WHAT GAME IS BEING PLAYED? THE NEED FOR CLARITY ABOUT THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN SCIENTIFIC AND THEOLOGICAL UNDERSTANDING

by David A. Pailin

Abstract. This paper investigates the relationship between theology and the natural sciences by considering four realist and five nonrealist interpretations of theological understanding. These are that theology expresses biblical affirmations, the faith of the community, revelatory declarations, or a priori conclusions, and that it is reducible to expressions of feelings, attitudes, naturalism, liberating praxis, or moral convictions. Because these views are unsatisfactory, the author calls for an imaginative form of natural theology that shows how faith's understanding of the purpose, value, and meaning of reality fits how the world is actually found to be.

Keywords: a priori; Bible; credibility; faith; game; God; natural theology; nonrealist theology; religion and science; revelation; theism; theology; understanding.

Changing Theology and Developing Science

Jude's description of the Christian faith as one which "God entrusted to his people once and for all" (Jude, v. 3 NEB) reminds us that for some the frontier between scientific knowledge and authentic religious belief is unlike any geographical one, because one side of this frontier is constituted by an understanding that is forever developing while the other side is constituted by an understanding that, in its fundamentals at least, is supposed never to change. The result is that for many, both onlookers and insiders, religious belief seems trapped like a insect in amber, revealing interesting

David A. Pailin is Professor of the Philosophy of Religion in the Department of Religions and Theology at Manchester University, Manchester M13 9PL, England. A version of this paper was presented at a conference on "Science and Religion: Where Are the Frontiers Now?" at Manchester University on 22 May 1998.

[*Zygon*, vol. 35, no. 1 (March 2000).]
 ISSN 0591-2385

things about some past era and maybe usable as an interesting ornament, while scientific thought forges ahead, providing ever deeper insights into the actual world in which we find ourselves. Trying to link the two is therefore as unpromising as attempting to navigate around the earth using the Hereford Map of the World (*Mappa Mundi*) drawn by Richard de Bello around 1290 C.E.

To others the situation is not so dire. Distinguishing between the form and the content, they hold that in different intellectual contexts the appropriate way to express (and, in terms of how it is thus apprehended, to understand) faith's position may alter in order for the grasp of its essence to remain the same. Authentic belief in God as creator is thus held to be constant, although the way that contemporary believers may grasp its significance may seem very different from how it was perceived by their predecessors. There is some plausibility in this response. It may be argued that those who first presented faith's understanding did the best that they could in their circumstances—and even that where this understanding was allegedly revealed by the divine, it was similarly suitably accommodated to the intellectual state of those receiving it.

Neither of the above ways of understanding, however, is warranted. Examination of how theological understanding[1] emerges shows that it is not credible to hold that it is based on insights "given once and for all." What is maintained in such understanding is the resultant of various factors, each of which is affected by current forms of thought.[2] Hence it is an unjustifiable presumption to consider that theological understanding expresses (or should express) some time-independent essence in different forms at different times.

The "Game" to Be Played

Granted that the notion of some non-temporally relative content is an unjustifiable presumption, how must we consider the relationship between science and theology? It is important that those engaged in theological understanding be clear about its fundamental character. Otherwise, as the title of this paper suggests, they may find themselves in trouble because they have not ascertained what "game" they are supposed to be playing. This is to apply to theology the simple point, made decades ago by Ludwig Wittgenstein, that confusions arise if people attempt to play one game by using the rules of another (see Wittgenstein 1958, §§11–14, 23–24, 78–81).

What, then, is the game that those who seek theological understanding should consider themselves to be playing if they are to achieve rationally credible results? and what are its rules? These basic questions often seem to be ignored by those interested in debates about science and religion. While those whose expertise is in the sciences rightly expect theologians

who discuss issues about science and religion to be aware of what scientists actually maintain, many who launch into these debates, both scientists and theologians, show very little awareness, let alone critical understanding, of the nature of theological thought. The result is that their discussions are frequently sterile. The purpose of this paper is to throw some light on the issue of what is involved in seeking theological understanding in relation to the natural sciences. It is for others to report on the frontiers that result from the current state of scientific exploration.

Influence of the View of the World Described by the Sciences

The natural sciences dominate much of life through the technologies and expectations that arise from their discoveries. Equally profound, if less conscious, are the ways that the natural sciences affect what seems credible to people when they deliberately and critically attempt to make sense of human existence—and of their individual existence in particular. For those who are rationally and critically self-aware,[3] a religious faith that does not take account of what are currently perceived to be the discoveries of the natural sciences seems out of date, irrelevant, and incapable of providing credible direction and value to actual life. For example, rationally satisfying talk of God as creator, whatever activity may specifically be intended by "creating," must be appropriate to the scale and complexity of the cosmos as we are discovering it to be—with its billions of galaxies each containing billions of stars and with the apparently "chance and necessity" structure of biological development from living organisms to self-conscious beings. Theological statements are rationally incredible and rightly ignored when their underlying picture of the world fails to match what is now considered to be its state.

When, however, the current state of the natural sciences is taken into account, the world that emerges has many puzzling and unexpected characteristics. It is not the apparently comprehensible and ordered world that Newtonian science initially seemed to suggest. Attempts to make sense of what is must cope with such notions as relativity and the debatable character of the relationships between space and time, quantum indeterminacy, the genetic formation of organisms and the conditioning of human beings; the huge improbability that a sustainable, evolutionary cosmos highlighted by different forms of the anthropic principle could exist; the relationship between the brain and what we refer to as the mind; the relationship between freedom, causality, and indeterminacy; and the character of self-consciousness. In view of these requirements, it is not surprising that some consider that the debate leads into a cul-de-sac because it is beyond our competence[4] while others promote solutions that are fundamentally inadequate. Is there a credible alternative to deciding that the significant search is for what is not there to be found?[5]

Theological Understanding Has to Respond to the General Picture

Before those interested in the science-and-religion debate are overwhelmed by their appreciations of the magnitude of the task, a necessary qualification may provide some relief, namely, that those engaged in discussions about science and theology are not required to be thoroughly conversant with the very latest findings in all the sciences. While in the past a competent theologian, or at any rate a competent natural theologian, might have been expected to be a polymath, such a requirement is no longer feasible. The expansion of knowledge means that any individual's grasp of what has been discerned is rapidly becoming an ever-smaller fraction of the whole. Whatever be our own expertise, for most information we are dependent upon others, even though historical awareness and critical reflection warn us against ever abandoning the lifebelt of suspicion that things may not be as the experts currently maintain. Over time, however, some basic points become so established that it seems unreasonably scrupulous for a nonexpert in the field to entertain doubts about them. It is the overall understanding of the structure and processes of reality that those engaged in developing theological understanding have to take into account.

There is, then, no need for those trying to make sense of the relationship between science and religion to pore over all the refereed journals to keep up with the latest details of research. The question that they must constantly ask themselves is whether what they hold theologically about God and the world is basically compatible with what scientists tell us about the world. In this respect the role of the sciences in relation to theology is one of falsification rather than of verification. While scientific understanding may no longer provide the premises for positive arguments demonstrating the reality of God, it does provide material that may falsify theological claims by showing that what they imply about the character of reality is contradicted by experience—including convincingly argued inferences from experience.

A final preliminary point is that those engaged in considering current scientific work in relation to theological understanding should exercise caution. One reason for caution is the danger that, in their desire to be relevant, they may end up being taken for a ride on the latest bandwagon—or, more likely, may show that they have jumped onto a bandwagon just as those who set it up are abandoning it for other, later and allegedly more fruitful, positions.

A second reason for caution is that theologians need to reflect on the implications of what is supposedly being maintained by the natural sciences before they rush in to baptize these insights as supporting their positions. It is puzzling, for example, why in recent years a number of those interested in theological and scientific understanding have been excited

about the various forms of the anthropic principle, some apparently perceiving them as providing a contemporary version of the teleological argument. The figures produced are certainly impressive; if we have emerged by chance, that chance is so minute that winning the lottery seems almost a certainty by comparison. What those who present this interpretation of the anthropic principle as a contemporary form of the argument used by William Derham (1713; 1714), William Paley (1802), and Frederick Robert Tennant (1928) seem to ignore, however, is that the Creator God that emerges from this understanding is not the God of theistic faith[6] but a being who is fantastically busy in the first jiffy or two after the Big Bang and apparently then leaves things to act and interact in their own ways within the parameters established. This "Creator" is not the gracious, personal agent that theistic faith has traditionally affirmed as persistently active.

A third reason for caution is the need to identify and reflect on the justifiability and implications of the presuppositions underlying pieces of scientific understanding. It is important, for example, to consider whether what is being asserted is the whole story rather than the story that emerges when events are examined from a particular, restricted point of view (see Tennant 1932). If we consider what happens in the processes of reality solely in terms of the model of the mechanical resolution of forces, we should not be surprised if we end up with a deterministic[7] understanding of those processes. Such a conclusion is inevitable given the starting point and methods used. It is also important to examine carefully whether conclusions are warranted by the scientific findings when those conclusions begin to move into the areas of philosophy, ethics, and theology. While most of Jacques Monod's *Chance and Necessity* (1972), for example, is a praiseworthy exposition of biological understanding for its time, in the final part Monod draws philosophical conclusions that cohere with that understanding but do not necessarily follow from it. Scientists may yearn to discover the theory of everything and to answer the ultimate questions that metaphysicians have sought, but such theories and answers will only be credible if what they offer does cover *everything* and not merely what is seen if one limits oneself to a restricted perspective. Furthermore, just as scientists should be annoyed when theologians tell them what must be the case in their fields of study,[8] so scientists should not object when they themselves use terms such as *God* and then are criticized for using it in ways that bear no clear relationship to its use in religion and theology.

Four Unsatisfactory Views of the Nature of Theological Understanding

In view of the above, what is the theological problem posed by scientific understanding? It is not perhaps as straightforward as might be thought. This is because the problem and possible solutions to it depend upon

decisions about what kind of game is being played when people seek theological understanding. Lack of clarity about the nature, objects, and rules of this game leads to much confusion.

What must be appreciated is that theological understanding encounters misunderstanding from two directions. On one hand, theology is challenged by skeptics who seek to undermine it and to jeopardize faith in its purported object by arguing that theology advances unwarranted and unwarrantable positions. Religion is accordingly judged to be a grand illusion, which those who pretend to mature critical rationality repudiate. On the other hand, the credibility of theology is also menaced, perhaps even more comprehensively, by those who consider themselves to be its strong supporters but who, as such, profess views that are radically unsustainable when subjected to rational examination. Rationally concerned theologians often find that their most vicious critics are those whose beliefs express mind-numbing credulity. What then is the game that is being played in science-and-theology debate? A first step toward answering this question is to recognize that games that were being played in the past are not appropriate, relevant, and important for theological understanding today.

Here, then, are four games that were played in the past and still haunt some theological discussions but now arguably ought to be shunned.

1. The first is the view that authentic theology is a matter of reporting and elucidating what the Bible asserts. Underlying this understanding of theology is what may be called an oracular appraisal of that book: its texts are held to be ultimately authoritative because in some way or other they are considered to express communications from the divine. So far as the relationship between science and religion is concerned, the result is that theology sees its task as that of showing how the biblical witness can be reconciled with what is maintained by scientists today. Those who adopt this view of theology bring about a debate that has produced various kinds of mental gymnastics.[9] It is also a debate that is arguably fundamentally mistaken.

We can learn much from persons who lived in the past. Nevertheless, if I visited a doctor who told me that he chose to use the classical medical practices of Galen, I would immediately seek treatment from someone else. I want to be treated by a doctor who has the advantages of all the further insights that have come into medical understanding since Galen's time. Similarly in matters of religious faith, while there may be important insights into the divine and into relationships with the divine that are to be gained through reflection on convictions held long ago, it does not follow that theology must be trapped in a pre-Enlightenment notion of a golden age in the distant past when the truth was revealed and perceived once and for all. The authors of the biblical documents expressed their faith about God in terms of their understanding of the world. By interpreting their

works we may seek to apprehend how they grasped things. The question of whether they were correct in their understanding, however, is another question. And it has to be asked. To allow the science-and-religion debate to be a matter of saving the face of the Bible is to accept a view of theological understanding that may have many adherents but is not helpful to contemporary faith. It is to promote a view that is destructive of theology's credibility.[10]

2. The second view of theology that needs to be exposed and rejected is that authentic theology is a matter of discerning and expressing the convictions of those who constitute a community of faith. This view has the merit of recognizing that religious faith is not only a matter of adequate and credible self-understanding but also has an intrinsic urge to explore that self-understanding. To allow whatever a community believes to be the touchstone for theological understanding—perhaps with some revisionary input to correct incoherencies within what is actually held—is to bind that understanding to the level of intellectual and religious development within that community. Rather than subject the community's faith to the demands of rational credibility, its underlying principle preserves that faith from critical examination. As for the interactions between science and religion, this view of theological understanding means that recent views in the sciences are being linked to what is held in a community whose ideas were formed in part by what was held by science in the past. This is not likely to result in a fruitful interchange. Just how theologically unsatisfactory this position is emerges when it is asked how it is to be determined that the community is right in what it believes. Theological inquiry cannot provide the answer when its norm relies on what the community believes. Furthermore, there are many communities of faith, and they differ in what they hold. Theology, while it may use as a resource what those communities hold, must also stand over against them if it is to be seen as a serious search for understanding.

3. A third unprofitable view of theology maintains that its primary duty is to be the subservient expositor of a revelatory dogmatism. The "Word" is given by God, and nothing about God's reality and will can be validly known except what is so revealed.[11] Such an understanding may be viewed as seeking the authoritative status of an oracular text without being embarrassed by those elements, found within ancient scriptures, that cause believers to squirm as they try to show that these scriptures are still credible—or assert them in spite of how the world is found to be (*contra mundum*) and, we may add, contrary to what reason establishes (*contra rationem*). This revelatory view of theology replaces a sacred text (in spite of all the opportunities for inventive exegesis) with the even more elusive and flexible notion of a given "word of God." So far as science and religion are concerned, this view of theology prevents any dialogue with science; all that is permissible is judgment that applies the divine "word." This way of understanding

theology founders, however, on the rock of the demand that it show that what it holds to be such a "word" has actually come from God, been accurately apprehended, correctly interpreted, and appropriately applied (see Locke 1690: IV, chapter 18). Critics of the revelatory view wonder how those who claim to hear "God's word" know that it is God that they hear and not echoes of their own deep wishes.

4. A fourth view of theological understanding that deserves to be shunned holds that its core is provided by a priori truths that, having been identified, are discerned to apply not only to this actual world but also to any possible world. Those who take up this view are confident in the power of human reason to identify not merely necessary, purely abstract and formal truths but also necessary, concrete truths that give synthetic information about what is and must be the case universally. Such confidence is no longer widely shared. Consideration of the nature of thought and of the contents of past convictions raises deep skepticism about human ability to avoid cultural conditioning in such matters.

Those who hold this view of the heart of theological understanding provide useful evidence about the unacknowledged presuppositions of their age; they do not present convincing insights into the material (as contrasted to the formal) attributes of the divine.[12] Furthermore, there is not likely to be a fruitful positive dialogue between such theological convictions and what scientists maintain, for the former present necessary truths identified, allegedly, by pure ratiocination while the latter present conclusions reached by examination and reflection on what is observed in the actual world. There may, however, be a negative dialogue in that the material claims presented by a priori theology may be found to fail the test of what I. T. Ramsey (1964, 17, 38–40) referred to as "empirical fit," as science—and less sophisticated common-sense experience—shows that the "real world" is not what a priori arguments conclude that it must be.

What Theological Understanding Is About

If, however, these four ways of considering theological understanding are to be eschewed, what is the proper nature and method (that is, the authentic "game") of theological understanding? The answer depends on what theological understanding is held to be about. Because views differ about this, the place to start may not be with the supposed sources of theological understanding but with its content, as we take it to be self-conscious, rationally-ordered reflection on religious faith.[13]

Numerous answers have been given to the question, What is faith?—"belief in something that makes life worth living" (Niebuhr 1941, 77); "ultimate concern" (Tillich 1953, 14); openness to the future in which one is "free from anxiety" and "free for love" (Bultmann 1961, 181ff.); fundamental "confidence in the final worth of our existence" (Ogden 1967, 44); "viewing life as having a ground and final purpose" (Smith 1968, 63); "a

fundamental trust, a basic confidence" that reality is "in principle meaningful, valuable, actual" in spite of its ambiguities and uncertainties (Küng 1977, 70); "a quiet confidence and joy which enable one to feel at home in the universe, and to find meaning in the world and in one's own life, a meaning that is profound and ultimate, and is stable" (Smith 1979, 12); "an ever-deepening sense of the long sorrow of the world together with a vision and enactment of the compassion of God for creation, a light always deeper than the darkness of evil" (Farley 1990, 133); "a consciousness of the profound mystery of life combined with confidence in the possibility of living creatively within that mystery," a mystery that both relativizes and humanizes reality (Kaufman 1993, 55; see also 346–50, 357, 404). Explicit in some and implicit in other descriptions of faith is the conviction that the basic structure of reality is such that it is appropriate for people to feel "at home" in it because it is basically a purposive process that, in a significant way, respects human values, both treasuring what has been achieved and fostering further achievements. And, theists maintain, this conviction is based on, and can only be based on, the reality and activity of God. There is no other way to ground the claim that reality warrants such faith and is not merely to be believed to do so since, for some at least, the alternative is too unpleasant to contemplate.[14]

If this be roughly what theistic faith is about, the basic function of theological understanding may be considered to be that of elucidating and justifying the theistic faith that, ultimately, reality makes sense in terms of purposes entertained and implemented by God and what this implies for human existence, individually and corporately. In this task, as in all other domains of human understanding and self-understanding, interaction with what is disclosed in the sciences is critically important. Negatively this means that the theologian has to attempt to show that human existence is not wholly or even primarily to be described as an emergence in a cosmos that is the product of an immense series of accidents, a view that ultimately sees no point to human achievements and hopes. Although human existence depends physically on the products of decayed stars and eventually the earth will be absorbed into a dying sun, theology must try to show that this is far from being the whole of (or even the most important thing about) our being. Positively this lays on the theologian responsibility for attempting to establish the reality of God as the ground of the underlying purpose, direction, and value of the processes of reality, including (and especially) of human lives as part of those processes.

The Problem of Establishing Theological Understanding

In earlier times scientific observation seemed to offer powerful warrants for such a faith. At the end of the seventeenth century John Ray found abundant evidence of *The Wisdom of God Manifested in the Works of Creation* (1691); at the start of the nineteenth century Paley (1802) happily

cited similar kinds of evidence, even though he appreciated that the challenges to the argument compiled by David Hume (1779) meant that the argument from design could not be developed as naively as Ray had done. This approach to and understanding of natural history, found in that long tradition of the so-called argument from design, is still reflected in the uncritical use of an apparently intentional "so that" in descriptions of animals: this bird has such a beak *so that* it can probe into flowers; that animal has such physiology *so that* it can cross deserts, and so on. It suggests that observation and reflection justifies holding that everything has been designed for a purpose and that it is reasonable to hold that the everything is part of a whole that is a purposive scheme willed by God. Authentic existence is then considered to be found by discerning and realizing one's place in that scheme.

Only some aspects of reality provided the evidence for faith, and it was recognized that there was apparent evidence to the contrary (the evidence that constitutes the so-called[15] problem of natural evil). However, the faith that everything, every creature and every event, has a purpose that gives it meaning came to be a general and fundamental conviction of those who held a theistic faith. Furthermore, it was also held, theism implies that the constituents of reality compose a whole that has a purpose—the purpose informing the divine activity as the creator and end of all. It was as if the fact that there is a reason why each raindrop falls how, as, and where it does makes it reasonable to seek to identify a pattern made by all the raindrops and to regard the overall pattern as what finally gives to each of them its significance as part of the whole.

The faith that particular events and states have an explanation that makes sense of them (and that everything constitutes a whole that is determined by some overall purpose) satisfies a deep longing in human beings to feel part of a planned and intended scheme of things, even if the basic plan may lie largely (or even wholly) beyond their grasp. Such a feeling is seen in the way that many people find it difficult to cope with the notion that something may be accidental. In previous times reference to "the will of God" was a means by which some could come to terms with unfortunate and otherwise inexplicable events. Although the material content of that "will" might not be discernible, believers were convinced that events must have some purpose that made sense of what had happened.

Today that comforting explanation is no longer credible for many people.[16] A major factor in this loss of credibility is the way that events are increasingly understandable through reference to purely natural forces. On one hand, time and time again what might once have been considered a positive expression of the divine will (the shape of a bird's beak, for example) has been shown to be cogently explicable in terms of natural processes. On the other hand, the apparently dysteleological character of some of these changes makes reference to divine intentionality unconvincing. It

seems much more reasonable to say either that these events are contrary to the divine will (so implying that God is not one who guarantees the basic purposefulness of reality) or that the mixed character of events shows that there is no coherent purpose underlying what happens. Advances in scientific understanding have pushed God's activity in the processes of reality so far into the background that *God* seems to many to signify at most an agent that once worked very hard for a jiffy or two (according to some interpretations of the anthropic principle) and then let things run without further guidance for billions of years. If this God be conscious of what happens subsequently to those initial jiffies, it is as one who passively enjoys the play of chance and necessity.

As references to divine activity within the world in which human beings understand themselves to exist have become increasingly unconvincing, theologians have been faced with a dilemma as they seek to identify, develop, and warrant religious faith. They seem to have to choose either (1) to show that this faith is justified by reference to a God whose significant intentional activity in bringing about the structures of reality is apparently confined to establishing the most general parameters of the chance-and-necessity character of the processes of the natural world or (2) to radically change their theological understanding.

Five Nonrealist Views of Theological Understanding

Some theologians have essayed the second option. In face of the increasingly unpromising outlook for attempts to develop and justify faith as an understanding of the ultimate character of reality (especially as scientists not only explain more and more of what happens but even presume to claim to be on the verge of producing "a theory of everything"[17]), some theologians have produced revised views of what is to be regarded as the proper nature of theological understanding. Accepting that the sources of sacred text, community faith, divine revelation, and a priori reasoning cannot provide claims to truth that can credibly claim to offer an alternative or a significant supplement to secularist scientific understanding, they have come to the conclusion that there is no future for theology as an attempt to develop rational understanding of what is ultimately the case. They have consequently sought to develop nonrealist conceptions of the game of theological understanding. As will become apparent in the following discussion, the nonrealist position may be developed in different ways, but all share the basic conviction that the term *God* (or what other term is considered to identify the primary, identifying referent in religious and theological understanding) does not refer to some mind-independent "object" that exists—is "real"—whether or not anyone is aware of its existence; according to the nonrealist position it refers to something that only exists in the minds of those who talk about it and has no reality apart from their notions of it.

1. One of these nonrealist responses perceives religion as entertaining and the theological game as expressing a certain type of feeling, in particular a profound feeling of wonder, awe, and delight.[18] According to this interpretation, faith does not concern the basic character of things external to the self but the character of the self's subjective response to things, at least to some things, as it contemplates them. It is the religious stance of

> What is this life if, full of care,
> We have no time to stand and stare?
>
> —William Henry Davies, "Leisure" (Jones 1940, 60)

combined with the saving experience of the Ancient Mariner as he responded to the water-snakes:

> O happy living things! no tongue
> Their beauty might declare:
> A spring of love gushed from my heart,
> And I blessed them unaware . . .
>
> —Samuel Taylor Coleridge, "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" (Coleridge 1912, 198)

Faith thus expresses an aesthetic joy, and theology is its systematic expression—and by being systematic is probably at odds with what it is trying to express. Just as serious explanations of jokes are rarely amusing and deep analyses of comedies are no fun, so theologians taking this nonrealist view of their activity may be suspected of destroying what they profess to elucidate.

This nonrealist view of faith responds to a deep desire for mystery and wonder that many people feel—and probably is a major factor in the attractiveness of bizarre new religions in the contemporary Western world, where traditional religions seem incapable of evoking a sense of the august and terrifying mystery of the sacred and the deep joy found in the good. It is also a view of faith that has no problems with contemporary science. Indeed, this view may feed on scientific knowledge. Some people seem to find their desire for mystery and wonder satisfied by scientific discoveries, their desire for mystery being met by findings largely beyond their understanding and their desire for wonder being met by amazement at those matters that they do grasp.

The corresponding view of theology, however, provides no justification for regarding this sense of wonder and the lifestyle that is supposed to enhance and conform to it as a valid appreciation of some fundamental state of being or "object" that is mind-independently real. According to this view, faith is a type of feeling or response. If such a feeling is aroused, it is legitimate; if it is not aroused, faith cannot be dismissed as not legitimate, for such a subjective response is neither true nor erroneous, neither valid nor invalid. The manifestation of faith interpreted as such a subjective response depends on how an individual actually feels. At this point

the inadequacy of this view of faith and theology becomes clear. Most believers consider truth claims to be essential to faith. They describe their faith in such terms as *true*, or *correct*, or *credible*. It is at least odd to interpret faith and theology in a way that implies that those who take it seriously have essentially misunderstood what it is.

2. A second nonrealist view of the theological game sees it and its actualization in the life of faith as concerned with an interpretative attitude toward reality that is expressed in a fitting lifestyle. Whereas the previous nonrealist view sees theology as dealing with *feelings* about reality, this view understands it as exploring *a way of seeing* reality that results in an attitude toward the real world and appropriate ways of responding to it. Those, for instance, who see the world as a divine creation are likely to consider themselves inhibited in what they may do in it in ways that those who regard it as an ownerless, accidental given do not.

In practice there may seem to be no significant difference between those who respond to the world *as if* it were theistically intended, and those who hold *that* it is so intended. There is, however, a basic difference between the positions that emerges under questioning. Those who entertain the former interpretation (who hold that theological understanding expresses only a way of seeing the world—looking at it and responding to it *as if* it had this or that particular character) are restricted in how they can defend their faith's attitude against challenges. They can do no more than present this attitude as consistent with what science in particular and human experience in general report to be so. Those who entertain the latter interpretation (who hold that faith's attitude to the world results from perceiving how the world actually *is*—seeing it in this or that way because that is how the world is) may, however, in principle respond to challenges to their faith's attitude in a much more robust manner. They may maintain (whether or not they can substantiate it successfully) that their attitude is based on what the real world shows fundamentally to be so. While, then, the latter consider that there is a rational justification for faith's attitude to the world, those who take the nonrealist view of theological understanding may adopt what is apparently the same attitude, and all that follows from it, but ultimately cannot justify their faith.[19] To adopt this nonrealist view of theological understanding is thus to abandon what believers may deem to be one of its key characteristics (namely, that it apprehends and appropriately responds to what fundamentally is the case in reality) and to leave faith, however heroic its stance, as an unwarranted and unwarrantable option.

3. A third nonrealist view of the game of theological understanding holds that it is a mistake to believe that there is something other than the natural, empirical world. Accordingly, it holds that references to God are not references to something that exists in some respects separately from and in relationship to the world. It denies that God is either a totally distinct entity (as in traditional theism, in which God is necessary and

unchanging while the world is contingent and changing) or a self-conscious self pervading the world (as in panentheism, in which the relationship of God to the world is in some ways akin to the relationship of the self to "its" body). In place of these models for conceiving of the relationship of God and the world, the naturalist (or radical empiricist) position maintains that theological understanding may use the word *God,* but only as a cipher for the deep structures of reality:

> Tumult and peace, the darkness and the light—
> Were all like workings of one mind, the features
> Of the same face, blossoms upon one tree,
> Characters of the great Apocalypse,
> The types and symbols of Eternity,
> Of first, and last, and midst, and without end.
>
> —William Wordsworth, "The Simplon Pass"
> (Wordsworth 1904, 186)

For the nonrealist naturalist, this "Eternity" cannot be accorded the personal attributes of self-conscious, intentional agency. Hence its corresponding form of theological understanding cannot warrant the claim that reality as a whole is fundamentally meaningful in that it expresses a purposive intention.

Such a denial is critical. While theological naturalism is concerned to cohere with the physical world, and while what is found to be the case therein suggests that the realm of nature is an order conforming to certain basic ways of proceeding (the so-called laws of nature), it is not possible to claim from this alone that the world has purpose, value, and meaning. This could follow only if there were a self–conscious agent, whose intentionality gives it purpose and whose awareness of it gives it value and meaning. The naturalist reading of theology may thus express an interpretation of the world that conforms to what scientists have discovered about it, but as a *theology* this reading fails to show that what is has a point. All that theological naturalism affirms is that what is, is. It cannot answer questions about whether what is has purpose, value, and meaning beyond the purposes, values, and meanings that we find in (and introduce into) it during our ephemeral existence. This view of theology thus seems to attempt to save theology at the cost of abandoning what may be regarded as one of its essential roles.

4. A fourth nonrealist position views theology as wholly or mainly concerned with liberating praxis while making no realist claims about the ultimate structure of reality. The theological game is not to identify, express, and draw inferences from what is found to be the ultimate and theistic character of reality. It is to identify the forms of oppression that exist in the world and the means of liberating people to achieve creative fulfillment. Inasmuch as faith is thus perceived to be practical commitment to human liberation, theology is seen as the analysis of authentic means of

liberation, and the success of those means in achieving liberation as demonstrating the validity of that theology.

In a world where oppression exists in many forms, some blatant and others subtle, there is much that is attractive about this interpretation of theological understanding. It offers hope of replacing idle speculation with directions for effecting change for good. Is the struggle only heroic, however, or can it claim to be moving things toward fulfillment that is intended and, it may be reasonably hoped, will eventually be realized? The "only heroic" is the utterly praiseworthy stance of the nonrealists who battle against the forces of oppression, knowing that each victory is only temporary and that battles to free the human spirit will never cease[20] until the end of human existence. Finally, however, no one will care, for there will be no one to remember what was done and why. Even if their convictions demean them in comparison with such heroes, theistic realists hold that the struggle is given final warrant by its being in accord with the will of God and final value in that its achievements are for ever treasured by God. If, then, people look to theological understanding to expound their faith in the ultimate value of life and to show its rational justification, the nonrealist form of theology as liberating praxis is unable to meet the latter demand. It is another attempt to salvage theology by cutting off a vital part.

5. The fifth nonrealist construction of the game of theological understanding to be mentioned translates theology into a form of ethics. Here the problems inherent in justifying a realist view of God are overcome by interpreting *God* as a cipher for the morally good. The transformation has initial plausibility in that it picks up faith's understanding of itself as requiring appropriate behavior from those who profess it. Whereas, however, realist forms of theism consider that believers love *because* God is love, and that the love of God justifies as well as demands that response, the moral nonrealist view of theological understanding considers that talking about God's love is a way of asserting that one ought to behave in a loving manner. Reference to God may pretend to give grounding to the demand of love, but analysis shows that "I believe that I should love *because* God is love" means little more than "I believe that I should love because I believe that I should love," the "little more" being that the reference to God is likely to place the affirmation in a context that gives a psychological boost to the commitment.

This attempt to salvage theological understanding through a nonrealist interpretation matches the way many people view both their own religious faith and that of others. To describe someone as being "a real Christian" generally is intended to convey the message that that person acts as Christians are expected to act, irrespective of whether such behavior is linked to actual Christian beliefs. Here again, however, a nonrealist interpretation

of theological understanding is put forward that is unable to provide any ultimate grounding for its moral position. If the morality is to be justified, it must be by *moral* forms of reasoning. Furthermore, according to this interpretation, theological understanding cannot counter the suggestion that the morality adopted is no more than a heroic stance in the face of purposeless, meaningless reality that ultimately neither treasures nor fosters such behavior. Although this nonrealist interpretation of theological understanding avoids claims that may be difficult to uphold in view of scientific insights, it succeeds only by cutting off what many hold to be a vital part of its relationship to faith.

While theological understanding is not to be wholly reduced to matters of feelings about reality, or interpretative attitudes to reality, or naturalist affirmations of the significance of empirical reality, or liberating praxis, or moral commitment, these five interpretations do identify essential parts of the complex structure of faith and its theological understanding. But just as no one part of a body, nor an aggregation of all the parts taken separately, is the living person, so theological understanding is something more than all the foregoing components. The critical missing element is the realist reference to what is actually the case. Hence, discussion of the proper nature of theological understanding has to tackle the problem of whether a significant realist theism can be affirmed in the face of what science is discovering about how the natural world works—and of the episodes of natural evil that suggest that there is no superintending reality whose intentions and responses give purpose, value, and meaning to the processes of reality.

The Need to Warrant Claims about God as Intentionally Agential

What, then, is the game of theological understanding that *should* be played if that understanding is to satisfy the task of expounding and justifying the claims of a realist theistic faith? How, in particular, should it attempt to respond to the problems posed by the findings of the natural sciences?

The key to answering this question lies in establishing a credible notion of God as an active, intentional, effective agent. Many traditional views of divine activity no longer survive critical examination. Those who thank God for the wonderful apples at a harvest festival may be expressing their delight at those apples, but any implication that what is laid on the altar is due to *God's* activity is subject to severe qualification. Human activity helped to produce the apples through genetic engineering by selective breeding and the development and use of fertilizers and (probably) protective sprays. Furthermore, evolutionary biology makes clear that it is much more plausible to hold that the original stock emerged through a series of accidents in faulty replications of DNA than through a conscious design

and implementation procedure of a divine Creator. Theists who want to affirm the significant activity of God in setting up processes of reality that constitute a whole with purpose, value, and meaning have the problem of establishing what God actually has done and continues to do to bring this about. Evolution on the planet does not seem to need references to divine agency to explain how the play of creation moved from the initial states of the solar system to where we are today.

The search for a credible notion of divine activity faces two further hurdles, one cosmic and the other particular. The cosmic hurdle is the problem of making sense of what might be meant by being a creator of a cosmos of 10^{11} galaxies, each with about 10^{11} stars in it, so far as we can now tell. Intercultural and interreligious dialogue indicates that many people still have difficulty in coming to terms with the oneness of the planet on which we live. Although the heliocentricity of Copernicus and Galileo and later discoveries of the extent of the cosmos may not be challenged, it is questionable to what extent this knowledge has been psychologically internalized. People see things from their own perspective—for there is nothing else they can do. The result is that, to a far greater degree than may be appreciated, they see things as if they are the center of everything and all else revolves around them and is there for their benefit. Furthermore, even if there is only a small chance of there being planetary systems containing elements produced by earlier supernovae at appropriate distances around suitably long-lived stars for evolutionary development to occur on them,[21] only one such system in each galaxy need exist for there to be 10^{11} places in the universe with evolutionary developments that at some time in their history might produce self-conscious beings. It is not easy to make sense of the purposive activity of God when it is on such a scale. If God enjoys and is enriched by the play of creativity in the cosmos, it is so fecund that people may well feel baffled when they try to imagine its purpose.

The particular hurdle facing credible understanding of the activity of God is one that has been raised already, namely, the problem posed by natural evil. Even if references to the activity of God connote a significant agency that can effect what happens in the world, it may still be satisfactory to explain the chance and necessity accidental structure of general evolutionary development as a result of divine delight in the play of creativity. It is not so clear, however, that this explanation shows why particular events that could be altered for good without any obvious destruction of the general ordering of the processes of reality are not so altered by God. It may be, as the Book of Job suggests, that the reasons for God's apparent noninterventions are beyond us. The problem is that it may then seem more reasonable to imply from the evidence of what happens that belief in God's effective agency expresses our desires[22] rather than describes what is actually the case. When things go well for us, it is only warrantable to

thank God for them (and so imply that to some significant extent what has happened is attributable to God's agency) if God be at least liable for some blame when things go ill for us. Theistic faith is not credible when it praises God for the good and blames others for the evil without showing who or what the actual agents are and what each was responsible for in each instance.

These comments may seem obvious and even naive. They are, however, important. Unless sense can be made of the notion of the activity of God, there may be no grounds for regarding both the world in general and its constituents in particular as having ultimate purpose, value, and meaning. It would then be more reasonable to view it as a pointless environment within which we are free to attempt to create meaningful structures whose value depends upon and is limited to human existence. On the larger scale such a view of reality is expressed in Monod's view of "the uncaring emptiness of the universe" (1972, 161) and was anticipated by Friedrich Nietzsche's description of growing awareness of the darkness and cold "breath of empty space" (1974, §125, 181) and by Jean Paul Friedrich Richter's menacing vision of the "nothingness and boundless void" (1877, 263). Richter took comfort that the vision was only a dream and that God could still be worshipped. The question is whether that belief is still possible in view of our perception of the chance character of the cosmos.

Tillich may well be correct in maintaining that all people have some faith (1957, 44–45). At least it may be justifiable to hold that all self-aware persons have some basic story by which they attempt to make sense of their experiences and guide their conduct. Freud, however, reminds us that the story we adopt may be a comforting illusion, seeking to impose on reality the character that we wish it to have rather than making sense of how it actually is (see Freud 1962). Those who find difficulty in envisaging a story that makes sense of what is found actually to be the case may try to opt for a story of a cosmic protector (a big Parent) who does look after us and knows what is best even though it may not make sense to us with our limited perspective and range of understanding. As adults, for instance, we may appreciate why parents sometimes allow unpleasant things to happen to their children (such as having an injection or being left alone to sort out a problem), although the child cannot appreciate the reason. This may be put forward as the model for understanding the divine-human relationship. But does it work? Children may trust their parents and not be overwhelmed by occasional unpleasant incidents because they have many clear instances of their parents' care for them. The problem with applying this model of justified belief to the divine is that it is not clear that there is credible evidence of acts of divine benevolence that warrants continuing trust in God and in the meaningfulness of reality when events occur that seem the opposite of benevolent.[23]

Is a Credible Natural Theology Possible?

The primary question posed by the interaction between science and religion is not, however, whether we can find positive evidence of divine action that may be held to indicate the reality of God. The question is a rather different, though related, one, namely, whether imagination can develop a story that makes sense of the notion of God having a purpose for, appreciating the values achieved in, and giving meaning to the processes of reality, including our own lives, when the scale, structure, and character of what happens in the universe is taken into account. What is wanted, in other words, is a new version of natural theology—new in that it is not trying to prove the reality of God from the natural order but is rather trying to discern a story that shows that religious faith in the reality of God, with all that this entails, can coherently embrace what we know about the world.[24]

The references to "imagination" and "story" do not mean that what is to be sought is a persuasive, reassuring fiction that can replace the comforting bedtime stories by which children are encouraged to settle down to sleep and, in a disturbingly frequent way, preachers (like electioneering politicians) console congregations by telling them fairy stories that express what they want to hear. On the contrary, what is being sought are new, maybe radically new, ways of understanding that make sense of how things actually are and can provide a rationally credible apprehension of the fundamental character of reality.

"Imagination" in this context refers to the way of advancing thought by opening it to new ways of understanding that conceive of matters in novel ways. The products of such "imaginative" activity are not necessarily fictions. They may or may not discern what is actually the case; such determination is the critical task of truth testing. What is important is that discussion not be stifled by being trapped in inherited conceptual structures. The current failure of such modes of thought in relation to science and religion is manifest in the awareness of many people—especially honest, reflective believers—of a serious gap between what faith allegedly affirms and how the world is found to be. What such people need (and presumably they include readers of this article) is a new vision that provides conceptual tools by which they may make sense both of what faith authentically affirms and of what is found to be the case in the world. It is a vision the entertainment of which will ensure that the people do not perish (see Proverbs 29:18). Imagination is the mental tool by which we escape the bounds of tradition and envisage new, liberating, stimulating, and satisfying ways of thought. Unfortunately, either because of fear of the new or because of indolence that prefers established patterns, it is a tool often left to rust unused beneath the bench of rational enquiry.

Can the desired way of understanding, a credible natural theology, be achieved? Perhaps. If it is to be achieved, however, what will emerge will probably be best understood as a kind of story. At this level of understanding, literal description may be unobtainable and certainly cannot be known to have been obtained. This does not matter. People live by metaphors and models brought together in stories. Satisfying understanding is found by identifying the appropriate story. Metaphysics and theology (that is, rational reflection on what is ultimate and necessary, and faith's apprehension of the fundamental character of reality) are accordingly to be interpreted as attempts to identify the story that embraces coherently all that has been, now is, and may be in the future. What distinguishes theological understanding is that its story not only makes sense of all but discerns that—and how—it is grounded in the divine and as such has purpose, value, and meaning.

That the result is in the form of a story should worry neither scientists nor theologians who are aware of their disciplines. They recognize that they work with models. It may, however, disturb some believers, who may worry that their grasp on faith is slippery if it is not based on a literal description of what is the case. This worry, however, may arise from something deeper than unhappiness with ostensibly epistemological difficulties. It may be the result of uncertainty about whether the story expresses something that works in practice. This worry can only be addressed through a pragmatic test, namely, asking whether adoption of the story leads to life that is creatively satisfying, liberated, and liberating.

What game, then, should be played when theological understanding considers the discoveries of the natural sciences? It is not the game of reconciling scientific understanding with what appears in the Bible, or with what the community of faith has traditionally held, or with what an alleged revelatory dogmatism asserts, or with what a priori reasoning concludes must be the case. These games may have been important for people once, but it is time to put aside such narrow ways of understanding faith and theology. On the other hand, the game to be played is not that of responding to what science declares about the world by adopting a nonrealist view of faith and theological understanding. If religious faith and theological understanding are to be credible, what they maintain about the purpose, value, and meaning of reality must be shown to make sense in terms of how we find the world to be. Natural theology that seeks to do this, especially liberal, modern (that is, enlightened) natural theology that is primarily concerned with establishing what is true, may be unfashionable. It is, however, unavoidable if the stance of faith is not to be a blind, absurd whistling in the dark but a rationally justified response to what we understand to be how things actually are.[25]

NOTES

1. By "theological understanding" is meant the product of self-conscious, rationally ordered consideration of the claims about the ultimate character of reality affirmed in religious faith and molding that faith's form of life. Although "theology" is justifiably regarded as typically second-order reflection on the first-order beliefs of religious faith, it is a widespread mistake to regard such rational consideration as limited to an essentially descriptive function and, hence, as determined by and parasitic upon the religious beliefs held in a community of faith. Theological reflection also revises and develops what is so maintained by reference to other data and by the application of such criteria as coherence, universalizability, and credibility (see Pailin 1990, 17–28).
2. See Pailin 1990 for a study of a number of these factors.
3. Rudolf Bultmann (1985, 4) described as "peculiarly split and untruthful" those whose faith was informed by one view of reality (for example, the "mythical" one of the first century) and whose practice was predominantly informed by another (for example, the "scientific" world-view of contemporary practice). While creationists who use the technologies of televangelism may be an extreme example, such schizophrenia is still widespread among the members of communities of faith.
4. See the response to the problem of evil presented toward the end of the Book of Job, when God discloses the incomprehensibility of the divine reality and Job decides to question no more.
5. Consider the hunt for the Woozle undertaken by Pooh and Piglet: when they thought they were pursuing this creature, in fact they were following their own tracks. Just as Albert Schweitzer (1954) suggests that those who sought to identify "the historical Jesus" presented self-portraits, so those who investigate belief in the pursuit of theological understanding sometimes tell us more about believers than about the mind-independent object of authentic faith.
6. The version of the anthropic principle that argues that because we are here, it was necessary that we be here, and hence that the state of the hot Big Bang must have been such that we are here, is as ultimately unexplanatory as soldiers' explanation of their state: "We're here because we're here, because we're here, because. . . ." The fact of being here is not explained; the apparent explanation ceases only when the platoon gets bored with the refrain.
7. In view of quantum indeterminacy, the "determinism" should perhaps be qualified: what is significant is that the processes are understood as either wholly determined by prior causal factors or largely so determined with a small degree of randomness in the outcome.
8. See John Hutchinson's *Moses' Principia* (1724), in which the author, on the basis of his reading of Genesis, responds to Newton by expounding what must actually have happened because this is what was declared by God to Moses. This is an extreme example, but contemporary religious creationists share its spirit.
9. These gymnastics range from attempts to use the Bible to tell scientists what is so (as in the case of Hutchinson mentioned in the previous note and Philip Gosse's view that God put fossils in the rocks "in order to tempt geologists into infidelity" [Edmund Gosse 1972, 77]) through attempts to see the "days" of creation in the Genesis narratives as geological epochs to ingenious hermeneutical arguments that conclude that, despite appearances, contemporary scientists and the biblical authors are either expressing different facets of the same truth or basically saying the same thing.
10. See Søren Kierkegaard's report of a hospital where "the patients are dying like flies" and where changing methods does not improve matters because it is the building itself that is the source of the fatal poison (Kierkegaard 1956, 139ff.). As with this and the following views of theology, what is needed is not a revision of the methods being used (new hermeneutical techniques for interpreting the Bible, for instance) but a radical reappraisal of the principles determining the practice.
11. Consider the view put forward by John Ellis (1747) or its twentieth-century (and so supposedly post-Enlightenment) expression in Karl Barth's assertion that "Theology is *ministerium verbi divini.* It is nothing more nor less" (Barth 1933, x).
12. The formal attributes of God are those that necessarily belong to the defining description of God (for example, as uncreated, omnipresent, indestructible), whereas the material attributes are those that describe what may be regarded as the personal characteristics of God (benevolent, compassionate, respectful for others, merciful, and so on).
13. See note 1.

14. Those who press the claims of theism must bear in mind that refusal to admit the truth about reality is the most profound and most insidious form of atheism. They should be careful to avoid copying the preacher who, disturbed at the effect of what he was telling people, "said soothingly, 'children, do not weep; the whole thing might be a lie'" (Kierkegaard 1956, 181). To tell fictitious fables about God to comfort people because the truth is too horrid for them to bear is to deny the reality of God.

15. For the reason for speaking of the problem of natural evil as "so–called," see Pailin 1994, 133–42.

16. The widespread sense that it is not credible to hold that individual events may make sense as "acts of God" leads increasing numbers of people to turn to the courts to find meaning in what happened by establishing that some human agent, by commission or by omission, is to blame for it. By appearing unable to accept an event as an "accident," people show themselves to be locked into a Newtonian structure of understanding.

17. Kierkegaard's complaint that the Hegelians were always promising but never finally providing the absolute system may be applicable to those professing to attain a theory of everything: either they do not mean everything or they have found (but not yet revealed) how to incorporate totally the subject in what they describe. The former is the more likely: the focus of their interest has produced a restricted view of "everything."

18. See note 1 on the relationship between religious faith, belief, and theological understanding: the view maintained in this nonrealist position tends to be the basically unsatisfactory one that considers theology to be essentially descriptive of and parasitic upon the religious beliefs held in a community of faith.

19. The claim that the attitude of faith is self-justifying is shown to be itself an unjustified claim if, once its content is grasped, questions arise about whether and why it should be adopted.

20. See Dr. Rieux's comment at the end of Albert Camus's *The Plague* (Camus 1987, 248).

21. The chance of there being extraterrestrial intelligent beings in the cosmos arguably depends on the formula $R_x \times f_g \times f_p \times f_e \times f_l \times f_i$, where R_x is the rate of the formation of stars in the cosmos; f_g is the fraction of those stars that exist long enough and are sufficiently warm for the evolution of life on planets around them; f_p is the fraction of those stars with planets; f_e is the fraction of those planets that are suitable for the evolution of life; f_l is the fraction of those planets on which life actually starts; and f_i is the fraction on which life develops into intelligent forms.

22. Freud (1962) holds that belief in divine agancy is an "illusion"—a proof of what people want to be the case.

23. I explore a possible model for understanding the notion of divine activity in a credible way in Pailin 1999.

24. For more on the notion of understanding as "story," see Pailin 1986.

25. The extent of the demand made upon the "imagination" to produce a credible "story" for natural theology may be illustrated by some figures given to a recent conference on science and religion, namely, that according to some calculations the sun will become a red giant in 5×10^9 years, stars will cease to form in 10^{12} years, small stars will have become white dwarfs in 10^{14} years, the universe will be composed of 90 percent dead stars, 9 percent black holes, and 1 percent helium and hydrogen in 10^{23} years, protons will have decayed in 10^{31} years, dead stars will have evaporated in 10^{32} years, and black holes will have evaporated in 10^{66} years. A credible view of the purposes of God as Creator needs to imagine a story that makes sense of reality as described by such figures.

References

Barth, Karl. 1933. *The Epistle to the Romans*. Trans. E. C. Hoskyns. London: Oxford Univ. Press.

Bultmann, Rudolf. 1961. *Existence and Faith*. Trans. Schubert M. Ogden. London: Hodder and Stoughton.

———. 1985. *New Testament and Mythology and Other Basic Writings*. Ed. and trans. Schubert M. Ogden. London: SCM.

Camus, Albert. 1987. *The Plague*. Trans. Stuart Gilbert. London: Folio Society.

Coleridge, Samuel Taylor. 1912. *The Poems of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*. Ed. Ernest Hartley Coleridge. London: Oxford Univ. Press.

Derham, William. 1713. *Physico-Theology: or, A Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God, from His Works of Creation*. London: W. Innys.
———. 1714. *Astro-Theology: or, A Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God, from a Survey of the Heavens*. London: W. Innys.
Ellis, John. 1747. *The Knowledge of Divine Things from Revelation, Not from Reason or Nature*. London: J. Watts.
Farley, Wendy. 1990. *Tragic Vision and Divine Compassion: A Contemporary Theodicy*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox.
Freud, Sigmund. 1962. *The Future of an Illusion*. London: Hogarth.
Gosse, Edmund. 1972. *Father and Son*. London: Folio Society.
Hume, David. [1779] 1935. *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*. Ed. Norman Kemp Smith. Oxford: Clarendon.
Hutchinson, John. 1724. *Moses' Principia*. London: J. Bettenham.
Jones, Phyllis M., ed. 1940. *Modern Verse 1900–1940*. London: Oxford Univ. Press.
Kaufman, Gordon E. 1993. *In Face of Mystery: A Constructive Theology*. Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press.
Kierkegaard, Søren. 1956. *Attack upon Christendom*. Trans. Walter Lowrie. Boston: Beacon.
Küng, Hans. 1977. *On Being a Christian*. Trans. E. Quinn. London: Collins.
Locke, John. [1690] 1975. *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. Ed. P. H. Nidditch. Oxford: Clarendon.
Monod, Jacques. 1972. *Chance and Necessity: An Essay on the Natural Philosophy of Modern Biology*. Trans. Austryn Wainhouse. London: Collins.
Niebuhr, H. Richard. 1941. *The Meaning of Revelation*. New York: Macmillan.
Nietzsche, Friedrich. 1974. *The Gay Science*. Trans. Walter Kaufmann. New York: Vintage Books.
Ogden, Schubert M. 1967. *The Reality of God and Other Essays*. London: SCM.
Pailin, David A. 1986. "Narrative, Story, and the Interpretation of Metaphysics." In *Hegel and Whitehead: Contemporary Perspectives on Systematic Philosophy*, ed. George R. Lucas Jr. Albany: State Univ. of New York Press.
———. 1990. *The Anthropological Character of Theology: Conditioning Theological Understanding*. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press.
———. 1994. *Probing the Foundations: A Study in Theistic Reconstruction*. Kampen: Kok-Pharos.
———. 1999. "The Activity of the Quadriplegic God." *Religious Studies* 35 (December): 441–60.
Paley, William. 1802. *Natural Theology, or Evidence of the Existence and Attributes of the Deity Collected from the Appearances of Nature.* London: Wilks and Taylor.
Ramsey, I. T. 1964. *Models and Mystery*. London: Oxford Univ. Press.
Ray, John. [1691] 1827. *The Wisdom of God Manifested in the Works of the Creation*. Ed. J. F. Dove. London.
Richter, Jean Paul Friedrich. 1877. *Flower, Fruit, and Thorn Pieces*. Trans. A. Ewing. London: George Bell and Sons.
Schweitzer, Albert. 1954. *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*. Trans. W. Montgomery. London: Adam and Charles Black.
Smith, John E. 1968. *Experience and God*. New York: Oxford Univ. Press.
Smith, Wilfred Cantwell. 1979. *Faith and Belief*. Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press.
Tennant, Frederick Robert. 1928. *Philosophical Theology*. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press.
———. 1932. *Philosophy of the Sciences, or The Relations between the Departments of Knowledge*. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press.
Tillich, Paul. 1953. *Systematic Theology*. Vol. 1. London: Nisbet.
———. 1957. *Dynamics of Faith*. New York: Harper.
Wittgenstein, Ludwig. 1958. *Philosophical Investigations*. Trans. G. E. M. Anscombe. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
Wordsworth, William. 1904. *The Poetical Works of Wordsworth*. Ed. Thomas Hutchinson. New ed. rev. Ernest de Selincourt. London: Oxford Univ. Press.