

TIME, TRANSCENDANCE, AND THEODICY

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Judeo-Christians know that there is one God who created all things, but beyond that there are ever so many questions—some legitimate and some silly.

A silly question is, “Who created God?” All philosophies must begin with something—all reasoning starts with premises that cannot be reached by reason, all explanations resort to chance, necessity, and/or design which themselves are unexplainable.¹ The unanswerable philosophical question is: Why is there something and not nothing? All explanation begins with something.

But then there are lesser questions like, Does God exist outside of time? Can God defy logic? Does God transcend reality? If God were evil would that make evil good?

I wish to address some of these questions, not as a philosopher or theologian, but more as a devil’s advocate. It is commonly assumed that God exists outside of time, yet few ever ask what this might mean. It is assumed that God is utterly transcendent—omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent—yet if we’re not careful such efforts to exalt God actually conspire to diminish God. And they make reconciling God’s goodness with the evil in the world next to impossible.

Time

Augustine reasoned that time is a feature of the physical creation—today we might say it emerges from matter—and therefore there is no time in God’s immutable realm.

Augustine was no fool, and though we may disagree with him we can still respect his intellect. Augustine asked, “What was God doing before He made heaven and earth?”²

*At si cuiusquam volatilis sensus vagatur
per imagines retro temporum et te, deum
omnipotentem et omnicreantem et
omnitentem, caeli et terrae artificem,
ab opere tanto, antequam id faceres, per
innumerabilia saecula cessasse miratur,
evigilet atque attendat, quia falsa
miratur.*

But if the roving thought of any one should wander through the images of bygone time, and wonder that You, the God Almighty, and All-creating, and All-sustaining, the Architect of heaven and earth, for innumerable ages refrained from so great a work before You would make it, let him awake and consider that he wonders at false things.

¹ Materialist philosophy, completely regnant in the modern academy, disallows design, for which see Monod (1972). Materialism, however, is now being challenged by Intelligent Design. See, for example, Dembski and Wells (2007). Two ID websites of interest are <http://www.discovery.org/csc/> and <http://www.arn.org/>.

² *Quid faciebat deus antequam faceret caelum et terram?* Augustini Confessionum 11. Text available on line at <http://www.thelatinlibrary.com/augustine/conf11.shtml>, and an English translation can be found at <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/110111.htm>.

If God has been working for an eternity, why is it, we might ask, are we only to this point? Couldn't God by now have gotten further than this? Remember—forever is forever. With forever to accomplish his purposes, why does the world still suffer to achieve those purposes? When Jesus said (John 5:17), "My Father worketh hitherto," surely he couldn't have meant that his Father had been working for a past eternity.

William Lane Craig has popularized a similar thinking with his *Kalam Cosmological Argument*.³ Thus he quotes Sir Isaac Newton who disagreed with Augustine (Craig 2001):

He [God] is eternal and infinite . . . ; that is, his duration reaches from eternity to eternity; his presence from infinity to infinity He is not eternity and infinity, but eternal and infinite; he is not duration or space, but he endures and is present. He endures forever, and is everywhere present; and, by existing always and everywhere, he constitutes duration and space. Since every particle of space is always, and every indivisible moment of duration is *everywhere*, certainly the Maker and Lord of all things cannot be *never* and *nowhere*.

Leibnitz, as expected, disagreed, asking again Augustine's query: "Why, if He has endured through an infinite time prior to creation, did not God create the world sooner?"⁴

History so far has not been kind to Newton,⁵ for Einstein supposedly overthrew Newton's conception of space and time.⁶ Thus whereas Newton saw time and space as "emanative effects" of God's existence,⁷ today they are seen as derivative of the material cosmos.

But what might this mean? It means that God does not do anything until he steps into our realm. In God's own realm he doesn't do anything because all doing occurs in time and there is no time for him. And so we dispense with one problem (What has God been doing for all eternity?) and create another: If there is no time in God's realm then God is not first and foremost a Creator, an Agent, a Person.

Thus God in many ways becomes the ontological deity of the Greek philosophers—a kind of template to an emergent reality.⁸ What they have done, let me suggest, is to

³ See Craig (2000).

⁴ From Craig (2001).

⁵ I sometimes wonder if perhaps Newton's religious sensibilities might not arouse prejudice on both sides of the materialist - theist divide. On the one hand Newton's infatuation with the Scriptures embarrasses the materialist, and on the other hand his rejection of Christian orthodoxy cannot please the Christian sectarian. Newton's vast religious writing was deemed to be of so little value in his home country that much of it now resides in the library of Hebrew University in Jerusalem. See <http://www.jnul.huji.ac.il/dl/mss/newton/>.

⁶ See, for example, Misner et al (1973).

⁷ See Craig (2001).

⁸ Or the source of the flickering shadow that is this world, as in Plato's allegory of the cave in Book VII of the *Republic* (Πολιτεία).

mistake the word (*λόγος*) in John 1:1 for God⁹ as also Plato's realm of eternal forms which lies beyond time:¹⁰

ἡμέρας γὰρ καὶ νύκτας καὶ μῆνας καὶ
ἐνιαυτούς, οὐκ ὄντας πρὸν οὐρανὸν γενέσθαι,
τότε ἀμα ἐκείνῳ συνισταμένῳ τὴν γένεσιν
αὐτῶν μηχανᾶται ταῦτα δὲ πάντα μέρη
χρόνου, καὶ τό τ' ἦν τό τ' ἔσται χρόνου
γεγονότα εἰδη, ἀ δὴ φέροντες λανθάνομεν
ἐπὶ τὴν ἀίδιον οὐσίαν οὐκ ὄρθως.

For there were no days and nights and months and years before the heaven was created, but when he constructed the heaven he created them also. They are all parts of time, and the past and future are created species of time, which we unconsciously but wrongly transfer to the eternal essence

I think it likely that most moderns who so readily say that God is “outside of time” are thinking that God resides in some alternate “time frame” (such as popularized in science fiction). But, no, the theologians generally deny that for God there is anything even analogous to time nor anything that occurs in time.

Motion occurs in time. Therefore God does not move.

Change occurs in time. Therefore God does not change.

Learning occurs in time. Therefore God does not learn.

Thinking occurs in time. Therefore God does not think.

Speaking occurs in time. Therefore God does not speak.¹¹

Deciding occurs in time. So if God enters time from outside of time, how is this possible if there is no time in which to do the deciding and entering?

If God has exhaustive foreknowledge (i.e., he cannot learn but rather knows all that ever was, is, or will be), then he does not decide to enter time, rather something from outside must decide to read the divine template and play it in the realm of time. It's as if the DNA were “God” to the cell wherein something outside the DNA decides when to read and follow its recipe.

Israel did not reason its way to an abstract deity, rather the Bible has it that man's Maker found Israel:

⁹ John 1:1, καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος ‘and the word was God’, can be understood as saying that God's word/law is judge (i.e., God), as in John 10:34-36; 12:48. It need not argue for the divine simplicity.

¹⁰ From the *Timaeus*, on Time (*Χρόνος*), 37e, translation by Benjamin Jowett. Available on line at <http://www.ellopos.net/elpenor/physis/plato-timaeus/default.asp>.

¹¹ The question of the biblical God is addressed in Wolterstorff (1995:95): “The writers of these scriptures repetitively applied the language of speaking to God. So one aspect of our question is whether, understanding that language literally, they could have been right about that. Or was their application of such language to God only metaphorically true at best, and misguided at worst?”

- ✓ Deuteronomy 32:9-10—"For the LORD's portion *is* his people; Jacob *is* the lot of his inheritance. He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye."
- ✓ Hosea 9:10—"I found Israel like grapes in the wilderness; I saw your fathers as the firstripe in the fig tree at her first time ..."
- ✓ Hosea 11:1—"When Israel *was* a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt."

And after the liberation from Egypt there was the awesome encounter with God at Sinai (Deuteronomy 5):

כִּי מֵכָל־בָּשָׂר 26 For who *is there of* all flesh,
אֲשֶׁר שָׁמַע קֹל אֱלֹהִים חַיִם that hath heard the voice of the living God
מִזְבֵּחַ מִתְוֹךְ־הַאֲשָׁר speaking out of the midst of the fire,
כִּמְנוּ נִיחַן as we *have*, and lived?

The emphasis in Scripture is not on some abstraction but on God as a *Living God*.¹² Jesus, for example, argued for the resurrection on this basis (Mat 22:31-32): "But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying [Ex 3:6], I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living."

Part of the *kalam argument*,¹³ at least as I understand it, is that an infinite sequence of events cannot—by definition—ever be traversed: therefore there does not exist a past eternity. And therefore the universe had a beginning, and something from outside of time was its creator.

If so, then is this not truly Plato's realm of eternal forms and not the Hebrew God of history? If God simply IS but does not BECOME, then God is not first and foremost a Living God in the biblical sense.

Is it then that God in his essence is not the Living God pictured in Scripture, but that he is such when he is projected into our world? If this is so then in what way are we created in God's image and likeness? Is it only in the image of his projection and not in any way a likeness of his essence? Why then do we not say that God is projected into our world *in our image*?

¹² The phrase occurs variously, **מֵכָל־חַיִם** in 1Samuel 17:26, 36; Jeremiah 10:10; 23:36; **אֲלֹהִים חַיִם** in 2Kings 19:4, 16; Isaiah 37:4, 17; **אֱלֹהִים חַיִם** in Joshua 3:10; Psalms 42:3[2]; 84:3[2]; Hosea 2:1[1:10]; **אֱלֹהִים חַיִם** in the Aramaic of Daniel 6:21[20], 27[26]; and in the Greek as ὁ Θεὸς ὁ ζῶν in Matthew 16:16, etc., etc.

¹³ Craig (2000).

And is it logical that only abstract verities are eternal—not God as a person? The realm of absolutes encompasses the truths of mathematical realism,¹⁴ the natural law of the theologian,¹⁵ the logic, ethics and aesthetics of the tripartite categorical distinctions of Charles Sanders Peirce,¹⁶ all principles that have to do with a dynamic world of motion, cause and effect, consciousness and agency. If there were nothing going on ... nothing happening ... what would these eternal forms be for?

Modern physics, at least the Einsteinian genre, seems to be an outgrowth of this theology, for in its deterministic “block time” there is no “now.” Events are simply located within the four dimensions of space/time. “Now” is when free wills determine future contingencies—but this is all an illusion called “subjective time” by theorists in the know.¹⁷

If our grand scientific theories need overhauled, so also, I would argue, do the theological. And indeed there is a growing challenge to the classical theological approach to time. *Open Theism*,¹⁸ which argues that the future is open for God, presumes *presentism*,¹⁹ which says that only the present exists, that the past is past and the future hasn’t happened yet from any perspective. If the open theists are correct then there really is a “now”—even for God.

I’m not sure what is meant in Hebrews 4:12, “For the word of God *is* quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” But I would say that both soul and spirit are fundamental: *spirit* which relates to the realm of eternal forms, and *soul* which is the center of consciousness and free will and without which the spirit (those eternal forms) could not be instantiated in matter. This realm of spirit or wisdom is pictured as co-eternal with God in the book of Proverbs (See Prov 8:22-31).²⁰

¹⁴ Hersh (1997); Byl (2001).

¹⁵ Budziszewski (2004).

¹⁶ Becker (2001:P-W:1287).

¹⁷ The Big Bang may be seen as the convergence of science and theology (Jastrow 1978), but if it has empirical support, this may not be as solid as its acceptance in the popular culture—this at least according to Berlinski (1998). Atheists have preferred a steady state model (2Peter 3:4), but even if such turns out to be the better theory, our Universe is nevertheless a dynamic place where creation is on going. Our planet has not always been here and materialistic Darwinism offers no coherent explanation for its origin and the origin and development of the life upon it.

¹⁸ Especially as championed by Boyd (1997, 2000, 2001, 2003).

¹⁹ As argued by Wolterstorff (1995, 2001), Rhoda (2007, 2008, 2009) and Rhoda et al (2006). See also Bourne (2006).

²⁰ See also Dor-Shav (2005). *Spirit* (רוּחַ – πνεῦμα – *spiritus*) is everywhere associated with understanding, wisdom, knowledge, truth, information, language (Ex 28:3; 31:3; 35:31; Deut 34:9; Isaiah 11:2-3; Job 20:3; 32:8; John 14:17; 15:26; 16:13; 1John 4:6; 1Cor 2:9-12; Eph 1:13; 2Thess 2:13; etc.) and *soul* (נפשׁ – ψυχή – *anima*) with consciousness and free will (Lev 4:1; 5:1; 17:11; Deut 14:26; 1Sam 2:16; 20:4; 1Kings 11:37; Ezekiel 18:4, 20; Prov 8:36; 13:4; 21:10; Job 23:13; Mat 10:28; 26:38; Luke 12:23; 21:19; Acts 2:43; Heb 10:38; etc.). God also has a spirit (Gen 1:2) and a soul (Ps 11:5), and if he doesn’t have a body why did he deceive Moses into believing that he was showing him his back parts (Ex 33:23)? And if he has no face why does he say (Ex 33:20), “Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live.”

Transcendence

The first word of Genesis, בָּרָאשִׁית *bərē'shit*, is a construct noun and thus does not mean ‘in the beginning’ (as in some absolute sense) but rather ‘in the beginning of ...’ But the beginning of what? That is the puzzle, traditionally (within Judaism) interpreted as ‘in the beginning of the Torah and the Covenant—in the beginning of Adam/Israel/Messiah. Genesis is not easy to understand—rather it cries out, “Interpret me!”²¹ The doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo* (i.e., that God did not create from preexistent matter) was reasoned to by theologians—it is nowhere explicit in Scripture.²²

Why should the *material* of creation be so important? It is the *design* that is *ex nihilo*. It is not where God gets the material—it is that God can invent new things. God is an on-the-scene, here-and-now Designer. One of the most profound expressions of creation is in Genesis 2:7 where God is pictured as a potter (צָר – cf. Isaiah 64:8):

וַיַּצְאֵר יְהוָה אֶל־הָיָם אֶת־חָדָם
עַפְرֵת מִרְדָּךְ אָדָם
וַיַּפְחֹד בָּאָפְיוֹ נֶשֶׁמֶת חַיִם
וַיְהִי הָאָדָם לְבָשָׂר חַיָּה:

And the LORD God formed man
of the dust of the ground,
and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life;
and man became a living soul.

It has long been my suspicion that theology played a large role in birthing modernism with its agnosticism and consequent secular humanism. By making God ever more transcendent, God becomes indistinguishable (as already suggested above) from Plato’s realm of timeless forms. Paul Johnson sees this as a more or less natural outgrowth of monotheism: “Indeed monotheism itself can be seen as a milestone on the road which leads people to dispense with God altogether.”²³ Or as Alan Dershowitz puts it: “The

It also says that (John 4:24), “God is a Spirit [πνεῦμα ὁ Θεός]” ... and then there are Paul’s enigmatic words in 1Corinthians 15:

44 σπείρεται σῶμα ψυχικόν, ἐγείρεται σῶμα πνευματικόν. εὶς ἔστιν σῶμα ψυχικόν, ἔστιν καὶ πνευματικόν.	44 It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.
45 οὕτως καὶ γέγραπται, ἐγένετο ὁ πρῶτος ἀνθρώπος ἀδὰμ εἰς ψυχὴν ζῶσαν· ὁ ἑσχάτος ἀδὰμ εἰς πνεῦμα ζωοποιοῦν.	45 And so it is written [Gen 2:7], The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was <i>made</i> a quickening spirit.

²¹ Thus Rashi comments:

בָּרָאשִׁית בָּרָא
אֵין הַפְּקָרָא הַזֶּה אָנוּמָר אֲלֹא דָרְשָׁנוּ
כְּמָוֹשֶׁבֶת שְׁוֹרוֹתָה רְבוּתֵינוּ זְכוּרָנוּ לְבָרָכה
בְּשִׁבְלֵל הַתּוֹרָה שְׁנוּקָרָאת
נְאָשִׁית קָרְכוֹ ... “In the beginning of ... he created”
This verse isn’t saying anything but, “Interpret me!”
As the rabbis of blessed memory interpreted it,
for the sake of the Torah which is called (Prov 8:22),
“the beginning of his way” ...

²² May (1994) traces the history of *creatio ex nihilo* as a post-biblical doctrine, and Oord (2005) argues against the doctrine on biblical and logical bases. For a Jewish debate on the subject see Goldstein (1984, 1987) and Winston (1986). Copan (1996) and Copan and Craig (2004) provide a defense of the orthodox Christian view, and Copan and Craig (2002) criticize the Mormon approach. For a Mormon response see Ostler (2005).

²³ Johnson (1987:585).

progression from one God to an ‘unknowable force’ and then to ‘nature’ has, in fact, been part of the history of religion.” Dershowitz even questions the validity of monotheism: “Monotheism may be an advance in the atheist’s view—in the sense that it can be seen as part of a progression from many gods, to few gods, to one god, and eventually to no god. But to religious people, it should be neutral—in the sense that it should not matter that other religious people believe in a different god or gods. One God is—arguably though not inherently—a more abstract concept than many gods. But why is abstraction a particular virtue in religion?”²⁴

The Bible itself supports monotheism,²⁵ yet Dershowitz makes a good point. The biblical God is not presented in an abstract way—that was the contribution of the theologians. It is called the *divine simplicity* (I think of it as theological reductionism), the notion that God has no parts, that he is identical with his properties (omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, logic, etc.). The reason for this doctrine is to equate God with the Platonic realm and thus get around it being independent of God and thus outside his control. Alvin Plantinga has criticized this view saying that God then would be only a property and not a Person.²⁶

If God is identical with each of his properties, then each of his properties is identical with each of his properties, so that God has but one property. This seems flatly incompatible with the obvious fact that God has several properties; he has both power and mercifulness, say, neither of which is identical with the other. In the second place, if God is identical with each of his properties, then, since each of his properties is a property, he is a property—a self-exemplifying property. Accordingly God has just one property: himself. This view is subject to a difficulty both obvious and overwhelming. No property could have created the world; no property could be omniscient, or, indeed, know anything at all. If God is a property, then he isn’t a person but a mere abstract object; he has no knowledge, awareness, power, love or life. So taken, the simplicity doctrine seems an utter mistake. (Plantinga 1980:47)

A theological alternative, as Plantinga goes on to show, is “nominalism”—the notion that the Platonic world does not exist—that abstract concepts such as numbers are but words and not real—and thus God is limited by nothing. The Scriptures would disagree—as in Proverbs 8:

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| כְּבָר יְהוָה קָנָנִי רַאשֵּׁית צְרָפֹן:
קָדָם מִפְעָלָיו מָאֹז:
כֹּגֶד מְעוּלָם נִפְכָּתִי
מֵרָאשׁ מִקְדָּמִי־אַרְצִי: | 22 The LORD possessed me in the beginning of his way,
before his works of old.
23 I was set up from everlasting,
from the beginning, or ever the earth was. |
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Either way God loses—either he cannot speak (a la the divine simplicity) or his words convey no wisdom (a la nominalism). But what is more central to the God of the Bible

²⁴ Dershowitz (1991:183).

²⁵ See Deut 4:35, 39; 6:4; 1Kings 8:60; Isaiah 42:8; 45:5, 6, 14, 18, 21, 22; 46:9; Zech 14:9; Mal 2:10; Mark 12:29; John 17:3; 1Cor 8:4, 6; Eph 4:6; etc.

²⁶ There are, of course, statements such as (John 4:24), “God is spirit [πνεῦμα ὁ Θεός]”, and (1John 4:16), “God is love [οὐ Θεὸς ἀγάπη ἐστίν]”, but this should not be construed to say that this is all that God is.

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y—abstracting away any body for God, with “... organs of speech mentioned [in scripture] with a view to indicating the overflow of the intellect toward the prophets ...”²⁸ In other words there was no dynamic Speaker atop Sinai—just a transference of eternal verities into the mind of Moses. Thus the Rambam’s third principle of faith:

אָנָּי מַאֲמִין בְּאֱמֹנוֹת שֶׁלְّהָ

שְׁהַבּוֹרָא וְתִבְרֵךְ שְׁמוֹ אֵינוֹ גָּוף

וְלֹא יִשְׂיַגְהוּ מִשְׁׁגֵּי הָגָוף

וְאֵין לוֹ שׁוֹם דְּמִין כָּלָל.

I believe in complete faith
that the Creator, Blessed be His Name, has no body,
and the attributes of the body do not attribute to him,
and there is no resemblance of him at all.

And thus writes Kellner (2006): “Maimonides succeeded in convincing almost all Jews that the God of Judaism is entirely incorporeal. Given the dramatic anthropomorphism of the Bible and rabbinic literature this was no mean feat.” But bodiless or not God still must act in time in order to speak—at least according to Wolterstorff (1995:117):

So God must act if God is to speak. That is to say, God must causally bring about events *generative* of divine discourse. Now in our century there has been a veritable assault on the notion of God intervening in history. Ironically, certain theologians have been in the vanguard of this assault. Where once theologians saw it as their calling to defend not just the possibility but the actuality of divine intervention against the doubters, now a good many see it as their calling to defend the improbability if not the impossibility against the affirmers.

Now consider for a moment the Platonic realm as succinctly put in Hersh (1997:11):

Platonism says mathematical objects are real and independent of our knowledge. Space-filling curves, uncountably infinite sets, infinite-dimensional manifolds—all the members of the mathematical zoo—are definite objects, with definite properties, known or unknown. These objects exist outside physical space and time. They were never created. They never change. By logic’s law of the excluded middle, a meaningful question about any of them has an answer, whether we know it or not. According to Platonism a mathematician is an empirical scientist, like a botanist. He can’t invent, because everything is already there. He can only discover. Our mathematical knowledge is objective and unchanging because it’s knowledge of objects external to us, independent of us, which are indeed changeless.

But this eternal realm is not all—there is still the need for the *agency* of God. Thus writes Byl (2001) citing Plantinga (1980),

Abstract objects of logic and mathematics are ideas in the mind of God. Although God has no control over these abstract necessarily existing ideas or properties, they pose no threat to God in any way. They are not agents that oppose God but, on the contrary, they depend on God to affirm their existence. Plantinga writes:

“According to Kronecker God created the natural numbers and men created the rest
... Kronecker was wrong on two counts. God hasn’t created the numbers; a thing is

²⁷ Thus the rabbinical (*Pirqe Abot* 5:1), ‘In ten utterances was the world created’ [בְּעֶשֶׂר מִאֱמָרוֹת נִבְרָא הָעוֹלָם], referring to the ten times in Genesis 1 where we read, וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים, ‘and God said’ (verse 3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26, 29) and the once where we read, וַיֹּאמֶר לְךָם אֱלֹהִים, ‘and God said to them’ (verse 28).

²⁸ Maimonides (1993:100). For other influence on Maimonides, see Pessin (2008). Stead (1996), see chapter 9, argues that the notion of divine incorporeality came from the Greeks.

created only if its existence has a beginning, and no number ever began to exist. And secondly, other mathematical entities (the reals, for example) stand in the same relation to God ... as do the natural numbers. Sequences of numbers, for example, are necessary beings and have been created neither by God nor by anyone else. Still, each such sequence is such that it is part of God's nature to affirm its existence".
(Plantinga 1980:142)

Plantinga believes that in exploring mathematics one is exploring the nature of God's rule over the universe ... and the nature of God Himself. He concludes "Mathematics thus takes its proper place as one of the loci of theology." (Plantinga (1980:144)

I agree with Plantinga that both God and the Platonic realm exist. The one is timeless and the other lives and rules within time. The one is a realm of eternal truth which lays out the boundaries of the contingent world where the other acts.

The doctrine of divine simplicity may not exactly describe God, but I would say that it is applicable to the *soul*. There is no mechanistic theory of consciousness and free will—one can hardly imagine how there could be. Every attempt these days confuses cognition/computation with consciousness. Thus it is generally assumed that if there is sufficient computation going on, or maybe lots of stimulus-response computation, then at some point—*voilà!* Consciousness! On the contrary—the soul would appear to be simple in the sense that it is not reducible to mechanism. There are no components that can be reproduced. It is unique in each individual, and cannot be destroyed and recreated—it thus must survive the grave, though it can be killed in the judgment (Matthew 10:28). The soul is fundamental, a component of reality that is at once "simple" and able (with the proper body) to move matter.²⁹

Reductionism explains things by reducing them to ever deeper causes. The goal, it seems, is to explain everything in one simple mathematical equation. In this sense theologians are also reductionists. They reduce God to what's left after they have him "transcend" everything that can be named.

But there are two things that God surely does not transcend:

- ✓ God does not transcend reality,
- ✓ and God does not transcend his word.

As to the latter, we can see that moral evil exists in the world because God has extended time to free agents (more on this later). And as to the former there is the little matter that

²⁹ See Beauregard and O'Leary (2007). See also Wigner (1960), Steiner (1999), also Tieszen (1994) who argues on the basis of mathematics that minds aren't machines:

In this paper I argue that it is more difficult to see how Gödel's incompleteness theorems and related consistency proofs for formal systems are consistent with the views of formalists, mechanists and traditional intuitionists than it is to see how they are consistent with a particular form of mathematical realism. If the incompleteness theorems and consistency proofs are better explained by this form of realism then we can also see how there is room for skepticism about Church's Thesis and the claim that minds are machines.

we do not really understand ultimate reality and what precisely can and cannot be transcended.

It is said that nothing in the laws of physics points to the arrow of time.³⁰ Nothing, that is, except for the second law of thermodynamics. Entropy (chaos) increases along that arrow. Robert Oppenheimer, who had studied Sanskrit and thus knew that कालः *kālah* means both ‘time’ and ‘death’, famously quoted the *Bhagavad Gītā* upon the detonation of the first atomic bomb, “Now I am become death, the destroyer of worlds.”³¹

But maybe this means that time does not *emerge* from or *supervene* on physical law or on the matter so defined. Maybe time and space are eternal fixtures of reality after all and not just part of the creation, just as Euclid reasoned and as Isaac Newton laid out in his *Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica* (Newton 2004:64):

Absolute, true, and mathematical time, in and of itself and of its own nature, without regard to anything external, flows uniformly and by another name is called duration.

If along the dimensions of time and space events are linked by causation—and if this means a mindless, deterministic causation in the direction of entropy, then how do we explain evolution which really means an increase in ordered complexity? There is one kind of atheism—call it the Einstein kind—that sees everything determined via laws/principles/algorithms with no “now” in which either God or humans exercise free will. In this sense Einstein’s religion differed little from the theology of the theologians.³²

Even so I think the end of the matter is a temporal teleology. Intelligent Design has to argue for the primacy of agency, its elementarity and pervasiveness throughout the cosmos and all of time. Neither Einsteinian necessity nor Darwinian chance and necessity³³ are of themselves adequate.

³⁰ See, for example, Feynman (1967).

³¹ The Oppenheimer quote was from these lines in the *Bhagavad Gītā* (11:32).

श्रीभगवानुवाच	śrī-bhagavān uvāca
कालोऽस्मि लोकक्षयकृतप्रवृद्धो	<i>kālosmi lokakṣayakṛt pravṛddho</i>
लोकान्समाहर्तुमिह प्रवृत्तः ।	<i>lokān samāhartum iha pravṛttah</i>
ऋतेऽपि त्वां न भविष्यन्ति सर्वे	<i>rtepi tvām na bhavisyanti sarve</i>
येऽवस्थिताः प्रत्यनीकेषु योधाः ॥ ३२ ॥	<i>yevasthitāḥ pratyanīkeṣu yodhāḥ 11.32</i>

Lord Krishna said: I am death, the mighty destroyer of the world. I have come here to destroy all these people. Even without your participation in the war, all the warriors standing arrayed in the opposing armies shall cease to exist. (Translation from <http://www.sacred-texts.com/hin/gita/agsgita.htm>.)

³² See Jammer (1999). Powell (2003) effuses about the replacement of traditional religion by what he calls sci/religion—and as the Publishers Weekly blurb at Amazon.com puts it (http://www.amazon.com/God-Equation-Einstein-Transformed-Religion/dp/0684863499/ref=pd_bxgy_b_img_b): “The prophet of sci/religion, Powell claims, is Einstein, whose search for a unifying factor in his relativity theory brought together the elements of physics and metaphysics. Einstein believed that a spirit vastly superior to the spirit of man is manifest in the laws of the universe, and he named this spirit Lamda. His Lamda principle became known as the cosmological constant, a force that dominated the universe and mitigated the inward pull of gravity.”

³³ Monod (1972).

The only real difference between Darwinism and Einsteinism is that the one has *necessity* and the other *chance* and *necessity*. Both lack *agency*—premeditated design.

If the future is not open then God cannot make decisions in the here and now. We may think we're doing God a favor by making him timeless, but in so doing we deprive him of life and free will.

God is defined as the perfect being. Such a being, it is argued, cannot change because any change is a change away from that perfection. Theologians thus forget that one choice is not always superior to another—that creation involves the elimination of alternatives which may be inferior only in context (such as, say, butterfly wings on an eagle). Also why would the *inability* to live, decide, choose, and interact with other agents be part of perfection? When Jesus said (Mat 5:48), “Be ye therefore perfect [τέλειοι], even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect [τέλειος]”, one hardly imagines he meant that we become timeless and unchanging.

“Theistic evolutionists” such as Francis Collins of Human Genome Project fame and biologist Kenneth R. Miller believe that God is much too good to mess with matter,³⁴ yet in this regard I’m always reminded of the character Q in the Star Trek television series. Though Q was an omnipotent being, the captain of the Enterprise saw no reason to obey him. One wonders if Q had been presented as the creator of humans, as their maker, if it would have been so easy to present him as not God.

Reality is hierarchical, with determinism at one end (logic and mathematical realism, etc.) and contingency at the other (e.g., as expressed in our free will). Notches up from the things that even God cannot alter (such as $2 + 2 = 4$) is a created backdrop of stability as provided by the laws of physics and which we might compare to the canvas upon which a painter paints. Creation is thus evolutionary—each level builds upon preceding levels. There would be no organic life without organic chemistry and there would be no organic chemistry without the laws of physics, etc. And the creation of the planet had to precede the creation of life upon it, etc., etc. And so there is the question of where design detection comes in. If design obtains at all levels, as the theistic evolutionists would have it, then why not simply pronounce everything designed and be done with it?

What Intelligent Design is distinguishing, let me suggest, is between intended consequences (specifications) and the natural working out of blind principles in the environmental backdrop. Thus at one level we might see earthquakes as a part of the creation (plate tectonics), but the design is not so much in any particular earthquake as in the process that allows this planet to have continents. Thus in one sense it is design all the way down—all the way down, that is, to the Platonic realm and the Divine Soul who exercises free will therein.

Judeo-Christians want a personal God who acts in the here and now on their behalf, and yet they believe that God resides outside of time. They believe in an utterly omnipotent,

³⁴ See Collins (2006) and Miller (1999, 2008).

good God who can perform any magic, and yet they believe the evil in the world is for a purpose. Paul Davies says that they cannot have it both ways.³⁵

God is not a purveyor of magic—he cannot have his cake and eat it too. As Arthur C. Clarke has said, “Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic.” God may be able to override the laws of physics but he cannot suspend the wisdom of the realm of eternal truths (Proverbs 8).

If God is not a timeless entity but rather a living creator, then it follows that there are some things that God does not transcend. If, for example, there was a point in time when God created logic then that means that before that time God was not logical. And if there was a time when God first created—if Genesis 1:1 describes the beginning of everything *ex nihilo*—then before that God was not a Creator but rather had simply stared into “the blackness of darkness for ever.” But if God has always been creating then there could be, for example, an infinity of angels—each created at some point in time—yet there would be no oldest angel and none co-eternal with God.

What God does transcend is all rule and authority. He is the boss. He will not give his glory to another (Isaiah 42:8; 38:11). He is a God of gods, King of kings and Lord of lords (Deut 10:17; Josh 22:22; Psalms 136:3[2]; Dan 2:47; 11:36;; 1Tim 6:15; Rev 19:16), and apart from him there is no other (Deut 4:35; Isaiah 45:5, 6, 21).

Theodicy³⁶

The New Testament hints that God has decreed a specific span of time before he will deal with the fallen angels that now dominate this world,³⁷ hence they cried out to Jesus (Mat 8:29), “... art thou come hither to torment us before the time ($\pi\varrho\circ\kappa\alpha\iota\varrho\circ\tilde{u}$)?” Fallen angels may be incorrigible, but God extends time for humanity to repent (2Peter 3:9; Rev 2:21). If God has so given his word then he will not break it (Titus 1:2; Heb 6:18), for God, as noted, does not transcend his word.

It is because of the rebellion of free agents that there is moral evil in the world, and because God has granted time to those free agents. Moral evil flourishes for two reasons:

- ✓ God creates free agents

³⁵ Davies (2003).

³⁶ *Theodicy* is a term coined by Leibniz and has to do with reconciling the omnipotence of a good God with the evil in the world. See Leibniz (1790).

³⁷ These include the sons of God (בָּנֵי הָאֱלֹהִים) and the adversary (שָׁמָן) in Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7, the god of this world (ὁ θεὸς τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου) in 2Cor 4:4 and the principalities and powers (αἱ ἀρχαὶ καὶ αἱ ἐξουσίαι) in Ephesians 3:10; 6:12; Col 1:16; Col 2:15. Note that when the devil promised Jesus all the kingdoms of the world if he would but bow down and do obeisance (Matthew 4:8-9; Luke 4:5-7), Jesus did not deny that the devil possesses these kingdoms. But the reign of these dark powers is scheduled to end (Rev 12:9): “And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent [Gen 3:1], called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.” And then (Rev 20:2), “And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years ...”

- ✓ God hides his face.³⁸

When God commands (Deut 30:19), “... therefore choose life,” the very fact that we are to choose means that we are given the option of making the wrong choice. But when the wrong choice is made, why does God hide his face and not instantly intervene to correct the problem?³⁹

Because if people cannot learn the easy way God in his mercy let's them learn the hard way—“so that they will say in that day ...” (Deut 31:17-18):

Then my anger shall be kindled against them in that day, and I will forsake them, and I will hide my face from them, and they shall be devoured, and many evils and troubles shall befall them; so that they will say in that day, Are not these evils come upon us, because our God is not among us? And I will surely hide my face in that day for all the evils which they shall have wrought, in that they are turned unto other gods.

God is interested in the end result (Deut 32:20): “And he said, I will hide my face from them, I will see what their end *shall be* ...” Often David bemoans the hiding of God’s face, as in Psalms 13:2[1]: “How long wilt thou forget me, O LORD? for ever? how long wilt thou hide thy face from me?” And in the present diaspora there is a hiding of the Face (Micah 3:4): “Then shall they cry unto the LORD, but he will not hear them: he will even hide his face from them at that time, as they have behaved themselves ill in their doings.”

Elihu makes an interesting observation in the book of Job (Job 34):

כט	וְהוּא יִשְׁקֹט וְמַיְּרָשֶׁעַ	29 When he giveth quietness, who then can make trouble?
	נִסְתַּר פָּנִים וְמַיְּשֻׁבָּנוּ	and when he hideth <i>his</i> face, who then can behold him?
	נַעֲלָגֹוי נַעֲלֵאָם יִחְדָּה:	whether <i>it be done</i> against a nation, or against a man only:
ל	לִמְפָלֶךְ אָדָם חַנְפָּמַקְשֵׁי עַם:	30 That the hypocrite reign not, lest the people be ensnared.

In other words, if the King of the cosmos were visible to everyone in all his blazing glory, it would be hard for the King to prove who was for real and who was merely posturing. And so God hides his face. And thus in a day when evil is “cool” it is possible to establish merit by resisting that evil.

And so we can seek God even as he hides his face (Isaiah 8:17),⁴⁰ “And I will wait upon the LORD, that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him.” God

³⁸ It's called *hiding of the Face* (הַסְתֵּר פָּנִים – **hestēr pānim**), for which some make a play on the name of the one biblical book (מֶגְדָּלָת אֱשָׁר – **məgillat 'estēr** – the scroll of Esther) where there is no mention of God.

³⁹ In the redemption when God no longer hides his face there will be intervention, as it says (Isaiah 30:21), “And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This *is* the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.”

⁴⁰ God's face may be hidden but the wise see his hand in history, just as Sir Winston Churchill reminded us in his address to the Congress of the United States on December 26, 1941: “If you will allow me to use other language, I will say that he must indeed have a blind soul who cannot see that some great purpose and design is being worked out here below of which we have the honor to be the faithful servants.” For the whole speech go to <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/ww2/churchill122641.html>.

promises—and he does not transcend his word—that the day is coming when, as he says (Ezekiel 39:29), “Neither will I hide my face any more from them: for I have poured out my spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord GOD.” And at that time the scoffers will say “to the mountains and rocks” (Rev 6:16-17), “Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?”

The day is coming when God will right all wrongs, when he will make amends for the hurt that radiates from the hard lessons learned as he hides his face.

But many feel that all this limits God—that theodicy must be difficult because God really could have his cake and eat it too, so to speak. Thus Dembski (2006):

The overwhelming reason for truncating divine foreknowledge in current theological discussion (especially among openness and process theologians) is to assist in the task of theodicy. In such theodicies, a limited God is absolved from having to remove evils for the simple reason that he is incapable of removing them.

God hides his face, as we have seen, not because he has limited power—he could deal with evil in an instant (Exodus 32:9-10)—but because that is typically the only way that truly free beings will develop the virtue that God seeks. It takes patience and there are individuals down here below who plead for God’s patience, as did Moses on behalf of Israel (Exodus 32:11-14): “And Moses besought the LORD his God ...” They do this because they (2Peter 3:15) “... account *that* the longsuffering of our Lord *is* salvation ...” That is, the LORD does not easily give up on us individually or collectively ... therefore the persistence of moral evil. As God provides time for repentance he also searches for the gems of virtue that shine when he hides his face (Malachi 3:17): “And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.”

Now let me suggest that evil will exist forever—even after God has wiped away all our tears (Rev 7:17; 21:4). Why? Because, as it says of Israel’s king (Isaiah 9:6[7]), “Of the increase of *his* government [הַשְׁמָךְ]⁴¹ and peace *there shall be* no end ...” If the human family ultimately merits to propagate throughout the universe in unending generations (Psalms 89:4), then there is always the risk of evil.

This is because God does not transcend reality—he does not transcend logic—he is subject to the reality of what is and to what he promises.

The Bible says that God is good. Jesus said (Mark 10:18), “Why callest thou me good? *there is* none good but one, *that is*, God.” And a frequent refrain in the Psalms is that

⁴¹ “What does this mean to you?” I asked a friend. “God must be a Democrat!” he replied. Humor aside I should think it has to include obeying Genesis 1:28: “Be fruitful, and multiply, and [fill] the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion ...” And when all subversive forces are subdued and Adam has dominion (1Cor 15:27-28), will the increase of his government end? Or will the heavens beckon?

God is good.⁴² Why is God good? Because he DOES good. What God does he observes to be good seven times in Genesis (Gen 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31). When God sees that things are good (Gen 1:31), “And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, *it was very good*”, this implies a standard—an objective standard. For if, hypothetically speaking, God were evil—perish the thought!—this would not make evil good. Good is good and evil is evil just as $2 + 2 = 4$ and $4 \times 9 \neq 27$.

What is better—the perfection that comes from *being* perfect? Or the perfection that comes from *doing* good in a dynamic world?

Therefore I should think that the fact that God *does* good is very good news!

But what about natural evil?

When Jesus passed by a man who had been blind from birth his *talmidim* asked (John 9:2), “Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?” Jesus answered (next verse), “Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.”

Does this mean that God goes around blinding people so that he can bask in the glory of healing them later? I should hardly think so—certainly not if God is good and does good.

Yet when Moses balked at the responsibility God was laying upon him (Exodus 4:10), “O my LORD, I *am* not eloquent,” God responded (verse 11), “Who hath made man’s mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the LORD?”⁴³ And Job says of himself and his servant (Job 31:15), “Did not he that made me in the womb make him? and did not one fashion us in the womb?” David prays (Psalms 139:13 – JPS 1917), “...Thou hast knit me together [קָרְבָּנִי] in my mother’s womb.” And *Qoheleth* preaches (Ecc 11:5), “As thou knowest not what *is* the way of the spirit, *nor* how the bones *do grow* in the womb of her that is with child: even so thou knowest not the works of God who maketh all.”

So according to the Scriptures it is God who forms us in the womb—does he choose to make some of us blind? I say not.

Rather we are also the product of our heredity and “time and chance happeneth to them all.” (Ecc 9:11) We are each formed by God—it wouldn’t happen without his hands on agency—yet God works within the exigencies of a cause and effect world. So God doesn’t choose to make a child blind but he does choose to let the blind child be born. God is not an abortionist.

⁴² For example, ‘הָזֶה לַיהוָה כִּי־טוֹב’ ‘O give thanks unto the LORD; for *he is good*’ (Psa 106:1; 107:1; 118:1, 29; 136:1; 1Chron 16:34); ‘כִּי־טוֹב יְהוָה’ ‘For the LORD *is good*’ (Psalms 34:9[8]; 100:5; 135:3); ‘טוֹב־בְּרוּךְ־שָׁר־יְהוָה’ ‘Good and upright *is the LORD*’ (Psalms 25:8).

⁴³ In other words (Ps 103:14) “... he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we *are* dust” (which recalls Gen 2:7) and thus can take this into account in regard to what he asks of us.

God shapes peace through the light of his word (Prov 6:23; John 8:32), and he causes evil by hiding his face (Isaiah 45:7):⁴⁴

ז יוצר אור ובורא חשך ע שָׁהַ שְׁלֹום וּבָרָא רֻעָה: אֱנִי יְהוָה עֲשֵׂה כָּל־אָהָה:	7 I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these <i>things</i> .
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And isn't this pretty much the same thing as it says in Psalms 104?

כט פָּסָתֵיר פְּנֵיכָךְ יְבָהָלָוֹן ת סְפִּרְתֶּם רֹקַעַם יְגַעַוּנוּן וְאֶל־עָפָרָם יְשׁוּבוּן: ל תְּשַׁלֵּחַ רֹוחָךְ יְבָרָאוֹן וְתְּחִדְשֵׁ פְּנֵיכָךְ אַרְמָה:	29 Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled: thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust. 30 Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created: and thou renewest the face of the earth.
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So the point here is that entropy reigns—the world is a dangerous place—we cannot survive without the providence and protection of God. But God lets earthquakes happen. He lets a person suffer because, as Jesus said (John 9:3), “... that the works of God should be made manifest in him.” On our own—in this world of the hiding of his Face—we are subject to natural evil, but ultimately, as it says (Rev 7:17; 21:4), “God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.”⁴⁵

But what about evil *design*? How can deer ticks and intestinal parasites be good? Such evil was indeed designed, for Darwinism cannot explain the existence of any design—good or evil. Whether or not God directly designed these things (“I make peace, and create evil”—Isaiah 45:7), in the *overall* things are good. Yes, we die, and are besought by suffering. But in the overall the creation is wonderful and beautiful and good and those with the eyes to see will grasp the awesome potential of it all.

Theologians, like philosophers in general, engage in some very excruciating reasoning, which no matter how rigorous inevitably rests upon unproven premises. This is of course

⁴⁴ Light symbolizes instruction (‘תֹּוֹתָה אָור’ - Prov 6:23). Jesus prayed (John 17:17), “thy word is truth” and promised that (John 8:32), “the truth shall make you free.” Jesus’ brother called the ten commandments (James 1:25), “the perfect law of liberty”.

⁴⁵ God does not exercise all his power for immediate perfection in order that he involve us in our own creation which is in *tiqqûn ha’ôlâm* ‘the rectification of the world’. It’s a Jewish concept, as in the Mishna (*Pirqe Abot* 1:2),

על שלישה קברים העוֹלָם עָמָד על הַתּוֹרָה ונעל קעבנה ונעל גִּמְלִילָות קָסְדִּים	The world is standing upon three things: upon the Torah and upon the [sanctuary] service and upon acts of kindness.
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which the Rambam (Maimonides) interprets:

אמֵר שְׁבָחַכְמָה וְהִיא הַתּוֹרָה בְּרִמְעָלֹות הַמִּידּוֹת וְהֵן גִּמְלִילָות קָסְדִּים וּבְקִיּוּם צִיוּוּנָת הַתּוֹרָה וְהֵן הַקְּרָבָנוֹת הַתְּמִימָנָת תִּיקְוֹן הַעוֹלָם וְסִידּוֹר מִצְיאוֹת עַל הַאֲפָפָן הַשְׁלָלָם בִּיּוֹתָם	It said that in wisdom (and it is Torah) and in the virtues of character (and they are acts of kindness) and in the observance of the commandments of the Torah (and they are the sacrifices) and the continuation of the rectification of the world and the ordering of its existence in the most complete manner.
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For a critique of the modern political abuse of the concept, see Plaut (2003).

not bad—reason is the basis of our mathematics, the most exacting and precise of our knowledge—but *theories* that are not self evident axioms and which cannot be tested in the crucible of the real world must remain subject to dispute.⁴⁶ This is why Intelligent Design is so important.

In fact the most important intellectual project today is Intelligent Design. Which is easier—to be convicted on the basis of theological proofs, or to be convinced by the creation at our fingertips?

This is one of the reasons that empirical science replaced philosophy. Philosophy never really settles anything much, no matter how meticulous and flawless the reasoning, for there are always those who question the premises. Science, on the other hand, punctuates its proclamations with spectacular technology. It is for this reason that materialist philosophy masquerades as “science”.

Philosophy is important and I believe that the culture has gone to the other extreme in its general disdain and ignorance of it. But philosophy needs science just like theology needs Intelligent Design. For if there is no evidence that there is a God, and we believe only on the basis of dense theological reasoning or subjective desire, then we can make no credible claim before those who do not share our initial premises or our feelings.

So let us not say that philosophy and theology should be shut down. These are the activities of kings, as it says (Prov 25:2), “*It is* the glory of God to conceal a thing: but the honour of kings *is to* search out a matter.” Nor should we specify a priori what we cannot know, for as G. K. Chesterton said, “We don’t know enough about the unknown to know that it is unknowable.”⁴⁷ Yet there is reason for humility, and there is good cause not to claim we know more than we actually do. The biblical writers had a phrase for it—some things are simply ‘too wonderful for me’ (*ונפלאו מפנֵי*). This was the lesson of Job (Job 42:3), “Who *is* he that hideth counsel without knowledge? therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not.” David too conceded (Psalms 139:6), “*Such* knowledge *is* too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot *attain* unto it.” Even ordinary things in many ways lie beyond our ken (Prov 30:18-19): “There be three *things which* are too wonderful for me, yea, four which I know not: The way of an eagle in the air; the way of a serpent upon a rock; the way of a ship in the midst of the sea; and the way of a man with a maid.”

Without making any claim as to what can and cannot be known, I confess that *personally* I do not understand a past eternity (how could it have been traversed?) nor do I understand there not having been a past eternity (how could God create time if there were no time in which to do the creating?). Such is simply too wonderful for me.

Let us thirst for knowledge and hunger for truth—in humility—for the sum of our knowledge—which is finite—pales before the awesome vastness of our ignorance—

⁴⁶ E.g., in the sense of Popper (1963).

⁴⁷ See Dembski (2002).

which is infinite.⁴⁸ Let our philosophy be grounded in the Maker's Two Books—in the Scriptures and in the Creation. Reality is what it is, not what we want it to be, and God is who he is, not what we might prefer. When Moses asked God his name, God didn't say, "I am what you want me to be." Nor did he say, "I am what you reason me to be." Instead he said,⁴⁹

אָהָה אֲשֶׁר אָהָה
I am what I am

Exodus 3:14

Lastly now—why should we being neither philosophers nor theologians question the experts? I say it is not good that we pay the experts to speak on our behalf without them listening to our objections and clarifying for us the ramifications of their assumptions.

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⁴⁸ This does not mean that the mind's potential is finite—see Dembski (1998).

⁴⁹ The imperfective here also permits the translation, 'I will be what I will be.'

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