the publication of the book, *Questions on Doctrine* is believed to be the most controversial book ever written within Adventism, with some accusing the church of giving up too much of its identity in order to be considered evangelical.[14] While it is highly questionable that those elected to serve in this project had any intent to do so, nevertheless there is perhaps a level of naive relief in statements such as Froom's that imply that Adventism had passed the evangelical test by demonstrating that there were more things held in common by Adventists and other Christians than there were those that were different. However, Adventism is now facing considerable difficulty in some of these areas once believed to be held in common with other Christians. One of these is how to state and support its belief in the creation of humanity. Perhaps if the same rigor had been employed in the 1950s for explaining *all* the Adventist statements of belief, not just those which Adventists appear to hold uniquely, the church would have been better prepared for the problems concerning the inspiration and authority of Scripture and the accompanying questions concerning cosmology and cosmogony that plagued, and continues to plague, Christian theology from the 1980s to the present.[15] As discussed in my

[14]Cf. http://qod.andrews.edu. This website contains the papers presentations of Seventh-day Adventist and evangelical scholars in memory of the fiftieth anniversary of the publication of *Questions on Doctrine*. The symposium was held at Andrews University's Theological Seminary, Berrien Springs, Michigan, October 24-27, 2007.

[15]Evangelical scholar Roger E. Olson notes that "One issue that has bedeviled evangelical theology and often caused great dissension and controversy in the ranks of the theologians is *inerrancy*. Is the Bible without error? Many evangelical theologians distinguish between 'infallibility' and 'inerrancy' and argue that Scripture can be and is inspired and authoritative for faith and practice, while being flawed in terms of accuracy of details in history and cosmology. Its *infallibility*, then, is functional—it does not fail to communicate truth about *God* needed for salvation and Christian living. Other evangelical theologians insist that inerrancy is necessarily implied by inspiration and infallibility. They argue that if Scripture is to be trustworthy at all, it must be inerrant in every detail. This debate took place between evangelical theologians Warfield and James Orr in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; it was an ongoing disagreement about Scripture between theologians who agreed on most other points of doctrine. Warfield defended inerrancy, while Orr (a Scottish Presbyterian theologian who wrote against liberal theology) argued that Scripture can be and is inspired and authoritative without being inerrant" Olson, then, describes how these two approaches came to the fore again in the late 1970s: "The controversy erupted within evangelical theological ranks again in the 1970s with the original publication of Dewey Beegle's *Scripture, Tradition, and Infallibility* (Pryor Pettengill, 1988) (which was itself a revision of Beegle's earlier book *The Inspiration of Scripture*). Beegle attempted to demonstrate Orr's claim by showing that Scripture contains errors (e.g., contradictions) in history and cosmology that cannot reasonably be explained by appeal to mistakes of copyists. His motive was not to tear down faith in Scripture or its authority but to show that belief in the Bible's inspiration and authority does not depend on its strict

previous article in this edition,[16] the term "creationism" often refers primarily to soul, or spiritual, creation in many mainstream Christian denominations. When Seventh-day Adventists use the term "creation," however, the meaning does not address two separate origins—one of body (i.e., God-directed, or theistic, evolution) and one of soul (i.e., creationism)—, but is instead an affirmation of one creative activity in which body and breath come into existence necessarily and simultaneously to form a human being ("Then the LORD God formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being," Gen 2:7, NIV). The matter grows more complex as one considers the theological reasons why much of Christianity holds to some form of dual origins, and it is this point, I propose, that makes the foundation of the theology-and-science dialogue theological in nature, including, particularly, concepts of human nature and original sin, along with the accompanying problems of evil, eschatology, predestination, and the meaning of history. Science is not immune to these theological issues. Even Darwin responded to them; in fact, his reaction to them provides the foundation upon which evolutionary theory is built.[17] It is, therefore, crucial that Seventh-day Adventists reconsider their relationship with evangelicalism for the purpose of understanding their own unique approach to these areas. It is also equally important to consider how mainstream evangelicals are responding to these same issues in light of late twentieth- and twenty-first-century scientific proposals. Finally, it is important that Seventh-day Adventists rise above the dual temptations of reaction and defense. As I will discuss in more detail in the future and briefly

inerrancy. This set off a furor among conservative evangelical thinkers that came to expression in Harold Lindsell's *The Battle for the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan) in 1976. Lindsell argued that "Scripture's authority depends on its strict, detailed, and technical inerrancy and that evangelical identity depends on that vision of the Bible's accuracy." Needless to say, the battle over inerrancy was on. When a summit was held in the 1980s that resulted in the "Chicago Statement on Inerrancy," meant to "soothe troubled waters," the response of many evangelicals was that "the statement killed inerrancy with the death of a thousand qualifications; others viewed it as a reasonable resolution to the debate" (*The Westminster Handbook to Evangelical Theology* [Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2004], 155). Whatever the effects were in mainstream evangelicalism, the impact would result in a splintering of Seventh-day Adventist academics, particularly along the lines of cosmology.

[16]Abrahamson, "The Creation of the Soul, the Creation of the Body," 69ff.

[17]See, e.g., my discussion of his research into the soul ("The Creation of the Soul, Creation of the Body,"79-80). Darwin also grappled with the question of history and eschatology, particularly in the purpose and directionality of time (see, e.g., Stephen Jay Gould,*Time's Arrow, Time's Cycle: Myth and Metaphor in the Discovery of Geological Time* [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988]; idem, *Wonderful Life: The Burgess Shale and the Nature of History* [New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2007]; idem, *Full House: The Spread of Excellence from Plato to Darwin* [New York: 1996]).

in what follows, Seventh-day Adventist theology has a number of important contributions to bring to the theology-and-science dialogue, but it must do so from within its own tradition, and not simply in reaction to and within the context of others' systems of belief.

In order to differentiate briefly a Seventh-day Adventist perspective from that of mainstream evangelicalism, it is necessary first to define and then seek to understand the way in which evangelicalism has responded to the Augustinian worldview. We will begin by looking at Augustine's own views of the immortality of the soul and original sin and then at his perspectives on history and predestination. We will then turn to two critiques of Augustinian-based evangelical theology that will serve as a connecting point between Seventh-day Adventist and mainstream evangelical thought in regard to the theology-and-science dialogue: Anna Case-Winters, who is informed by feminist, Process, and scientific thought, and Rudolf Bultmann, who deconstructed the Augustinian worldview in his 1955 Gifford Lectures.

Responding to the Augustinian Perspective

Augustine's Areas of Influence in the Theology-and-Science Dialogue

Two central ideas in Augustine's perspective that are important to the Christian theology-and-science dialogue are, first, the twin notions of the special creation of the immortal soul and original sin and, second, the problem of history and predestination. Augustine's views on these areas are, briefly, as follows:

(1) *the immortal soul and original sin*. The soul is immortal for Augustine for two reasons: "it is the subject of a science which is eternal";[18] and "it is the subject of reason, which is not changed," i.e., is timeless as God is, and thus it cannot become mortal.[19] Augustine's complete human being is not a dual being as Descartes would later describe it; nor was it based upon the idea that the body was a corrupt vessel that "trapped" the pure soul within it. Rather, a true human being, according to Augustine, was a composite of body and soul. As Michael Mendelson notes, Augustine does see the material world as inherently evil in and of itself. We are not "trapped" in the world as in the Manichean proposal. "Rather, it is a more subtle problem of perception and will: we are prone to view things materialistically and hence are unaware that the sensible world is but a tiny portion of what is real [*Confessions* IV.xv.24], an error Augustine increasingly attributes to original sin [*De Libero Arbitrio* III.20; *De Civitate Dei* XIII.14-15]."[20] Humans become accustomed, due to this limited

[18]Augustine, *Immort. an.* 1 (*Basic Writings of Saint Augustine* [New York: Random House], 1:301).

[19]Ibid., 2 (*Basic Writings*, 1:302-303).

[20]Michael Mendelson, "Saint Augustine," in *Stanford Enclyclopedia of Philosophy*

insight, to focusing only on the sensible world and so it becomes a place of "moral danger, one wherein our will attaches itself to transitory objects that cannot but lead to anxiety [*Confessions* VII.xi.17-18]."[21] For Augustine, then, immortality was lost due to Adam and Eve's free choice to disobey God: "Man's nature . . . was created at first faultless and without sin."[22] Original sin is then passed on through "natural propagation."[23]

When challenged by the Pelagians on the passing on of original sin by "natural propagation," Augustine contended that while human procreation is motivated "by the concupiscence which is in his members, and the law of sin is applied by the law of his mind to the purpose of procreation," the righteous "do not carnally beget, because it is of the Spirit, and not of the flesh, that they are themselves begotten."[24] Adam and Eve thus lost their first access to a limited immortality through sinning, and this tendency to sin was passed on in some mysterious way to their offspring, and on to the entire human race through the act of human willing to disobedience. Now humanity must find salvation through the subjugation of the will to God. For Augustine, then, the human being only reaches its true actuality when it subjects its will to God's will and reunites the changeless, immortal soul with the changeableness of the human body and corrupted mind. The immortal soul becomes the true nature of the restored human being. [25]

Immortality belongs to the soul, or mind, for, as Augustine proposes in a subtitle, "Mind is Life, and Thus It Cannot Lack Life." "For whatever dead thing is said to be abandoned by life, is understood to be deserted by the soul. Moreover, this life which deserts the things which die is itself the mind, and it does not abandon itself; hence the mind does not die."[26] Here Augustine's Platonism comes to the fore. Plato, in *Phaedo*, records Socrates's final conversation before his execution, noting that Socrates stated: "I want to make my argument before you, my judges, as to why I think that a man who has truly spent his life in philosophy is probably right to be of good cheer in the face of death and to be very hopeful that after death he will attain the greatest blessings yonder."[27] He then asked, "Do we believe that

(http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/ augustine/), brackets original.

[21]Ibid.

[22]Augustine, *Nat. grat.* 3.1.

[23]Cf. Chris Siefert, "Augustine of Hippo and Thomas Aquinas on Original Sin" (unpublished paper, College of William and Mary, May 2000; http://www.memoryhole.net/~chris/research/original_sin.html).

[24]Augustine, *Pecc. merit.* 2.11 (NPNF[1] 48-49).

[25]Augustine, *Conf.* 7.17 (*Basic Writings*, 1:105).

[26]Augustine, *Immort an.* 9.

[27]Plato, *Phaedo* 64a, trans. G. M. A. Grube, in *Plato: Complete Works*, ed. with intro. and notes John M. Cooper (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997), 55.

there is such a thing as death?" Having received an affirmative answer, he asked, "Is it anything else than the separation of the soul from the body? Do we believe that death is this, namely, that the body comes to be separated by itself apart from the soul, and the soul comes to be separated by itself apart from the body? Is death anything else than that?"[28] Socrates, after a discussion concerning the way that the body impedes the acquisition of knowledge, notes that "freedom and separation of the soul from the body is called death."[29] The soul, Socrates proposes, after being imprisoned in the body becomes polluted by its association,

> having always been associated with it and served it, bewitched by physical desires and pleasures to the point at which nothing seems to exist for it but the physical, which one can touch and see or eat and drink or make use of for sexual enjoyment, and if that soul is accustomed to hate and fear and avoid that which is dim and invisible to the eyes but intelligible and to be grasped by philosophy—do you think such a soul will escape pure and by itself?[30]

The punishment for impurity is for such souls to wander, "paying the penalty for their previous bad upbringing. They wander until their longing for that which accompanies them, the physical, again imprisons them in a body, and they are then, as is likely, bound to such characters as they have practiced in their life."[31] Thus the soul becomes reincarnated in another body similar to the bad one that died. The goal is, then, to live a good life while it is possible to do so, for the soul is life itself. Socrates said, "what is it that, present in a body, makes it living?—A soul." . . . Whatever the soul occupies, it always brings life to it?—It does."[32] For Socrates, death was only, then, of the body; his soul, he believed, would live on, enjoying the benefits of the afterlife.[33]

If the soul and body, then, have different origins, from where does Augustine's soul come? The *Catholic Encyclopedia* proposes that Augustine takes a moderate position between Traducianism, the heretical doctrine that proposes that, "in the process of generation, the human spiritual soul is transmitted by the parents," and Creationism, "the [orthodox Roman Catholic] doctrine that every soul is created by God."[34] Augustine's position is known as "Generationism." "When a distinction is made between the terms Traducianism and Generationism, the former denotes the materialistic

[28]Plato, *Phaedo* 64c-d (*Complete Works*, 56).

[29]Ibid., 67d (*Complete Works*, 58).

[30]Ibid., 81b (*Complete Works*, 71).

[31]Ibid., 81e (*Complete Works*, 71).

[32]Ibid., 105c-d (*Complete Works*, 90).

[33]Ibid., 115d (*Complete Works*, 98).

[34]*Catholic Encyclopedia*, s.v. "Traducianism" (http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15014a.htm).

doctrine of the transmission of the soul by the organic process of generation, while the latter applies to the doctrine according to which the soul of the offspring originates from the parental soul in some mysterious way analogous to that in which the organism originates from the parent's organism." The *Catholic Encyclopedia* goes on to note that both Traducianism and Generationism are against the notions of Emanationism[35] and Evolutionism due to the fact that both Traducianism and Generationism posit that "the first human soul originated by creation. They differ only as to the mode of origin of subsequent souls."[36]

The *Catholic Encyclopedia* contrasts the pros and cons of Generationism, which Augustine held. Speaking in favor of the view, Generationism preserves, as does Creationism, the "union of body and soul, which constitutes the human being. A murderer really kills a man, although he does not destroy his soul." Further, humans differ and are hierarchically superior to animals due to humans' "spiritual nature which requires that it should be created by God." The argument against Generationism is that the "organic process of generation cannot give rise to spiritual substance" because "the soul is immaterial and indivisible," thus "no spiritual germ can be detached from the Parental soul (cf. St. Thomas, "Contra gent." II, c. 86; "Sum. theol." I:90:2, I:98:2, etc.). As to the power of creation, it is the prerogative of God alone (see Creation, VI)."[37] Roman Catholicism, then, while not explicitly condemning Generationism, is opposed to it and it cannot "be held without temerity."[38]

(2) *history and predestination*. For Augustine, "predestination involves God withholding or making available, according to the divine will, the means by which salvation is possible. Augustine stresses that the divine judgment which determines who will be allowed to be saved in this manner is beyond human understanding."[39] Augustine, turning to the biblical examples of Tyre and Sidon, proposed that God knew from eternity that they would not believe, thus he did not make their eventual, eternal punishment worse by forcing upon them a direct knowledge of himself. For Augustine, predestination is from eternity and, therefore, beyond the choice of humans, unless so empowered from eternity by God in his foresight of individual human beings.[40] Augustine saw this as a merciful act by God, noting:

[35]Cf. ibid., s.v. "Emanationism."

[36]Ibid., s.v. "Traducianism."

[37]Ibid.

[38]Ibid.

[39]Alister E. McGrath, ed., *The Christian Theology Reader*, 3d ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), 415.

[40]Augustine, *On the Predestination of the Saints*, bk. 2, chaps. 23-25 (Fathers of the Church).

> Therefore the mercy is past finding out by which He has mercy on whom He will, no merits of his own preceding; and the truth is unsearchable by which He hardens whom He will, even although his merits may have preceded, but merits for the most part common to him with the man on whom He has mercy. As of two twins, of which one is taken and the other left, the end is unequal, while the deserts are common, yet in these the one is in such wise delivered by God's great goodness, that the other is condemned by no injustice of God's. For is there unrighteousness with God? Away with the thought![41]

Human free will and the nature of the human being are called into question by the Augustinian worldview. If humans are dual organisms, even composite unions of body and soul as in the Augustinian perspective, then some evangelicals argue that classical theology is at risk for even greater dualisms in social orderings that lead to the subjugation of humans on the basis of issues such as gender or ethnicity and social classism (see Anna Case-Winters below). Others worry that the Augustinian worldview leads to the notion of fate in regard to human destiny and thus to a lack of human accountability (see Rudolf Bultmann below). These two concerns are also important to Seventh-day Adventist theology, and Case-Winters and Bultmann help to lay a foundation for Adventist discussion of these issues.

Anna Case-Winters: Reformed Theology and the Relation of God to the World as Informed by Feminist Theology, Process Thought, and the Natural Sciences

A growing number of evangelical theologians express concern about the ecological and economic crises that assail the planet. As a result, a number of these theologians and scientists-turned-theologians have come to embrace forms of feminist philosophical theology (e.g., Rosemary Reuther, Sharon Welch, Nancy Frankenberry, and Vandana Shiva) and Process thought (e.g., Charles Hartshorne, Ian Barbour, John Cobb, John Haught, Philip Clayton, and David Griffin).

Anna Case-Winters, a professor of theology at McCormick Theological Seminary, Chicago, shares her concerns about the current ecological crisis that is facing planet Earth and searches for a way for Christian theology to address the problem.[42] Writing from insights she has gained from feminist theology and Process thought, as well as from the religion-and-science dialogue, she

[41]Ibid., chap. 25. As McGrath correctly notes, "The contrast with Calvin is of particular interest, in that predestination is there defined as God's decision to save some and condemn others."

[42]Anna Case-Winters, *Reconstructing a Christian Theology of Nature* (Aldershot, EN: Ashgate, 2007).

argues that Christianity has much to say about a theology of nature and encourages Christians to search for ways to live more conservatively and sustainably for the sake of the planet, especially for those who are most vulnerable. She rises to the challenge brought forth by critics of Christianity, particularly Christianity's "desacralization of nature, its dualisms and elevation of the spiritual over material reality, and its habit of ignoring or resisting scientific understandings of the natural world," believing that it is important to study such critiques so that *if* there is even a modicum of truth in them that Christianity should recognize and correct its theological expression(s) and approach(es) to nature.[43]

Case-Winters begins by contemplating "Why We Need a New Theology of Nature," which includes deconstructing the traditional Christian views of "the state of nature" and "the state of theology." She finds a necessary relationship between the "companion crises" in ecology and economy, noting that "The work of eco-justice (*eco*-logical and *eco*-nomic) is one work."[44] Thus her goal is to better grasp human self-understanding in relation to the rest of nature.

In her book, *Reconstructing a Theology of Nature*, Case-Winters addresses a number of important deconstructive elements in the Augustinian worldview, three of which are important to this study: (1) "a critical appreciation of Christian tradition should be evidenced"; (2) "the anthropocentric and dualistic habits of thought that are embedded in Christian tradition should be addressed"; and (3) "an accounting that is fully conversant with scientific perspectives on the origin and operation of the natural world should be developed."[45]

"A Critical Appreciation of Christian Tradition"

One of the most important points in Scripture is that God is involved intimately in the creation, sustenance, and maintenance of life in the universe. Case-Winters believes strongly in this point and draws a careful line between a pantheistic perspective, in which God is the world, and a wholly transcendent God, who is completely other than the world. Here she is heavily influenced by Process thought, which "maintains divine immanence alongside a reconstructed understanding of transcendence [she has] called 'relational transcendence,'"[46] which means that there is a two-way relationality between God and the world. She notes: "God is not the world and the world is not God. But neither are these two mutually exclusive. God is in the world and the

[43]Case-Winters, see esp. chap. 2.

[44]Ibid., 5.

[45]Ibid., 145. For point 1, see her discussion in chap. 3 and throughout; for point 2, see chaps. 4 and 6; and for point 3, see chap. 6.

[46]Ibid., 147.

world is in God. There is a genuine relation of mutual influence because God and the world are *internally related*. Internal relations between entities entails there [*sic*] being co-constituted in such a way that what happens in one affects what happens in the other and *vice versa*."[47] Case-Winters's perspective stands in contrast to the classical Augustinian view in which "the world is internally related to God (subject to divine influence) while God, on the other hand, is *externally related* to the world (not influenced by the world, impassible)."[48]

While I strongly agree with Case-Winters's first point, that we must return to Scripture as our source for understanding God's relation to the world and with her contention that classical Christian thought needs to be thoroughly deconstructed in regard to God's impassivity to the world, I am uncomfortable with her reliance upon Process and feminist thought to accomplish her perspectives, primarily because it directs her away from a biblical perspective and toward a more nuanced philosophical perspective. She notes that "God leads the way in the creative advance, all the while supporting the creation in its freedom and respecting its integrity. . . . The traditional theological idea of a 'principle of plentiude' illumines this apparent directionality in the evolutionary process."[49] Yet, God guides, she proposes, all levels of the creation, from the tiniest particle to the most complex of all organisms, the human being, both allowing for freedom to thwart his plans and to conform to his "luring." Each level of the creation responds appropriately to God's activity at its own level.[50] The eschatological problem that arises from this position is that God has no ultimate goal for history—a problem that we will encounter again in our discussion of Bultmann—and responds only within the present evolutionary process. In other words, the historical acts of God in history are not to intentionally direct history toward an eschatological goal, but to make each act eschatological in the present moment. While there is certainly a freeing of the historical future from the eternity of the past and a call for human accountability in the present, both of which are needed, the focus seems more on human action and involvement than on God's directionality in history.

Anthropocentrism and Dualism

I also find Case-Winters's second point to be helpful in which she calls into question the problems of anthropocentrism and dualism that have become embedded in classical Christian thought. In chapter 1, she presents the case for a new theology of nature by offering a sampling of various ecological and

[47]Ibid., 130.

[48]Ibid.

[49]Ibid., 143.

[50]Ibid.

economic crises with which the world is currently contending. Her examples include the increasing consumption of nonrenewable energy sources such as fossil fuels, global warming, diminished biodiversity, and armed conflict over resources. While these examples are not new to environmental discussion, they are helpful in reminding the reader of the need for reform and for providing a reminder of the terrible impact that flagrant usage of natural resources has upon the poorest and most vulnerable elements of society. Her examination of economic crisis in the global economy is provocative and includes discussion of the ever-increasing gap between rich and poor (e.g., "In 2001, the average annual pay of USA CEOs was 350 times as much as the average annual pay of a factory worker, who earned on average $31,260"), economic globalization (e.g., globalization has led to "human exploitation and environmental degradation," meaning that there has been a "commodification," in which people and their labor are treated as commodities, nature is commodified as well," while local cultures have been annihilated and replaced with "a kind of consumer monoculture"), debt crisis (in which poor nations' debts become a form of enslavement from which they can never escape), the AIDS pandemic (the poor cannot pay for medication to treat the disease and young people are cut down in their prime), and population explosion (Earth's human population reached 6.2 billion in 2002, is now at 7 billion, and is expected to reach 8.9 billion by 2050). The "neo-liberal economic globalization" of economic trade includes "unrestrained competition and consumerism, privatization of public utilities and natural resources (like water), unlimited economic growth and accumulation of wealth—all without social obligation." Of deep concern, then, is the fact that "Of the 100 largest economies in our world today, 49 are nation states and 51 are corporations." In such a society, "the transnationalization of corporations and capital" mean that there is no "state" to provide moral or civil boundaries. There is no concept of "common welfare," leaving labor and nature open for exploitation.[51]

In the face of such difficulties, Case-Winters asks, "Where do We Go from Here?" Her first response is to re-envision the "Common Good." Based on the research of Herman Daly and John Cobb, she proposes that the common good is not something that is limited to humans, but must take into account the wider community of all living organisms, of seeing the world as a "community of communities."[52] Thus there is a need for understanding wholeness of life on Earth, for understanding the interconnectedness of all the parts together. Living organisms are valued not simply for their service potential for humans, but for their intrinsic value. For Case-Winters, humans become a part of the whole process of the universe, "reframed as a 'link

[51]Ibid., 9-11.

[52]Ibid., 14.

in the vast communitarian chain of the cosmos'" and "humans cannot be abstracted out of this larger web of being as a species apart."[53]

For me, Case-Winters's understanding of humans, as she expresses it here, is the most disturbing part of her proposal. Coming, as I do, from a more traditional view of humans as made in the image of God, it seems, by contrast, that she relinquishes too much in her attempt to stress the point that humans need to become more eco- and enviro-centric in their orientation and that in seeing humans as evolutionarily related to the rest of nature they are better equipped to step into these roles. I am not ready to acquiesce to the notion that there is no special difference between humans and other earthly life forms, although I can relate to her concern that seeing humans as the crowning act of creation can lead to a sense of entitlement over the so-called "lower" forms of creation. Nevertheless, her position is not a necessary conclusion.

The Genesis 1 account, or, in fact, any part of the Scriptures, do not in any way condone human dominance over the creation. Rather, the Scriptures hold humans responsible for care-taking as their divinely appointed task (Gen 1:26-28). Human beings were intended to bear the image of God in the world in the carrying-out of their role as care-takers of their earthly home. That this was to be a role of care-taking rather than the domination and exploitation of the natural realm is noted in Isa 11:8, which describes the "Peaceful Kingdom," in which the law of God prevails supreme on Earth because humans willingly observe it ("They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea," NIV), and in Rev 11:18c, which underscores that in the final outpouring of God's wrath on unrepentant humanity, a significant purpose for the final judgment is "for destroying those who destroy the earth" (NIV). The connection between physical and moral perspectives is important from the point of ecological and economic crisis—as humans move through the world, their moral behavior, or lack thereof, has physical causal consequences, which put into play a series of events that are thereafter out of their control and which may lead to catastrophic consequences.

Such a view does not require Christian theology to fall into Neo-animism, in which God is virtually inseparable from the world. This perspective is also not only a rejection of Neo-animism, but of the Augustinian concept of the immortal soul. The relationship between God and his creation cannot be reduced to mere spirituality, but is, particularly in regard to human-divine relationships, of a personal nature. God comes to dwell personally with his people ("Then have them make a sanctuary for me, and I will dwell among them," Exod 25:8, NIV; "'The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel,' which means, 'God with us,'" Matt 1:23, NIV).

[53]Ibid.

This biblically based perspective also deals with the problem of original sin. While it is true that the consequences of the sin of Adam and Eve have been passed to the entire creation in the sense of cause and effect, the fate of individual humans is not a matter of predetermined destiny, a point that we will return to in our discussion of Bultmann.

A Scientifically Informed Natural Theology

Case-Winters's proposal that natural theology should be scientifically informed is a proposal that I can also agree with. Too often in the course of history, theology has relied more heavily upon the moral lesson than on the accuracy of the natural phenomenon, bringing with this an interpretation that splits reality into spiritual and material elements. [54] Originally, Augustine's intent was not to splinter reality into types, but to find spiritual lessons in natural phenomena. He notes in his treatise *On Christian Doctrine* that

[54]See, e.g., a favorite allegory of the Middle Ages: the pelican, who through its beneficial death on behalf of its young, represented Christ's atonement for humanity. The legend stated that "If the Pelican brings forth young and the little ones grow, they take to striking their parents in the face. The parents, however, hitting back kill their young ones and then, moved by compassion, they weep over them for three days, lamenting over those whom they killed. On the third day, their mother strikes her sides and spills her own blood over their dead bodies . . . and the blood itself awakens them from death" (*Physiologus: A Medieval Book of Nature Lore*, trans. Michael J. Curley [Austin: University of Texas Press, 1979], 9-10). The problem with this lovely moral lesson is that pelicans exhibit no such behavior. As Erich Auerbach notes, this type of mixing of lessons of truth (or rhetorical/ethical perspective) with natural phenomena was a highly developed feature of Christian hermeneutic. He notes: "All the more frequently, however, do we find the Fathers pursuing the interpretation of reality—interpretation above all of Scripture, but also of large historical contexts, especially Roman history, for the purpose of bringing them into harmony with the Judeo-Christian view of history. The method employed is almost exclusively that of figures. . . . Figural interpretation 'establishes a connection between two events or persons in such a way that the first signifies not only itself but also the second, while the second involves or fulfills the first. The two poles of a figure are separated in time, but both, being real events or persons, are within temporality [even as in the case of mythical creatures]. They are both contained in the flowing stream which is historical life, and only the comprehension, the *intellectus spiritualis*, of their interdependence is a spiritual act.' In practice we almost always find an interpretation of the Old Testament, whose episodes are interpreted as figures or phenomenal prophecies of the events of the New Testament" (*Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, 15th anniv. ed., trans. Willard R. Trask, intro. Edward W. Said [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003], 73). While Auerbach's example is of the OT influence on the NT interpretation, the idea can also be applied to the same type of interpretative interaction between natural phenomena and, e.g., Christology.

> All doctrine concerns either things or signs, but things are learned by signs. Strictly speaking, I have here called a 'thing' that which is not used to signify something else, like wood, stone, cattle, and so on; but not that wood concerning which we read that Moses cast it in bitter waters that their bitterness might be dispelled, nor that stone which Jacob placed at his head, nor that beast which Abraham sacrificed in place of his son. For these are things in such that they are also signs of other things.[55]

Therefore, Augustine's intent is clear: he is attempting to draw together the spiritual and physical things to draw moral lessons, or signs, from them.

Eventually, however, Augustine's intent was lost. With Descartes came an intentional splitting of reality into moral and physical realms, the realms of mind and body. Case-Winters is correct in calling into question the truth of Descartes's myth of the body/mind dualism in which he contends that

> I correctly conclude that my essence consists in this one thing: that I be a cogitating thing. And, although I might perhaps . . . have a body which is very closely joined to me, because I have—on the one hand—a clear and distinct idea of myself, in so far as I am only a cogitating thing and not an extended one, and because I have—on the other hand—a distinct idea of [the] body, in so far as it is only an extended thing and not a cogitating one, it is still certain that I am really and truly distinct from my body, and that I can exist without it.[56]

Not only does Descartes prioritize mind over body, but he makes existence immaterial. The mind does not need the body to exist. Such a view is not in agreement with the scriptural notion that "the Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being" (Gen 2:7, NIV).

While we must be careful in the separating of moral/spiritual and physical creations,[57] we must also take care not to overrelate the two elements of the human being either. First, it is not simply a God-of-the-gaps argument to say that we do not understand the relation between these two aspects of reality; their relationship is a deep and intriguing mystery that beckons us to a contemplation that eschews simplistic answers. Second, while I agree with Case-Winters's reason for rejecting all forms of dualism—because it ultimately leads to the subjugation of the weakest elements of nature—once again, I propose that a thoughtful reconsideration of the Genesis 1 account in tandem with the rest of Scripture should lead to similar conclusions. In other words, each of the concerns brought forth by Case-Winters's and the critics of Christian theology can be corrected by a fresh reading of Scripture.

[55]Augustine, *Doct. chr.* 2, trans. D. W. Robertson Jr. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Library of Liberal Arts, Prentice Hall, 1958), 8.

[56]Descartes, 1992, 76, cited in Case-Winters, 70-71.

[57]See my "The Creation of the Soul, the Creation of the Body."

Rudolf Bultmann and the Authentic Self

Rudolf Bultmann, who critiques twentieth-century evangelicalism's propensity toward Augustinian theology, examines Augustine's concept of time as it relates to history and eschatology, the soul and freedom of the will, and the understanding of human being.

Citing Gerhard Krüger, Bultmann orients *History and Eschatology: The Presence of Eternity* toward the statement, "'Today history is our biggest problem'. Why is it so?"[58] Looking back on the recent events played out in his own life, Bultmann shuddered at how history had, apparently, swept humanity along toward the cataclysmic events that resulted in World War II. Reminiscing on the unlearned lessons from the French Revolution, he notes,

> The powers which rule as fate over man are not only foreign powers opposed to his will and plans but often such as grow out of his own will and plans. It is not only that "the curse of the wrong deed ever must beget wrong," as Schiller said, but good intentions and well considered beginnings also have consequences which no one could foresee and lead to deeds which nobody wanted to do.[59]

The lesson that Bultmann gleans from history is that "'willed actions reach beyond the mark of their intended goal, thus revealing an inner logic of things which overrules the will of man.'" In the French Revolution, what was intended to result in "a liberal constitution and a federation of free nations" led instead to military dictatorship and the death of countless innocent bystanders; "it intended peace, and it led to war."[60] The question at stake, then, is "whether our personal existence still has a real meaning when our own deeds do not, so to speak, belong to us."[61] If history is a mere coming to be and passing away, in which humanity is "a ball in the play of the waves," then history can be nothing more than the playing out of fate.

Christ's entry into history forever changes the notion of time, Bultmann proposes. Prior to Christ, time was the place in which preparation for his appearing, under the guidance of Providence, took place. "The whole course of history has now a meaning."[62] However, history in both OT and NT is seen as an "organic unit," a "unity of historical development." The Christian Church "amalgamates" Greek and OT traditions—medieval humanity finds freedom in the realization of God's order both in nature and history and

[58]Rudolf Bultmann, *History and Eschatology: The Presence of Eternity*, Gifford Lectures, 1955 (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1957), 1.

[59]Ibid., 2-3.

[60]Ibid., 3.

[61]Ibid., 4.

[62]Ibid., 58.

through obedience to the laws of God given to the church. It is here that Bultmann finds his true, authentic self and true existence.[63]

Augustine endorses this new teleological understanding of history, primarily on the grounds of his belief in creation. Time and history are not "eternal cyclical movement"; rather time has both beginning and ending that are determined by God. Bultmann notes that "The Christian understanding of man is the decisive reason for this view. Augustine has taken it over from Paul, and he unfolds it mainly in opposition to the ancient manner of thinking. For in ancient thought, man is an organic member of the cosmos, whereas for Augustine man has to be distinguished in principle from the world."[64] It is here that Augustine's view of the soul and original sin come to the fore. "Man as a being distinct from world" and as a "free person" is now able to with his own will to follow God or oppose him. "He is free in his decision for good and evil, and therewith he has his own history."[65]

As Bultmann studies the trajectory of Augustine's view of history, now secularized as it proceeds through time, he finds its ultimate expression to be progressivism.[66] "This belief in progress is not in accord with the Christian faith, indeed, it is opposed to it. It originated," Bultmann contends, "in the polemics against the Christian belief in providence." Progress, according to Voltaire, becomes "the progress of knowledge; and the meaning in history is the fact that men become richer in knowledge and thereby in welfare."[67] This understanding of history, combined with the discovery of civilizations that are older than the Judaic one and an "idea of progress promoted by science," usher in biblical criticism and result in an understanding of "eschatological perfection [that] is transformed into that of the ever-increasing welfare of humanity."[68]

However, even as the understanding of history as progress appears to bloom, its fate is already sealed. This is because, Bultmann proposes, this teleological view of history, expressed so eloquently in Augustine, asks that humans either "stand at the end or goal of history and detect its meaning by looking backwards; or if we could stand outside history. . . . But man can neither stand at the goal, nor outside history. He stands within history. . . . And this brings us again to the question: What is the core of history? What is its real object?"[69] The answer, Bultmann states, is "man"; "to live in actions

[63]Ibid., 7.

[64]Ibid., 59.

[65]Ibid., 60.

[66]Ibid., 70. Bultmann is not alone in his criticism of progressivism.

[67]Ibid., 70-71.

[68]Ibid., 73, 71.

[69]Ibid., 138-139.

is the very essence of man," "history is constituted by human actions. 'Action is distinguished from natural events in so far as it does not merely happen, but has to be expressly performed, borne and animated by some kind of consciousness.'"[70] But it is a consciousness that is undoubtedly influenced by natural events. Decisions about the present are influenced by past events, encounters, that brings about the future: "the future is open in so far as it brings the gain or the loss of our genuine life and thereby gives to our present its character as moment of decision.[71]

In seeing himself as a free being, Bultmann ultimately rejects the Augustinian view of history, noting that in accepting a new life of grace, given by God, "I also decide on a new understanding of my responsible acting. This does not mean that the responsible decision demanded by the historical moment is taken away from me by faith, but it does mean that all responsible decisions are born of love. For love consists in unreservedly being for one's neighbour, and this is possible only for the man who has become free from himself."[72] Bultmann's view here is an echo of the apostle Paul's second great statement on love in Rom 13:8-14. Paul's central point in this passage is that love does not harm its neighbor; therefore, it follows the moral law as set out in the Decalogue, which can be easily extended to include Case-Winters's concern for all living things. To care-take means to see other living things, including humans and natural resources, as more than things to be appropriated for one's own use. Rather, the goal of care-taking is to see also others' intrinsic purpose for being, granted through the creative acts of God.

Finally, and ultimately, Bultmann's rejection of the Augustinian view of history is also a radical rejection of the Augustinian conception of predestination. "To be historical," he asserts, "means to live from the future. . . . In principle, the future always offers to man the gift of freedom; Christian faith is the power to grasp this gift. The freedom of man from himself is always realised in the freedom of historical decision."[73] No longer a prisoner of history and fate, of God's eternal predestination, humanity is free to choose God's availing power to do what is good and right. Augustine's proposal seals the individual's eschatological destiny from eternity. Bultmann, by contrast, recaptures the scriptural element by making every moment an eschatological choice; the future is changed by the actions of the present. For Bultmann, the "authentic self" is the moral being choosing to act under the direction of God's power to do right.

[70]Ibid., 139.

[71]Ibid., 141.

[72]Ibid., 152.

[73]Ibid., 152.

Serious reflection on Genesis 1 and the initial conditions laid out by God, in which humans would participate in protecting the beauty and goodness of the world through their own ethical choices, is helpful as we consider how to respond to nature. Ellen White, reflecting on the events leading to sin as portrayed in Genesis 1–3, notes that

> If the [human] race had ceased to fall when Adam was driven from Eden, we should now be in a far more elevated condition physically, mentally, and morally. . . . Men will not take warning from Adam's experience. They will indulge appetite and passion in direct violation of the law of God. . . .
>
> From Adam's day to ours there has been a succession of falls, each greater than the last, in every species of crime. God did not create a race of beings so devoid of health, beauty, and moral power as now exists in the world. Disease of every kind has been fearfully increasing upon the race. This has not been by God's especial providence, but directly contrary to His will. It has come by man's disregard of the very means which God has ordained to shield him from the terrible evils existing.[74]

There are two important reasons why the creation accounts were included at the beginning of the Torah, which is the explication of law. First, it was to remind its readers that the initial conditions that brought about the world matter and set the tone for what will come, and that human beings as moral, creative creatures have a stake in determining how history flows through time. Bultmann realized this point, freeing himself from the deterministic Augustinian worldview in which the responsibility of human behavior was ultimately removed from the acting human because his or her fate had already been determined from eternity. While I do not agree with Bultmann's eschatology in the sense that the heavenly kingdom is realized in this earth as it is and without a personal, historical advent of Christ that results in the recreation of a new earth, I do agree that each decision humans make is eschatological in the sense of creating an initial condition that potentially has far-reaching consequences as it moves history toward a new state of being.

A second reason for including the creation accounts at the beginning of the Torah is due to the legal nature of God's covenant with humanity. In contrast to the *theological civilis* of classical Greece, in which the rituals were concerned primarily "with the civic cults, religious institutions, figureheads, and rites, which offered society social change" and the *theological fabulosa*, with the often immoral actions of the gods,[75] the rituals of ancient Israel

[74]Ellen White, *Review and Herald*, 4 March, 1875.

[75]McGrath, *A Fine-Tuned Universe*, 24. McGrath, 24-25, notes that this use of civil religion as a mechanism for social cohesion is why the early Christians were considered a threat to the Roman Empire because the Christians refused to do those things that promoted cultural unity, such as worshiping the emperor.

were to have lasting personal and communal impact on the behavior of the worshiper both in society and in relationship to God. In the laying-on of hands upon the head of the sacrificial lamb, the one offering the sacrifice would be forced to stop and contemplate the personal impact of his sin upon his relationship with God, with humans, and even the creation as he took part in the lamb's sacrifice (Lev 1:1-4). As Roy Gane points out, "Ritual consists of rule-governed activity (Staal 1989: 260, 452). That activities are rule-governed means that they exhibit regularities for which rules may be postulated to account for them" (ibid.: 58). He, however, points out a problem with ritual: "The concern of ritualists is with performing activities in a certain manner according to rules rather than with achieving results in any possible manner."[76] Ritual that has become mere activity becomes devoid of meaning; however, a ritual imbued with meaning can provide a hierarchical system that contains meaning throughout.[77] He proposes that God's character of love is demonstrated in the cultic rituals and that humans, by practicing the rituals and laws given in the Torah, demonstrate God's character and thereby place a boundary or limit upon the types of activities that they participate in, the lifestyles they choose to live, the relationships that they have with other humans and with God.[78] It is not unreasonable, then, to extend this idea of ritual and law to all living and nonliving things that exist in this world. If we apply this ritual construct to the creation event itself as the opening statement of God's character, then it is possible to see that human physicality and morality are intimately related to one another from the very beginning. The creation account comes at the beginning of the Torah because God is the source of all law, not just moral and civil. While Genesis does not speak of physical law in scientific terms, it nevertheless points to the metaphysical foundation upon which natural, moral, and civil law is grounded, a point that Philo articulates (see below).

Thus it is that humans are a system of hierarchical processes and subsystems. As pointed out by Ian Barbour, they are not simply physical beings, but are also moral beings who live together in communities and who are governed over by cultural, societal, and religious rules for living together.[79] The Genesis creation accounts endorse this sense of community by (1) creating an appropriate environment for creatures to live in, (2) by placing these creatures together in integrated and dependent relationships, (3) by commanding them to reproduce and fill this environment, (4) by giving humans the ability to make moral decisions that would help to sustain and

[76]Roy Gane, *Ritual Dynamic Structure* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2004), 2.

[77]Ibid., 3.

[78]Roy Gane, *Cult and Character: Purification Offerings, Day of Atonement, and Theodicy* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2005).

[79]Barbour, 29.

maintain the environment, and (5) by placing humans within stable family groups that would provide a continuing resource for moral growth and development. These initial conditions, even though shattered by the fall of Genesis 3, were to be reaffirmed by daily choosing to endorse the initial conditions of the Genesis 1 account:

> Hear, Israel, and be careful to obey so that it may go well with you and that you may increase greatly in a land flowing with milk and honey, just as the LORD, the God of your ancestors, promised you. Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates (Deut 6:3-8, NIV).

This recounting of God's law was not simply the remembering of moral and civil law, but also natural. Humans were meant to look upon nature and see its lessons for life and to enjoy the blessings granted by nature and given to them by God. Thus it is that Seventh-day Adventists believe strongly in grounding their beliefs in the Scriptures and by practicing, like many other Christians, a holistic reading of Scripture. Some Christians are seeking for answers to the economic and ecological crises by turning toward pantheistic perspectives, such as found in Native American and Eastern religions. However, the Scriptures provide lessons on how to live balanced and joyful lives that are in relationship not only with God and others, but also with nature. God is above, rather than a part of, his creation and God's character of love is, ultimately, his law: God's "law is a transcript of His own character, and it is the standard of all character."[80] By following his law in the essence in which it is intended, humans become successful relational beings.

But there is an even deeper lesson to be contemplated here in the first chapters of Genesis. There is a deep relationship between human behavior and nature. In the recounting of the great Deluge, the lesson is that as humans fell out relationship with God, one another, and nature, so nature became degraded. Nature and human degradation mirror one another. Interestingly, science is learning this same lesson.[81]

The climatic point toward which the Preacher of Ecclesiastes drives is that humans may choose to live their lives as they choose, believing that they are islands isolated from the rest of the world. However, in the end, God has been observing their actions all along ("Now all has been heard; here is the

[80]Ellen G. White, *Christ's Object Lessons* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2002), 315.

[81]Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2005), 90ff. *Home: The Movie* (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jqxENMKaeCU).

conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the duty of all mankind. For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil," Eccl 12:13-14, NIV). In view of this reality, the Preacher urges the young to "Remember your Creator in the days of your youth, before the days of trouble come and the years approach when you will say, 'I find no pleasure in them'" (Eccl 12:1, NIV).

As one of the most influential passages of Scripture to both Christians and Jews, Genesis 1 proposes that the path to the creation of humans was, first, purposeful—each organism existed not only for its own intrinsic purpose, but also for the sustenance and welfare of the planet (each type of organism comes into being in a hierarchical fashion,[82] each day's creation adding a layer of complexity and structure to the framework of life on Earth) and for the glory of God (revealed in the celebration of the creation event [i.e., the action of God in the world] and the worship of God on the Sabbath). The individual and yet harmonious roles that organisms were to play were meant to be lasting, with each step of the process being blessed and living organisms being bid to carry out their roles into perpetuity through their multiplying and filling the earth (each day is called "good" by God after its completion, with the final, seventh affirmation of the Earth being "very good"). Importantly, in the naming of the animals (Gen 2:19) humanity was to recognize the uniqueness and intrinsic role(s) of each creature; in other words, there was to be no excuse for "destroying the earth" through the exploitation of the creation. While the first recorded sin, in Genesis 3, is about listening to and heeding the lies of the serpent, it might be suggested that there is also the sin of exploiting nature to obtain knowledge for one's own personal gain; of making nature a "standing-reserve" or inventory[83] by perverting its intrinsic meaning—eating the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil to gain the wisdom of God. Similarly, the appearance of the evil one

[82]Here the term "hierarchical" is referring to the idea that "new properties and capacities *emerge* at higher hierarchical levels and can be explained only in terms of the constituents at those levels. For instance, it would be futile to try to explain the flow of air over the wing of an airplane in terms of elementary particles. Almost any phenomenon studied by a biologist relates to a highly complex system, the components of which are usually several levels above the level studied by physical scientists" (Ernst Mayr, *Toward a New Philosophy of Biology: Observations of an Evolutionist* [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998], 11, emphasis original).

[83]Heidegger uses this term to describe how humans change the meaning of nature when they exploit it for their own singular purposes ("The Question Concerning Technology," in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, trans. and intro. William Lovitt [New York : Harper Torchbooks, 1977], 17). While he does not compare it to the original sin of humanity, it is, I believe, a fitting metaphor for Genesis 3.

as a beautiful creature called a serpent was for the purpose of deliberately deceiving humanity (Genesis 3).

Genesis 1, then, viewed from a global perspective, shows a world that becomes increasingly complex and ordered throughout the creation account. However, it also points to a moral beginning, which correspondingly becomes increasingly complex and ordered as the layers of physical and biological complexity grow. In this account, there is no separation of the moral and physical elements of the natural realm. Rather the success of one realm is dependent upon the other.

By thinking of Genesis 1 qualitatively, we are then able to see the potential for viewing it not only globally, for the purpose of understanding how order flows throughout the entire creative process, but also for understanding that the process described there is not simply a demythologized version of Babylonian mythology. There is no struggle between God and the forces of chaos. Nor is the account a mere recitation of quasi-historical events, given only for the purpose of narrating a story of origins for the Israelite people, but is meant to convey a sense of reality.[84]

Philo of Alexandria asserts in the introduction to his work "On the Creation" that other "lawgivers . . . have sought to bewilder the people, by burying the truth under a heap of fabulous invention."[85] Moses, in contrast, "made the beginning of his laws entirely beautiful, and in all respects admirable, neither at once declaring what ought to be done or the contrary, nor (since it was necessary to mould beforehand the dispositions of those who were to use his laws) inventing fables himself or adopting those which had been invented by others."[86] Philo proposes that Moses did not make use of fables or myths because "the law corresponds to the world and the world to the law, and that a man who is obedient to the law, being, by so doing, a citizen of the world, arranges his actions with reference to the intention of nature, in harmony with which the whole universal world is regulated."[87] He surmises that neither historian nor poet could surpass the statement of law and creation given by Moses, although we ought to exert ourselves to describe nature. The problem is, however, that

> For some men, admiring the world itself rather than the Creator of the world, have represented it as existing without any maker, and eternal; and as

[84]See chap. 5 of my dissertation. See also Tryggve N. D. Mettinger, *The Eden Narrative: A Literary and Religio-historical Study of Genesis 2–3* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2007).

[85]Philo of Alexandria, "On the Creation," in *The Works of Philo: Complete and Unabridged*, new updated ed., trans. C. D. Yonge (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1993), I.1 (p. 3).

[86]Ibid., I.2 (Yonge, 3).

[87]Ibid., (Yonge, 3).

> impiously as falsely have represented God as existing in a state of complete inactivity, while it would have been right on the other hand to marvel at the might of God as the creator and father of all and to admire the world in a degree not exceeding the bounds of moderation.[88]

Without the historical nature of God's actions in the creation, that are carried out according to his law, there would be no basis for obedience of the law by the people ("the law corresponds to the world and the world to the law," and as citizens of the world, humanity observes the law; I.3).

Law, then, in all its aspects—moral, civil, and natural—becomes the basis for a better life for all living things.

Law and Restoration of the Creation by God and the Human Free Will

The Psalmist, contemplating his own place among the wonders of nature, asks God, "When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is mankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them?" (8:3-4, NIV). His answer echoes the words of God at the creation of humanity in Gen 1:26-28: "You have made them a little lower than the angels and crowned them with glory and honor. You made them rulers over the works of your hands; you put everything under their feet: all flocks and herds, and the animals of the wild, the birds in the sky, and the fish in the sea, all that swim the paths of the seas" (Ps 8:5-8, NIV). In Psalm 89, after affirming God's "rule over the surging sea" (ie., primordial chaos, vv. 9-10) and his role as Creator of heaven and earth (v. 11), the psalmist praises God for his law: "Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne; love and faithfulness go before you. Blessed are those who have learned to acclaim you, who walk in the light of your presence, Lord" (vv. 14-15). There is a reason why the physical and moral realms are not separated in the Genesis 1 creation account. This global approach recognizes that natural law and order, morality, and even chaotic creative changes from one state to another have their roots in God's law.

Proverbs 8 describes the role of wisdom personified, asking:

> Does not wisdom call out? Does not understanding raise her voice? At the highest point along the way, where the paths meet, she takes her stand; beside the gate leading into the city, at the entrance, she cries aloud: . . . "I raise my voice to all mankind. . . . All the words of my mouth are just; none of them is crooked or perverse. . . . Choose my instruction instead of silver, knowledge rather than choice gold, for wisdom is more precious than rubies, and nothing you desire can compare with her. I, wisdom, dwell together with prudence; I possess knowledge and discretion. I hate pride and arrogance, evil behavior and perverse speech. Counsel and sound

[88]Ibid., II.7 (Yonge, 3).

> judgment are mine; I have insight, I have power. By me kings reign and rulers issue decrees that are just; by me princes govern, and nobles—all who rule on earth (vv. 1-4, 8, 10-16, NIV).

Here wisdom and law may be equated—wisdom is just, having knowledge and discretion, counsel and sound judgment. It is the foundation of law, both moral (choose prudence and abhor pride, arrogance, and evil behavior) and civil (kings reign and rulers issue decrees by wisdom).

But wisdom is also the foundation of natural law:

> The LORD brought me forth as the first of his works, before his deeds of old; I was formed long ages ago, at the very beginning, when the world came to be. When there were no watery depths, I was given birth, when there were no springs overflowing with water; before the mountains were settled in place, before the hills, I was given birth, before he made the world or its fields or any of the dust of the earth. I was there when he set the heavens in place, when he marked out the horizon on the face of the deep, when he established the clouds above and fixed securely the fountains of the deep, when he gave the sea its boundary so the water would not overstep his command, and when he marked out the foundations of the earth. Then I was constantly at his side. . . . Blessed are those who listen to me, watching daily at my doors, waiting at my doorway. For those who find me find life" (Prov 8:22-30a, 34-35a, NIV; see also God's speech to Job (38–41, NIV).

Without the context of Scripture, the Judeo-Christian perspectives about reality and human origins would be left only partially answered, for science, as we have seen, limits itself to an examination of the physical causes, knowing even then that human ability falls far short of even a complete physical answer, let alone a moral one. It struggles then to form an idea of morality based upon what it does know about reality. Without Scripture the divine activities that preceded and accompanied the origin of the physical act of creation would remain forever in the shadows.

The correspondence between moral and physical law within the animal kingdom is demonstrated in the establishment of the new creation following the reign of Messiah. In Isa 11:1-3, the Messiah is presented as one who comes from the "stump of Jesse," having a Branch that bears the fruit of the Spirit of God: "the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of might, the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the Lord." Further, he will be a wise ruler, who sees beyond the deeds and actions of humanity to their innermost motivations and who will judge according to his righteous law (vv. 3-4). "Righteousness will be his belt and faithfulness the sash around his waist" (v. 5).

The result of Messiah's actions in the animal kingdom result in the return of peace to animals once antagonistic to one another in the previous fallen world:

> The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them. The cow will feed with the bear, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox. The infant will play near the cobra's den, the child will put its hand into the viper's nest. They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea (Isa 11:6-9).

Thus even the created organisms other than humans experience the benefits and rewards of a restored divine law.[89] The image of the infant playing among serpents is striking. The adder, symbolizing the tearing down of the moral element of the creation, which results in its physical damage and destruction, is once again restored to its original position as a beautiful creature by its place beside the infant. The curse placed upon the serpent for its role in the deceiving of humanity in Gen 3:14b-15 ("Cursed are you above all livestock and all wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life. And I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel," NIV) is now lifted, the relationship restored. This simple illustration points to the fact that each entity within nature has its own intrinsic value and reason for being. Though the unmoral behavior of humans often misappropriates and uses the natural resources and even one another as inventory, each creature retains its original identity and reason for being in the mind of God. Part of the role of God's people is to help uplift these original intents and one of the activities of God in the new Earth will be to fully restore the creation to its original form.

Genesis 1 proposes that the creation was orderly and hierarchically structured. But the moment of creation becomes a chaotic moment of creative activity in which the Earth that was "without form, and void" and a place of darkness (Gen 1:2a) transitions into a new physical, biological, and moral state—a place of light and life as God himself provides the motion that creates and sustains life. Even during periods of terrible evil in the present world, following the fall of humanity (Genesis 3), the law remains effective and working, while the perpetrators of evil are held accountable for their

[89]It is important to note here that a canonical approach to the interpretation of Scripture is being employed here. Brevard Childs, who developed this approach, did so in an "attempt to heal the breach between biblical criticism and theology." It belongs to the genre of literary criticism rather than historical criticism (John Barton, *Reading the Old Testament: Method in Biblical Study* [London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1984], 79, 90). Childs puts forth his canonical approach in *Biblical Theology in Crisis* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1970) and his application of it in *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1979). The canonical approach is interested in the text of the biblical canon as a "finished product" (*Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture*, 82-83).

actions.[90] The fact that the law remains active, effective, and authoritative in all aspects of life—moral, civil, and natural—makes possible the restoration and transformation to a final state in which there is a new Earth void of death (1 Cor 15), evil (both moral and natural), and tears (Revelation 22).

> Since the book of nature and the book of revelation bear the impress of the same master mind, they cannot but speak in harmony. By different methods, and in different languages, they witness to the same great truths. Science is ever discovering new wonders; but she brings from research nothing that, rightly understood, conflicts with divine revelation. The book of nature and the written word shed light upon each other. They make us acquainted with God by teaching us something of the laws through which He works.[91]

By taking our cues for care-taking of the Earth from Scripture, we can help to preserve and protect the creation and, at the same time, learn to read nature as God's creation. Such a view of the relationship of Scripture and nature moves us away from the Augustinian perspective that leads ultimately to humans as the mere pawns of history, swept along by the tides of time to an unknown fate. It forces us, as Bultmann desired, to reconsider our own responsibility and accountability not only to God, but to those living and inanimate things that we have been divinely charged to care for. To accomplish this task is to fulfill Case-Winters's desire for a life of relational transcendence.

Finally, eschatology mirrors the original creation (Genesis 1): a massive fall at the beginning of time requires a massive restoration and re-creation at the end (Genesis 3; Rev 21–22:7).[92] However, simply because this present

[90]While it is outside the scope of this paper, it is important to note that the cultic law of the Israelite nation demanded accountability for the carrying-out and support of evil. This process was worked out in the purgation rituals of the temple both at an individual and corporate level (see Roy Gane, *Cult and Character: Purification Offerings, Day of Atonement, and Theodicy* [Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2005]; idem, *Altar Call* [Berrien Springs: Diadem, 1999]; and idem, *Leviticus, Numbers*, NIV Application Commentary [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004]).

[91]Ellen G. White, *Education* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2002), 128.

[92]John Polkinghorne goes halfway on this same position, proposing instead that protology follows an evolutionary trajectory, while eschatology is creation by divine fiat. He notes that there is an issue of "continuity and discontinuity" in "a credible eschatology hope": "Without an element of continuity there is no real hope being expressed for this creation beyond its death; without an element of discontinuity, the prospect would be that of the non-hope of mere unending repetition. While it is for theology to say what it can about the 'new' that God will bring into being, if that new is to be understood as the eschatological transformation of the old, then science may have some modest role to play in clarifying what will be the necessary degree of continuity required for this to be the case" (*The God of Hope and the End of the World* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002], 12-13).

world will come to an end does not imply that humans are not to continue in their roles of care-takers of the planet; nor does it mean that in taking care of the Earth that we are helping to perpetuate the fall or imply that we no longer believe in a personal and historical second advent. Rather by care-taking we demonstrate to God and others that we cherish our current and only home, prepared with care and forethought at the creation by God. In honor of this loving act, Seventh-day Adventists celebrate the Sabbath weekly, looking both to the past (the Creation week) and to the future (the re-creation and restoration), which ushers in an eternity of harmony.

The purpose of this article has been to rethink the Augustinian foundation upon which the theology-and-science dialogue rests. It has been seen that there is a need to reconsider alternative foundations in the face of issues such as dualism, which too often leads to the subjugation of the weaker elements both in society and nature; it proposes an understanding of human nature and the immortal soul that cannot be verified either in Scripture or in science; its understanding of history does not allow for freedom of the will and makes humanity a pawn to fate. In response to such problems evangelicals are critiquing the Augustinian foundations of their beliefs. Some are offering deconstructive/reconstructive possibilities from within the Augustinian tradition itself, while others propose moving to another foundation completely outside of Christianity and within Neo-Animistic perspectives such as Native American and Eastern religions. However, this article proposes that while a serious rethinking of Augustinianism is indeed called for, one does not need to be limited by these two options. Rather, a return to a canonical approach that demands a fresh reading of the Scriptures provides answers to these problems and offers a new ground for examining the twin crises of economy and environment.