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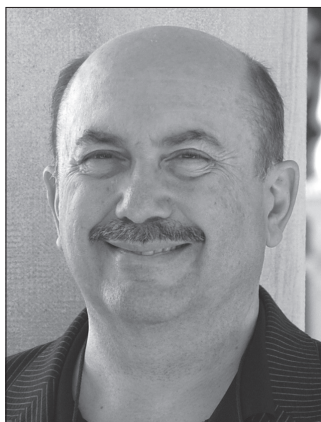
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What is Christianity? An Evangelical Catholic and Reformed View of Faith and Culture



by Eduardo Echeverria

The only strength with which Christianity can make its influence felt publicly is ultimately the strength of its intrinsic truth. This strength, though, is as indispensable today as it ever was, because man cannot survive without truth. That is the sure hope of Christianity; that is its enormous challenge to each and every one of us.¹ —Joseph Ratzinger

The Creedal and Confessional Imperative

I am a member of the American ecumenical ini-

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tiative, Evangelicals and Catholics Together (ECT).² Recently, at one of our “brain-storming” sessions regarding our next statement—“What is Christianity?”—I had the opportunity to present a short paper dealing with one approach to this question. The article before you is substantially this paper.

If we are to understand the nature of the Christian faith, i.e., what Christianity is, we need to do so in light of the teaching of the Apostle Paul, who calls us to believe with one’s heart and to confess what one believes (Rom 10: 9). The then-Lutheran theologian Jaroslav Pelikan informs us of a twofold Christian imperative—the creedal and confessional imperative—that is at the root of creeds and confessions of faith.³ Faith involves both the *fides qua creditur*—the faith *with which* one believes—and the *fides quae creditur*—the faith *which* one believes. Maximally, a biblical account of faith, according to Reformed theologian Richard Muller, involves knowledge (*notitia*), assent (*assensus*), and trust (*fiducia*).⁴ Indeed, normatively these are three elements of a single act of faith involving the whole person who commits himself or herself to God in Christ and through the power of the Holy Spirit. Minimally, however, faith involves belief, and to have a belief means that one is intellectually committed to the whole truth that God has revealed. Furthermore, faith involves holding certain beliefs to be true, explains Thomas Aquinas, because

“belief is called assent, and it can only be about a proposition, in which truth or falsity is found.”⁵ Paul Helm puts it this way: “the personal and the propositional, are interconnected, and highlight two aspects of one situation.”⁶ Moreover, the *fides quae creditur* is the objective content of truth that has been unpacked and developed in the creeds and confessions of the Church, dogmas, doctrinal definitions, and canons.

Since ECT is proposing to make a statement regarding what Christianity is, it is important to understand that the context in which that statement will be issued is drowning in “veriphobia”—the fear of truth.⁷ In modern Christianity, the normativity of creeds and confessions, not to mention doctrinal definitions and canons, as expressive of authoritative dogma that are objectively true, is a problematic one. We need to be keenly aware of that problematic when we speak of what the Christian faith is in our culture. Otherwise, our addressees might think that we are merely talking of a “faith option” rather than objectively true affirmations about reality. In this connection, Orthodox Presbyterian theologian Carl Trueman has correctly suggested a possible reason that the very idea of authoritative dogma has become problematic, namely, a rejection of “old-fashioned notions of truth and language”:

Modern culture has not really rendered creeds and confessions untrue; far less has it rendered them unbiblical. But it has rendered them implausible and distasteful. They are implausible because they are built on old-fashioned notions of truth and language. They make the claim that a linguistic formulation of a state of affairs can have a binding authority beyond the mere text on the page, that creeds actually refer to something, and that that something has significance for all of humanity.⁸

It is clear from Trueman’s description of these notions that he means a view of language that (whatever else language is) has a proper function of referring to reality by virtue of assertions that express propositions, which, if true, correspond to reality. Furthermore, according to this view, reality is what is known by a true affirmation.⁹ Significantly, then, behind the stance that some take towards truth and hence towards creeds and confessions is a rejection

of realism (both epistemic and metaphysical) and its corollary—a correspondence view of truth.

According to a realist view of truth, a proposition is true if and only if what that proposition asserts is in fact the case about objective reality; otherwise, the proposition is false. Both Bernard Lonergan and Paul Helm¹⁰ helpfully draw out the implication of excluding propositional truth and its corollary, the correspondence view of truth. Consider, for example, the idea of objective truth as something that happens to us; in other words, as hermeneutic philosopher Jens Zimmermann puts it, “truth is an event.”¹¹ This claim regarding the “truth of event” raises the question of whether events are true. As Paul Helm, for one, asks, “They happen, but are they true?”¹² “Clearly not,” he responds. Helm is right. When we ask about the matter of truth, for instance, the truth of what St. Paul asserted when he said that “God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself” (2 Cor. 5:19), we are not considering “the fact that Paul uttered *p*, that uttering *p* is a linguistic act . . . or facts about the fact of his asserting it.”¹³ Rather, we are considering the truth content of that assertion *p*, and if that assertion is true, it is then permanent truth in the realist sense such that that proposition is true because it corresponds to reality. Lonergan puts the point about truth as a matter of correspondence this way:

To deny correspondence is to deny a relation between meaning and meant. To deny the correspondence view of truth is to deny that, when meaning is true, the meant is what is so [is the case]. If there is no correspondence between meaning and meant, then [. . .] it would be a great mistake to read the dogmas as if they were saying something [about objective reality]. Either denial is destructive of the dogmas If one denies that, when the meaning is true, then the meant is what is so, one rejects propositional truth.¹⁴

The rejection of propositional truth is destructive of dogmas for the following reason. If there are no true propositions, then there are no false ones either; there are just differences of opinion and no one is wrong. For instance, the affirmation regarding the Incarnation—“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us” (John 1:14)—excludes a state of affairs in which the proposition is false. But if the

belief in the Incarnation is just a matter of opinion, it would exclude nothing because it asserts or affirms nothing. This is just a roundabout way of saying that “all truth-claims are necessarily exclusive.”¹⁵ So this statement about the Incarnation is true if and only the Word, the Son of God, became man, fully human.

The rejection of propositional revelation, which follows from the rejection of propositional truth, has resulted in a doctrinal relativism.

The denial of propositional truth is applied also to faith and revelation, eliminating the mediating role of propositions “both from God’s revelation to man and man’s faith in God.”¹⁶ The rejection of propositional revelation, which follows from the rejection of propositional truth, has resulted in a doctrinal relativism.

Creation, Fall into Sin, Redemption in Christ, and Consummation

What is the Christian faith? Pared down for my purpose here, I’d like to address this question in light of the relationship of nature and grace. Three quarters of a century past, Jacques Maritain significantly remarked regarding the question of the relation of nature and grace that it is erroneous to ignore both the distinction between nature and grace as well as their union.¹⁷ Nature has to do with the fundamental structures of reality, in particular, of human reality, in short, the deepest foundations of what God created. How has sin affected those foundational structures of creation? Has the *nature* of creation been corrupted or completely destroyed by sin? What has been called the Augustinian Principle¹⁸ affirms that the *nature* of humanity, namely, the creational structures of the world, persists in the regime of man’s fallen state. Augustine writes, “The natures in which evil exists, in so far as they are natures, are good. And evil is removed, not by removing any nature, or part of a nature but by healing and correcting that which had been vitiated and depraved.”¹⁹ The point here is that the Fall

disorders human nature but human nature itself, its deepest foundations, remained in place after the fall/sin. In other words, metaphysically speaking, what human nature lost because of the Fall was accidental, not substantial or essential to being a human being, for the Fall did not literally turn the human being into a different kind of creature. The distinction here is between substance and accident. Paul Helm appeals to this very distinction: “So there are essential features of being a human being—whatever they are—and also accidental features, those lost in the fall, and those restored in Christ.”²⁰ Indeed, Calvin himself appeals to this very distinction in his response to Albert Pighius, found in *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will*.²¹ So, the essential feature of human nature remains the same, being substantial, or primary, and hence sin is a secondary element such that it is accidental to human nature.

Shortly before his death, John Paul II, published his final book, thus leaving the Church a beautiful gift of his reflections titled *Memory and Identity*. Relevant to the question of the indivisible unity of nature and grace is the following passage from this work:

The resurrection of Christ clearly illustrated that only the measure of good introduced by God into history through the mystery of Redemption is sufficient to correspond fully to the truth of the human being. The Paschal Mystery thus becomes the *definitive measure of man’s existence in the world created by God*. In this mystery, not only is eschatological truth revealed to us, that is to say the fullness of the Gospel, or Good News. There also shines forth a light to enlighten the whole of human existence in its temporal dimension and this light is then reflected onto the created world. Christ, through his Resurrection, has so to speak “justified” the work of creation, and especially the creation of man. He has “justified” it in the sense that he revealed the “just measure” of good intended by God at the beginning of human existence. This measure is not merely what was provided by him in creation and then compromised by man through sin; it is a superabundant measure, in which the original plan finds a higher realization (cf. Gen. 3:14–15). In Christ, man is called to a new life, as son in the Son, the perfect expression of God’s glory.

So, at the core of the Christian worldview is an interlocking set of life-orienting beliefs regarding the creation, fall into sin, redemption (i.e., incarnation, passion, resurrection, and ascension), and eschatological consummation of God's plan. First, God created the world good. Given the cultural mandate to subdue and have dominion over created reality, this "goodness" extends to the work of man's hands when accomplished in the light of "the truth about ourselves and about the world." Indeed, the totality of creation, especially man who is its crown, actually manifests God's goodness, being created in the image and likeness of God. This manifestation of goodness is God's thesis, his affirmation, his yes to the creation (Gen. 1:31).

Second, all creation (i.e., nature, culture, history, society) is fallen through original sin. Human nature as a whole has lost its original harmony, and man is wounded at the very root of his being, estranged from God, from himself, and from his fellow man. His humanity exhibits the marks of being sinful, prone to sin, with sin being a violation of God's will and purpose. This sinfulness denies God's thesis and has its beginnings in Genesis 3. God's response to man's sin is yes but also no. It is yes because God, full of love, mercy, and grace, does not abandon the fallen creation. Indeed, Genesis 3:15 contains the first proclamation of the Messiah, the proto-evangelium; it is also no because God, judging man in the light of his perfect justice and holiness, is the author of the antithesis, of the sign of contradiction between good and evil, between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent.

Third, the redemption accomplished through the mystery of the Incarnation and Christ's finished work—his life, passion, death, resurrection, and ascension—abrogates the antithesis between sin and creation. Put differently, the incarnation, passion, and resurrection in Jesus Christ means that his grace restores an original good creation. As Yves Congar puts it, "the restoration or re-formation of nature is included in the redemptive plan and in the redemptive power of Jesus Christ." He adds, "This . . . implies and signifies that an agreement is in itself possible, that is a certain reciprocal ordering and a certain proportion exists between nature and grace, creational order and order of redemption, civilization and evangelization." Furthermore, "Our theol-

ogy of the relationship between nature and grace, our positions on the analogy of being and natural law, are founded on the profound identity and the reciprocal implications of the two aspects of the lordship of Christ."²² I will return to Congar's claim that "The Lordship of Christ over the world [is] exercised within the creational structures of the world,"²³ particularly as this claim bears upon the reality of the natural law.

For now, I continue with the claim that God's original thesis is reasserted and reestablished, but also, as John Paul II asserts in the above quote, enriched, fulfilled, and perfected. This redemption restores the very heart of human nature, causing the rebirth of the human self in Christ (Col. 2:13; 2 Cor. 5:17): "Christ alone, through his humanity, reveals the totality of the mystery of man . . . The key to his self-understanding lies in contemplating the divine Prototype, the Word made flesh, the eternal Son of the Father." That is, the Second Person of the Trinity is the archetype of perfected humanity. "Without the Gospel," John Paul adds, "man remains a dramatic question with no adequate answer. The correct response to the question about man is Christ, *Redemptor Hominis*." This rebirth manifests itself in the integral redemption of the whole man in Christ through the fellowship of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and with one another in them, which has been given to us in grace (Rom. 5:5). Furthermore, this redemption in Christ becomes a vision of cosmic redemption for the whole creation, including the life of culture. Indeed, God's grace in Christ restores all life to its fullness, penetrating and perfecting and transforming the fallen creation from within its own order, bringing creation into conformity with his will and purpose.

This evangelical Catholic and reforming view of faith and culture is, as Nicholas Wolterstorff rightly says, "gripped by the Colossians' vision of cosmic redemption."²⁴ Basic to this vision is the truth that the whole creation is recapitulated in Christ (see *Gaudium et spes*, no. 38). In the written Word of God, the lordship of Jesus Christ over creation and redemption is revealed (Phil. 2:11). Thus, "The Lord is the goal of human history, the focal point of the desires of history and civilization, the center of mankind, the joy of all hearts, and the fulfillment of all aspirations" (*GS*, no. 45). It follows from

this vision of cosmic redemption that Christians are called to engage in the sanctification of culture by transforming it through God's grace in Christ. In short, they are called to the work of restoring all areas of culture, indeed, all dimensions of human existence, all of creation itself, to Christ, so that "in everything he might be preeminent" (Col. 1:18), and of making them share in the redemption he accomplished, and in this way to be his agents, coworkers, for exercising his lordship in creation. As the Pontifical Council for Culture states: "[A] Christian cultural project . . . gives Christ, the Redeemer of man, center of the universe and of history, the scope of completely renewing the lives of men 'by opening the vast fields of culture to His saving power.'"²⁵ In sum, the Council explains, "the primary objective of [this] approach to culture is to inject the lifeblood of the Gospel into cultures to renew from within and transform in the light of Revelation the visions of men and society that shape cultures, the concepts of men and women, of the family and of education, of school and of university, of freedom and of truth, of labor and of leisure, of the economy and of society, of the sciences and of the arts."²⁶

God created everything good, but this whole creation has suffered the radical fall into sin, and hence it is savagely wounded and seriously disturbed. Requiring divine recreation, renewal, and restoration, creation is thus redeemed in Jesus Christ, made a new creation at its very root, and "is in principle again directed toward God and thereby wrested free from the power of Satan." God continues, even now, until the return of Christ, to work for the consummation of his plan in the renewal of the entire creation. In this restoration, we are his coworkers, agents in the struggle that God's kingdom continues to wage against the kingdom of darkness until his consummating total recreation—the new heavens and the new earth (cf. Rev. 21:1–4). This is the perspective of *Gaudium et spes* §39: "The good things—such as human dignity, brotherhood and freedom, all the good fruits of nature and of human enterprise—that in the Lord's Spirit and according to his command have spread throughout the earth, having been purified of every stain [of sin], illuminated and transfigured, belong to the Kingdom of truth and life, of holiness and grace, of justice, of

love and of peace that Christ will present to the father, *and it is there that we shall once again find them*" (emphasis added).

This, too, is a Reformed teaching. In a passage worth quoting in full from volume 4 of Bavinck's *Reformed Dogmatics*, he succinctly describes this consummation and its substantial continuity with the original creation:

All that is true, honorable, just, pure, pleasing, and commendable in the whole of creation, in heaven and on earth, is gathered up in the future city of God—renewed, re-created, boosted to its highest glory. The substance [of the city of God] is present in the creation. Just as the caterpillar becomes a butterfly, as carbon is converted into diamond, as the grain of wheat upon dying in the ground produces other grains of wheat, as all of nature revives in the spring and dresses up in celebrative clothing, as the believing community is formed out of Adam's fallen race, as the resurrection body

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is raised from the body that is dead and buried in the earth, so too, by the re-creating power of Christ, the new heaven and the new earth will one day emerge from the fire-purged elements of this world, radiant in enduring glory and forever set free from the "bondage to decay" ... [Rom. 8:21]. More glorious than this beautiful earth, more glorious than the earthly Jerusalem, more glorious even than paradise will be the glory of the new Jerusalem, whose architect and builder is God himself. The state of glory (*status gloriae*) will be no mere restoration (*restauratio*) of the state of nature (*status naturae*), but a re-formation that, thanks to the power of Christ, transforms all matter ... into form, all potency into actuality (*potential, actus*), and presents the entire creation before the face of God, brilliant in unfading splendor and blossoming in a springtime of eternal youth. *Substantially* nothing is lost.²⁷

Not only is culture, then, eschatologically oriented, but also the whole creation, which includes the creational structures of the world, ever looks forward to its consummation in Christ “to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth” (Eph. 1:10).

Christological Foundation of Natural Law—its Significance for Engaging a Religiously and Morally Pluralistic Culture

There are differences among Catholics and Evangelicals (Reformed) over the place of the natural law in an understanding of what Christianity is. Protestants such as J. Daryl Charles and Stephen Grabill, however, have recently sought to rediscover or retrieve the natural law to its rightful place in the practice of the Christian moral life.²⁸ Someone might ask, “Why natural law in a reflection on what Christianity is?” The brief answer to this question is this: In our present culture, there is a *crisis of nature*, that is, of the fundamental structures of human reality as God created them. (The recent ecumenical agreement called the Salzburg Declaration understands this crisis immensely well.²⁹) Furthermore, Sacred Scripture teaches that this world has been created in, by, and for the *Logos*, the Word of God, the Eternal Son of the Father, and that the world has life and subsistence in him. Indeed, the Son is “the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For in him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible. . . . All things were created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together” (Col. 1:15-17). The Logos is, therefore, the key of creation. Thus, orthodox Christianity has a doctrine of creation that needs reaffirming, here and now, because it is being denied. Corresponding to this notion of nature is the natural law, upon which human rights and responsibilities, human dignity, marriage and family, are grounded. The notion of natural law, as a law of God in creation in principle accessible to all men’s natural moral reason, is integral to the Christian tradition because it provides common ground for moral reasoning in a pluralistic society. Let me state some presuppositions about the natural law:

- Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of the Natural Law. He did not “come to abolish but to fulfill” the law (Mt 5:17). Grace neither abolishes nature nor leaves it untouched but rather “heals, strengthens, and leads to its full realization.” Furthermore, “As a consequence, while the natural law is an expression of the reason common to all human beings and can be presented in a coherent and true manner on the philosophical level, it is not foreign to the order of grace. The demands of the natural law remain present and active in the various theological stages of salvation history through which humanity passes.”³⁰
- Given the Augustinian Principle, then, general revelation, which is typically understood to mean God’s self-revelation in and through the works of creation (Rom 1: 19-20), also includes the creational structures of the world: “Creation itself appears as the act by which God structures the entire universe by giving it a law.”³¹ God sustains these structures by virtue of his common grace in the fallen conditions of the world, so that ontically they still have validity for all men, but also Christ’s redemptive and transformative Lordship is exercised within these structures.
- Despite the noetic influences of sin upon human understanding and reason and man’s nature, the restraining force of God’s common grace is such that sin has not taken away all knowledge of the natural law or that sin has resulted in a loss of man’s created dynamisms and finalities. In other words, man still retains, in principle, the capacity of moral discernment and hence the ability to know naturally certain moral precepts, that certain kinds of actions are good, others evil, first principles of morality, and fundamental inclinations and their corresponding goods, in short, the goods of human flourishing. There is a variety of explanatory frameworks purporting to provide a justification of the concept of natural law.³²
- Regarding the matter of *grounding* of morality and law, the natural law is always defined

by Thomas in reference to the eternal law: “It should be said that the natural law is a participation of the eternal law, and therefore endures without change owing to the unchangeableness and perfection of divine reason.”³³ Thomas does not hold that natural law is grounded in, rather than known by, human reason; otherwise, human reason would subvert the metaphysical order laid out in the *Summa*. In other words, while many things are known from the bottom up, as it were, they are not *grounded* in this way. Furthermore, metaphysics of theism is not something that may or may not be considered an “add-on” or a “plus factor” stuck onto an ethics or law presumed to be all it should be in itself.

There are differences among Catholics and Evangelicals (Reformed) over the place of the natural law in an understanding of what Christianity is.

- Furthermore, human reason’s natural light is not autonomous: “The Logos who shines in the world must also let his light shine in our consciousness. That is the light of reason, the intellect, which, itself originating in the Logos, discovers and recognizes the Logos in things.”³⁴ Bavinck makes an allusion here to St. Thomas’ account of the “light that, originating in God, shines in our own intellect”: “God is the light of reason in which, by which, and through which all things that shine so as to be intelligible, shine.” Man’s reason is that divine light, argues Bavinck, but “it is not itself the divine logos, but it participates in it.” As St. Thomas puts it, the natural light of human reason “is nothing else than a participated likeness of the uncreated light.”³⁵ Adds Bavinck, “To be (*esse*), to live (*vivere*), and to understand (*intelligere*) is the prerogative of God in respect of his being (*per essentiam*), ours in respect of participation (*per participationem*).”³⁶

- Moreover, of particular importance here for understanding the mistaken rationalistic interpretation of natural theology or natural law is the assumption that “truth or reality ought to be accessible irrespective of the character and state of mind of the aspirant to truth.”³⁷ In other words, “that is an assumption of modern scientific inquiry—that the truth is simply available for discovery, given sufficient ingenuity and the careful application of the appropriate techniques, and that the *dispositions and moral character of the inquirer are entirely irrelevant*.”³⁸ This, too, was Pius XII’s view in his 1950 Encyclical *Humani Generis*. He does not leave the knowing subject out of account in arriving at the knowledge of God. He states that the aspirant to truth must exercise self-surrender and self-abnegation because the human intellect is hampered by, for example, evil passions arising from original sin, prejudice or passion or bad faith that fuels the resistance against the evidence. In particular, Pius also rejects the charge of intellectualism against catholic philosophy “for regarding only the intellect in the process of cognition, while neglecting the function of the will and the emotions.”³⁹ He dismisses this charge: “never has Christian philosophy denied the usefulness and efficacy of good dispositions of the soul for perceiving and embracing moral and religious truths. In fact, it has always taught that the lack of these dispositions of good will can be the reason why the intellect, influenced by the passions and evil inclinations, can be so obscured that it cannot see clearly.”⁴⁰ Furthermore, Pius adds, looking back to Aquinas, “that the intellect can in some way perceive higher goods of the moral order, whether natural or supernatural, inasmuch as it experiences a certain ‘connaturality’ with those goods, whether this ‘connaturality’ be purely natural, or the result of grace; and it is clear how much even this somewhat obscure perception can help the reason in its investigations.”⁴¹
- The Natural Law gives Christians a clear advantage in the public square today, especially, because we live in a culture where there is a

three-fold crisis of truth, reason's truth-attaining capacity, and nature. By a crisis of nature I mean that the fundamental structures of human reality as God created them are rejected. Corresponding to this notion of nature is the natural law, upon which human rights and responsibilities, and human dignity, are grounded. The natural law may be appealed to in four principal contexts. First, our culture manifests a commitment to scientism and relegates the moral life to moral subjectivism or cultural relativism. In response, proponents of the natural law insist on human reason's truth-attaining capacity to grasp "the ethical message inscribed in the actual human being"⁴² and to know in their main lines the fundamental norms of just action in conformity with the nature and dignity of man." Second, given this culturally dominant commitment of moral subjectivism and cultural relativism, proponents of the natural law insist on the "natural and objective character of the fundamental norms that regulate social and political life In particular, the democratic form of government is intrinsically bound to stable ethical values, which have their source in the requirements of natural law and thus do not depend on the fluctuations of the consent of a numerical majority." Third, given the attempt by a thinly-disguised totalitarianism of secularism to privatize religious liberty and hence to exclude believers from public discourse, we are left with a "naked public square" (to borrow a well-known phrase from Richard John Neuhaus). The interventions of Christians in public life for the common good in light of natural law is particularly important on subjects such as "the rights of the oppressed, justice in international relations, the defense of life, from conception to natural death, of marriage and family life, of religious freedom, and the freedom of education." Fourth, abuse of power, totalitarianism, and legal positivism reinforce relativism. But "the Church recalls that civil laws do not bind in conscience when they contradict natural law, and asks for the acknowledgment of the right to conscientious objection, as well as the duty of disobedience in the name of obedience to a higher law."⁴³

In sum, the notion of natural law, as a law of God in creation, is in principle accessible to men's natural moral reason, and is integral to Catholic (and Reformed!⁴⁴) social teaching because it provides common ground for moral reasoning in a pluralistic society.

Endnotes

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 17. Maritain states, "There is one error that consists in ignoring [the] distinction between nature and grace. There is another that consists in ignoring their union," *Clairvoyance de Rome*, 222. Cited in De Lubac, "Apologetics and Theology," in *Theological Fragments*, Translator Rebecca Howell Balniski (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1989), 91-104, and at 103n28.
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 19. St. Augustine, *City of God*, Book XIV, Chapter XI, online: <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/120114.htm>.
 20. Helm, *Faith, Form, and Fashion*, 28.
 21. See *Bondage and Liberation of the Will*, 2.263 (at n. 58), 264 (at nn. 63, 65), 284 (at n. 213), 290 (at n. 259); 4.331 (at n. 45); 5.361 (at n. 100); 6.381 (at n. 59). See also, G.C. Berkouwer, *Wederkomst van Christus*, I (Kampen: Kok, 1961), 279. Translated by James van Oosterom as *The Return of Christ* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972), 225: "Reformed theology has been particularly inclined to walk this road [of distinguishing substance and accident]. Calvin, for example, in his commentary on 2 Peter 3:10, distinguishes between substance and quality. The cleansing of heaven and earth 'so that they may be fit for the kingdom of Christ' is not a matter of annihilation, but a judgment in which something will remain. The things will be consumed 'only in order to receive a new quality, while their substance remains the same'. According to Bavinck, the annihilation of substance is an impossibility, but the world, her appearance laid waste by sin, will vanish. There will not be a new, second creation, but a re-creation of what exists, a renaissance. Substantially, nothing will be lost." For Bavinck, see note 23 below.
 22. Yves Congar, *Jesus Christ*, translated by Luke O'Neil (New York: Herder and Herder, 1966), 176.
 23. *Ibid.*, 168.
 24. Nicholas Wolterstorff, "Keeping Faith: Talks for the New Faculty at Calvin College," *Occasional Papers from Calvin College* 7, no. 1 (February 1989).
 25. Pontifical Council for Culture, May 23, 1999, "Towards a Pastoral Approach to Culture," §§3, 6. Online: http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/cultr/documents/rc_pc_cultr_doc_03061999_pastoral_en.html.
 26. *Ibid.*, §25.
 27. *Gereformeerde Dogmatiek*, IV (Kampen: Kok, 1901), 702. ET: John Bolt, ed., *Reformed Dogmatics*, vol. 4, *Holy Spirit, Church, and New Creation*, translated by John Vriend (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 720; see also editor's note, 697.
 28. Stephen Grabill, *Rediscovering the Natural Law in Reformed Theological Ethics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006); and J. Daryl Charles, *Retrieving the Natural Law: A Return to Moral First Things* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008). See also, David VanDrunen, *Natural Law and the Two Kingdoms: A Study in the Development of Reformed Social Thought* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010) and Robert C. Baker and Roland Cap Ehlke, eds., *Natural Law: A Lutheran Reappraisal* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2011).
 29. In Salzburg, Austria, last September 6, 2015, a historic ecumenical Congress organized by the (Protestant) International Christian Network (Internationale Konferenz Bekennender Gemeinschaften) met to consider current cultural threats to the human person's created nature, and a plan for responding to them. The most significant thing about this ecumenical gathering of Protestants and Catholics is its unanimous approval, after prayer and consultation, of a document called the "Salzburg Declaration: Current Threats to Human Creatureliness and Their Overcoming, Life According to the Creator's Will" (<http://www.ikbg.net/de/aktuelles.php>). The participants expressed concern that while the ecology of the environment is well developed the same cannot be said for the "ecology of man." See my brief review of this document: <http://www.oecumene.nl/nieuws-blogs/blogs/1162-an-ecumenical-ecology-of-man>.
 30. International Theological Commission, 2009, "In Search of a Universal Ethics: A New Look at the Natural Law," §101. Online: http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti_documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20090520_legge-naturale_en.html.
 31. *Ibid.*, §23.
 32. Most recently, by two Catholics, Matthew Levering, *Biblical Natural Law: A Theocentric and Teleological Approach* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008); and R. J. Snell, *The Perspective of Love: Natural Law in a New Mode* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2014). Of course, there are also the many publications of J. Budziszewski on natural law, including his recent book, *Commentary on Thomas Aquinas' Treatise on Law*.
 33. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologia* I-II, q. 93, a. 2, resp.

34. Bavinck, *Gereformeerde Dogmatiek* I, 207 [233].
35. St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* I, q. 79, a.5, Vol. 11.
36. Bavinck, *Gereformeerde Dogmatiek* I, 205 [232].
37. John Cottingham, *The Spiritual Dimension, Religion, Philosophy and Human Value* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 139.
38. Ibid. Italics added.
39. *Humani Generis*, §33.
40. Ibid.
41. Ibid.
42. Benedict XVI, "Address to the Participants in the International Congress on Natural Moral Law," Monday, February 12, 2007. Online: http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2007/february/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20070212_pul.html.
43. "In Search of a Universal Ethics," §35.
44. For relevant literature see note 28. See also, Herman Bavinck, *Christelijke Wereldbeschouwing*, Tweede Herziene Druk (Kampen: J.H. Kok, 1913), III, "Worden en Handelen, 68-106, particularly 70, 80-87; idem, "Ethics and Politics," in *Essays on Religion, Science, and Society*, Translators Harry Boonstra and Gerrit Sheeres, General Editor, John Bolt (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 261-278, and 270-272. Early Herman Dooyeweerd was a proponent of a Calvinist idea of natural law. See his 1925 essay, "Calvinism and Natural Law," in *Essays in Legal, Social, and Political Philosophy* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1997), 3-38. This essay was translated by A. Wolters.