Reply to Laurence Hemming

Daphne Hampson

I must thank you Laurence for the time and trouble you have devoted to my work. Yours is a substantial review, in the sense that you have thought through the difference between our presuppositions. (At the same time I wish you could have honoured me for mine.) Of course it is the case – and readers should know this – that Fergus (Kerr) invited you to review *Christians Contradictions*[1] (hereafter *CC*) in my presence at a reception at the American Academy of Religion; and I was pleased that you accepted. At the same time I could have had no inkling of the kind of review article which would be forthcoming.

In the first instance I must say that your article must give a most misleading impression as to what *CC* is actually about. Thus it must astonish readers to know that I do not (in either book) mention Heidegger; nor indeed Aristotle (though medieval Aristotelianism). I say little of Aquinas: the book being rooted in the sixteenth century I take the Tridentine Decree on 'Justification' as the counter-part to Luther. In the case of *After Christianity*[2] (hereafter *AC*), you say you will concern yourself with certain aspects of my work and that is fine. But one wishes you could have read me with perspicacity. In that book I write, of the virtue of 'attention' as it pertains to academics: 'it must involve reading carefully (with attention, one might say) and representing the views of others accurately' (*AC* 265). I wish I could think that was in evidence.

To summarise what I believe is at stake between us, and what I gather is your position. You have what we may call a radical, Catholic, 'fideist' outlook. By contrast, I take it as axiomatic that knowledge is all of a piece, as is also ethics. That is to say it cannot be that in a religious sphere we hold what is otherwise untenable. I bring to writing of earlier generations criteria and judgement culled from what we now know to be the case. Of course *philosophically* in some sense there may not be progress. But that we now know immensely more *scientifically* is unquestionable. Clearly earlier generations were no less aware of that which is God than we may be today. But they cast their experience in a form shaped by their world view, in the absence of what is now common scientific knowledge. Your

[1] *Christian Contradictions: The Structures of Lutheran and Catholic Thought* (CUP 2001, paperback 2004).

[2] *After Christianity* (SCM Press 1996, second edn. 2002).

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work strikes me as a self-enclosed bubble, involved in a time warp as it has floated, unaffected, into another world. You castigate me on intellectual grounds; I might well think the boot on the other foot.

CHRISTIAN CONTRADICTIONS

I commence with *CC*. As I understand it, your thesis is as follows. That, although different in particulars, Lutheran and Catholic thought amount in essence to the same thing (over against Daphne Hampson): that what Catholicism says in relation to baptism, Lutheranism holds in relation to salvation – namely that the human is 'established' in God. That it is true not only of Lutheranism, which I describe as 'dialectical', but also of Catholicism that it is this: by which you mean that Catholicism finds a newness in the future as revelation takes precedence over reason and Catholic 'grace' over Catholic 'nature'. In short, that there is nothing essentially novel about Luther; he simply made religion more 'personal'. Now it must seem to me that these propositions are mistaken all down the line: indeed it rather astonishes me that one who has read my book could hold them. Thus it seems to me evident that: (i) what we might mean by 'establishment' is quite other; (ii) that Catholicism is in no way 'dialectical' in the sense in which this is true of Lutheran thought, but rather 'linear'; and that (iii) in consequence the two traditions are differently related to 'the future'. Furthermore it strikes me that the belief that the Reformation was as you describe it has served to blind Catholics to the fact that Lutherans *structure* Christian faith otherwise.

I will first summarise this difference in structure. Diagrams may serve us here. Then I shall elaborate so far as I am able in the space available. I would ask that readers turn to *CC* chapter I for a fifty-page explication of the structure of Lutheran thought.

(i) '*Establishment*'. For Lutheran thought the mark – no less – of what it means to be a Christian is that we are 'established' in Christ in God (and not 'in ourselves'). The Christian lives *extra se*, by an *extrinsic* righteousness, the righteousness of Christ. To be a Christian is to have this different self-understanding. Hence Luther writes, at the climax of that revolutionary essay in which, gathering his thoughts together, he broke through to a full Reformation position, 'The Freedom of a Christian' (sent to Rome when in 1520 he was threatened with excommunication): 'A Christian lives *not in himself*, but in Christ and in his neighbour. *Otherwise he is not a Christian*' (my italics).[3] The

[3] *WA* 7.38.6–9 (German); 69.12–15 (Latin). A useful collection of Luther's writings (in which this text is given) is ed. J Dillenberger *Martin Luther: Selections* (Anchor Doubleday, 1961).

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British Luther scholar of the last generation Philip Watson captures this well in speaking of a transfer of 'centre of gravity'.[4] To be a Christian is to live from the knowledge of God's acceptance of one for Christ's sake, that is to say by Christ's righteousness. By contrast Catholics would surely want to say that in giving us His[5] grace, His very self, God establishes and transforms that which in creation He has made. Catholics have often protested to Lutherans that Catholicism is not (as they suppose Lutherans think) 'Pelagian'. But it is not that Lutheranism is – as Catholics seem to think – somewhere out beyond Augustine in saying that 'all grace comes from God'. Lutheran thought is a switch in paradigm from the Catholic-Augustinian. We live extrinsically by Christ's righteousness (and not by anything we could be 'given' for ourselves).

(ii) '*Dialectic*'. Lutheran thought is *structured* by an either/or. By contrast Catholicism – from Augustine forwards and at all times (such that one might also call this structure 'Augustinian') – is linear. What has impressed me in my work is that it is held so axiomatically by Catholics that 'grace transforms nature' that any other way of structuring Christian faith is unthinkable. But Lutheran thought conceives that there are two contrasting stances which the human can take to God; the one, faith, is that of a creature in relation to the Creator; the other, sin, represents the failure to let God be God to one. In faith the human trusts in God, looking to God in everything; that is to say lives extrinsically in God in Christ. Catholics should note that this stance may be named, indifferently, creation or salvation, since salvation is nothing other than a reinstantiation of that relationship intended by the Creator. However the position taken up by the natural man in his sin is quite other. Sin is a non-relationship, the turning of one's back on God in a bid for independence. Quintessentially sin is pride, *hubris*; the attempt to be adequate (also *coram deo*, before God's face) in and of oneself. The Lutheran 'dialectic' (as I have called it) between these two stances is strictly non-comparable with the Catholic proposition that grace transforms nature.

(iii) '*The Future*'. Commensurately, the two have a different relationship to 'the future'. Within Catholicism the future is a goal; it is 'future'. Life is lived *towards* that goal; it is a *via* for our transformation, that finally we may be one with God. But we have not yet arrived neither are already perfect. The Lutheran dialectical structure is very different. There is a sense in which we are already one with

[4] Cf. *Let God be God: An Interpretation of the Theology of Martin Luther* (London: Epworth press, 1947), pp. 34, 52 etc. Hence also the discussion in Scandinavian Lutheranism (in what may be an unfortunate choice of words) of Lutheran *theocentrism* as opposed to Catholic *egocentrism*.

[5] When discussing Christian theology I employ non-inclusive language both for God and the human being as this reflects the character of that theology.

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God. As Luther expressed it in the sentence immediately following that which I quoted in 'The Freedom of a Christian': 'by *faith* [the Christian] is caught up beyond himself into God'. Thus he lives 'from' this relationship to God *towards* the world (if one is to express this in directional terms). One may put it in this way: in the Lutheran universe *person* always comes before *works*. We first need to be 'established' in Christ in God, but in so establishing us God turns us to the world in service. Hence faith leads to love – and the sentence I have just quoted concludes 'by *love* he descends beneath himself into his neighbour' (my italics). Theology (the relationship to God) leads to ethics. (Whereas within Catholicism one might well say that an ethics made possible by God's grace leads to a relationship with God.) It is not, for Lutheranism, that by being good we are brought into a relationship to God; rather do we first need a revolution in the constitution of our person that good works may result. As Luther expresses it: 'faith remains the doer, love the deed'[6].

These contrasting structures may be represented diagrammatically as over the page. As we have said, within Lutheranism the basic understanding is that the Christian lives (*extra se*), in Christ in God. The Christian's response to the revelation of God's love is thus aptly called faith (Latin *fiducia*, trust, not *fides* belief). In trust I transfer my gravity to another. 'Grace' also acquires relational connotations: God's graciousness towards me, that I am accepted irrespective of any merit on my part. It is this in which the good news, the *kerygma*, of the gospel consists. It is important to note that, that this is the case, *runs counter to expectation*. For we should expect that God would punish sinners and reward the righteous, by what Luther calls an 'active' righteousness. Luther's breakthrough came when – seated in the alcove formed by a tower on the corner of his lecture theatre (still there today), hence his 'tower' experience – and struggling with the text of Romans I in the original Greek, Luther read Paul's 'the righteousness of God' to mean that *passive* righteousness by which, lending us His righteousness we may say, God justifies us and by which we live.[7] Hence the centrality of preaching and the break (the dialectic) brought about by the gospel. For against expectation we grasp that in His agapeistic love God accepts us independently of any merit for Christ's sake. Thus gospel is set over against law,[8] and revelation against reason.

[6] *WA* 17,II.98.25.

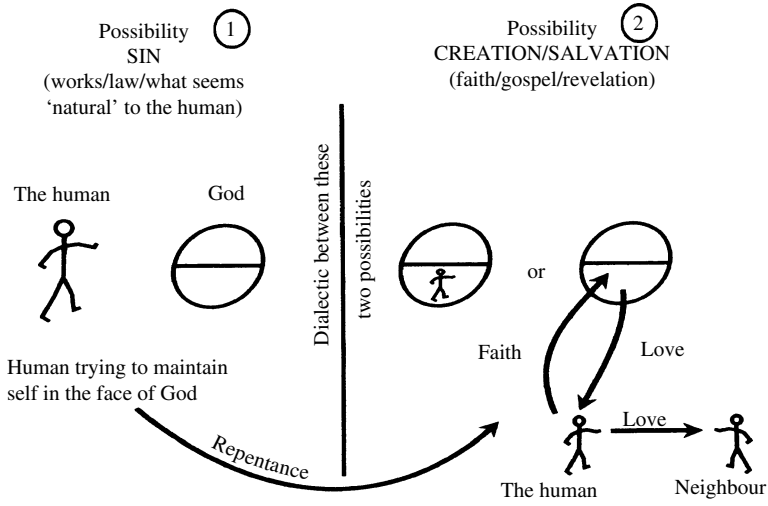
[7] For Luther's (retrospective) description of this breakthrough cf. *WA* 54.185.12–186.21.

[8] The Lutheran dialectic may well be expressed in terms of 'law' and 'gospel'. The law is an enemy to be overcome in the sense that it leads us to think that, sinners that we are, we cannot be acceptable to God. (Cf. for example *WA* 40,1.267.26–268.18.) In contrast the Tridentine Fathers anathematise those who deny that Christ is also a law-giver.

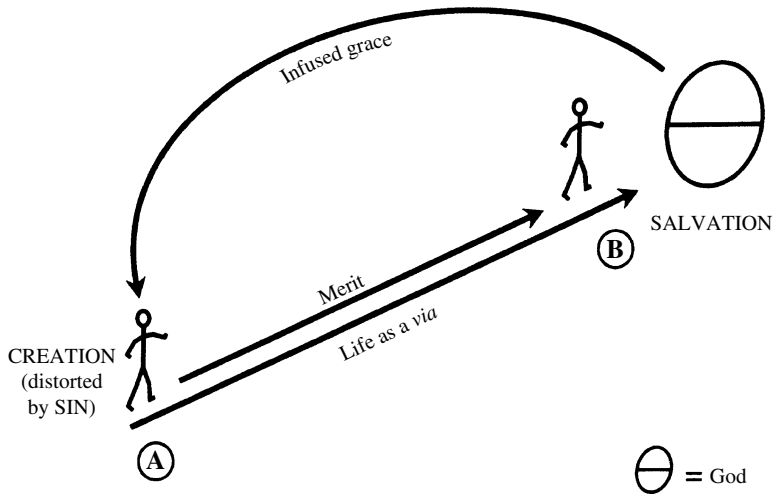
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Lutheran Thought



Catholic Thought



That Lutheran thought has this structure has profound implications for our sense of the Christian life. Henceforth we come to live as though our will were one with God's. Whether this is what it means to have a God, or whether there is thereby within Lutheran thought an inadequate sense of self, is a profound question. But it is very different from a humanist, or Catholic, stance. One could say that the Lutheran 'virtue' (the sense of the Christian life which this structure brings with

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it) should be designated a freedom from self-preoccupation. But this again is going to raise questions as to whether we do not in some way have to 'come to' ourselves then to inter-relate with others and with God. Catholicism has a strong sense of human dignity; that God Himself respects the creature whom he has made. Within the Lutheran structure one might say that to think of God as one with whom one inter-relates, the human standing as it were on his own ground, just doesn't make sense. It is a failure to understand that God is God. Thus as has well been said (by a teacher of mine thirty years ago)[9] in an observant remark, Protestantism drives towards dependence, Catholicism towards equality. Note how true this is also of the Reformed tradition (of both Schleiermacher and Barth). The Tridentine decree by contrast envisages that we may be so transformed through God's grace that we may in the end stand in God's presence.[10]

It is worth turning to Catholic misunderstanding here. It is not that Luther is a 'determinist' in common parlance; though he does think God the power which enables all (in parallel with Aquinas). In regard to what Luther calls things 'below' us (he instances the choice of spouse or career) of course we have freedom. As he quips, quoting a proverb: 'The kingdom of heaven was not made for geese.'[11] Nor that the human's every act is sinful (in a Catholic understanding of sin). Rather what Luther is saying is that the human cannot perform what Catholics would call a 'meritorious act', an act through which he should earn merit. It follows that a concern for works (note that in the late Middle Ages a good work was indifferently an ethical action or a religious observance) is beside the point; indeed to head off on the wrong direction, for such works will deceive us into thinking that we can somehow be adequate for God.[12] Rather does Lutheranism have what Barth would call a 'negative' joining point (*Anknüpfungspunkt*). It is when the human fails in his own eyes that he is open to the gospel message that it is both impossible for him in and of himself to be just before God and also unnecessary, for God has already accepted him in Christ; and consequently, repenting, puts his trust in another, in Christ. Whereas within the Catholic diagram I have depicted a smooth transition from A to B as 'grace' transforms

[9] Arthur McGill.

[10] Cf. 'Decree on Justification' in ed. J. Leith *Creeds of the Churches* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1973) pp. 418–20. See the final chapter, XVI, written into the decree in the course of the debate to rule out Seripando's wish for an expression of 'double justice'.

[11] *WA* 18.636.21–22.

[12] Thus Luther in his great Galatians lectures given at the height of his career in the 1530s: 'Religion that can be comprehended by reason is false religion. . . . In this respect there is no distinction between the Jews, the papists, and the Turks. Their rites are different, but their hearts and thoughts are the same . . . That is, they say, "If I have acted in such and such a way, God will be well disposed towards me". The same feeling is found in the hearts of all men.' *WA* 40.1.603.5–11.

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'nature', in the Lutheran the arrow representing 'repentance' shows movement between the two possible stances 'through the back door'.

Life, in a Lutheran understanding, is lived within a dialectic (as between the two stances) as once and again we cease to trust in God, relying on ourselves. Whereupon, failing, we again hear the gospel and repenting come to trust in God. We are, says Luther, *semper peccator, semper penitens, semper justus*.[13] And again: 'Progress . . . is nothing other than constantly beginning'.[14] But then we are not speaking of 'progress' in terms of self-transformation. This does not however mean that 'nothing changes': that Catholic reading (as it has often been) is a failure to understand Lutheran dynamics. Lutheranism is a challenge to the idea that one must think in terms of an internal state in order to speak of a renewed life. The Lutheran sense is again relational. As Luther puts it, if God has done this for me, loving and accepting me irrespective of merit on my part, shall I not likewise love my neighbour (irrespective of merit on their part)?[15] Lutherans have consequently been suspicious of any coupling of merit with service of neighbour (such as they find in Catholicism). For if there is something in it for me the neighbour's need will be distorted in relation to myself. Sin for Lutherans is being caught up in one's own problematic apart from God (and such pride leads to concupiscence). Thus typically one speaks of sin as a stance, in the singular. By contrast within Catholicism (for which ethics is prerequisite for the relationship to God) one speaks of sins, in the plural, as infractions of a (God-given) moral order.

We should note how difficult it would be for Catholics (given at least a classical Catholic theology) to acknowledge the basic Lutheran insight: that God loves sinners. The problem here stems from the Aristotelian underpinning to Catholic theology (and we see how fundamental the break with Aristotle was in enabling Luther to say what he did).[16] For Aquinas (and Catholicism more generally) the relationship to God is predicated upon a *likeness* between the human and God, a likeness given in the first place through creation. Catholics speak of being in a 'state' of sin or grace (with the implication that one first has to be brought into a state of grace before one is in relationship to God). The whole of Catholic ecclesiology is predicated on this. By contrast for

[13] *WA* 56.442.17.

[14] *WA* 4.350.15. Though Luther also admonishes us in what is sometimes called a 'second righteousness' to become what we are, children of God. Cf. the sermon 'Two Kinds of Righteousness', thought to date from 1518/19, given in Dillenberger op.cit.

[15] Cf. 'The Freedom of a Christian'. Compare the comment of George Lindbeck (in large part responsible for drafting the American joint statement on justification) that the problem is that Trent conceives of renewal in terms of inherent righteousness which, from the Lutheran perspective, is both an unnecessary and unusable way of expressing renewal. 'A Question of Compatibility' in ed. Anderson et al *Justification by Faith* (Augsburg, 1985).

[16] On the significance of Luther's discarding of Aristotelian modes of thought see Wilfred Joest, *Ontologie der Person bei Luther*, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1967.

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Lutherans the church is the place where the gospel (that God accepts sinners) is preached. Of course for an Aristotelian mind-set existence is itself a good, and being and goodness ultimately interchangeable. Thus Aquinas can comment that insofar as a sinner *exists* that is a good, but insofar as he is a *sinner* he is unlike God and hateful to God in respect of his sin.[17] Catholics seem unable to respond to Lutherans here?

Commensurately with the different shaping they give to theology, Catholics and Lutherans have a different sense of the Christian life. Catholicism has what we may call an *imitatio* tradition: we are to become Christ-like. Lutherans speak rather of a *nachfolgen*, a following after (the German word *Nachfolge* also being the word for a disciple). The implication of *nachfolgen* is suffering; if they have persecuted me. . . . The difference is well captured in a letter of Bonhoeffer's from prison, musing on a conversation of many years earlier with a French priest.

> He said he would like to become a saint. I think it is quite likely he did become one. At the time I was very much impressed, though I disagreed with him, and said I should prefer to have faith, or words to that effect. For a long time I did not realise how far we were apart. I thought I could acquire faith by trying to live a holy life, or something like that.

And Bonhoeffer continues (in wholly Lutheran mode): 'One must abandon every attempt to make something of oneself, whether it be a saint, a converted sinner, a churchman (the priestly type, so-called!), a righteous man or an unrighteous one, a sick man or a healthy one.'[18] Bonhoeffer would rather have 'faith', that transfer of gravity to Christ.

We may well draw this discussion to a close through considering the difficulty Catholics have had with that Lutheran formula which encapsulates Lutheran faith, that we are *simul justus et peccator*. Catholic misunderstandings are legion. Thus previously (before ecumenism) the phrase was often declared nonsense; a contradiction in terms. Otherwise it is taken to mean (as indeed Augustine uses it and as perhaps it must mean if translated into a Catholic framework) that the human is *in via*: *part* just, but *part* still a sinner.[19] When it is recognised that this is not Lutheran intent, but that we are (wholly) just while (wholly) sinners then one (such as notably Hans Küng)[20] attempts a reconciliation by finding a Catholic parallel in the priest in

[17] Cf. *ST* I, qu. 20, art. 2, reply: 'God loves all things that exist. For all things that exist are good, in so far as they are. The very existence of anything whatsoever is a good, and so is any perfection of it . . . There is nothing to prevent the same thing being loved in one respect and hated in another respect. God loves sinners in so far as they are natures, because they are, and have their being from himself. But in so far as they are sinners they fail to be, and are not. This deficiency is not from God, and they are hateful to God in respect of it.'

[18] Ed. E Bethge *Letters and Papers from Prison* (SCM Press, 1954), 11.

[19] Ps.cxl, Migne, PL37, col.1825.

[20] *Justification: The Doctrine of Karl Barth and a Catholic Reflection* (Burns & Oates, 2nd edn. 1981). For my critique of Küng cf. *CC* 129–37.

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the eucharist who (assumed in a state of grace) yet asks forgiveness for his sins and those of the people. But this is to make both terms relate to the internal 'state' of the person (a concern which Lutherans think they have got away from). On a Lutheran tongue the phrase of course means that, sinners though we are, God accepts us for Christ's sake: we live by God's, by extrinsic, righteousness.

In conclusion, consider the row which almost ditched the 'Joint Declaration on Justification', finally signed between the Vatican and the Lutheran World Federation in 1999.[21] For there can surely be no real ecumenical progress (if indeed this is possible) until Catholics understand where Lutherans are coming from (and there is scant evidence that they have begun to grasp this). A previous German ecumenical statement had spoken of justification as the 'criterion' of faith: German *als Kriterium* – the German does not require an article. In translation this became 'the criterion' – whereupon the Vatican said not a bit of it, there are many such criteria (the presence of a trinitarian formula for example was suggested). The Catholics were thinking of justification as a Lutheran doctrine; Catholics tending to think of faith as *fides*, belief in doctrines. But for Lutherans, in saying that justification is 'that by which the church stands or falls' one is not so much speaking of the necessary presence of a particular doctrine (one among others) as speaking of the structure of Christian faith. There is no problem in this structure being cast in other terms (as revelation over against reason, or gospel over against law) not employing the word 'justification'; indeed Luther more commonly expressed it otherwise.

Response to Laurence

Now it does not seem to me Laurence that you have in any way grasped this Lutheran structure. You take elements from what you read in my work and from what you know of Protestantism (the centrality of revelation) and then weld this into what I have called a radical Catholicism. The fact that you use my work as a vehicle to pursue a polemic internal to Catholicism makes it the more complex to respond to you. I shall not comment on this but simply point to the misappropriation of Lutheran thought.

Turning first to what you call 'establishment' you write: 'In truth, however, [Hampson] has misread Catholicism: Christianity, Lutheran or Catholic, begins with sinners, who are transformed *from the future*, from a radical '*extraseity*' if you will . . . by their being established in Christ.' (Hemming, henceforth H 22). What you further have to say confirms my conviction that this sentence is to be read entirely with Catholic connotations. Thus we 'begin' with

[21] At www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils, or available as 'Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification', ISBN 3.906706.54.0.

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sinners. For Luther however what is 'sin' only becomes evident in the light of revelation; as Kierkegaard puts it, sin is the opposite not of goodness (as in a humanistic system) but of faith.[22] In saying sinners are 'transformed' 'from' the future your meaning is as though by grace given from the future (viz. from God). When you speak of being 'established in Christ' I think you mean (from what you say elsewhere) in baptism; within Catholicism the necessary 'establishment', the beginning of our transformation. But in Lutheran thought we are not speaking of being (inwardly) 'transformed', nor of something coming to us 'from' the future/'from' something other than ourselves. Rather is it that our position changes, so that we live 'from' the promise, or 'from' the future as Bultmann will have it.[23]

That I have not misread you here would seem to be confirmed by other statements. Thus (in a comment which must sound strange to Lutheran ears) you write: 'Indeed it is the formalism of the receipt of grace which Luther seems to be challenging, in favour of a more personal understanding of the effects of grace.' (H 17). But Luther is not speaking of 'receiving' anything at all;[24] nor is he concerned for any 'effects' it might have. You say: 'It would seem therefore Hampson misses the point when she argues that "what is pivotal to Luther is to have escaped the kind of introspective concern which an interest in receiving grace implies".' (H 17). Now I am not actually taking sides here: it is fundamental to my text that I want to critique orthodox Lutheranism for lacking sufficient sense of self. But it remains the case that – however one may best express it – the relief that Luther finds in reading the gospel as he does is on account of the fact that he can drop a concern for self-transformation. In that Christian 'freedom' consists.

When we turn to the question of a 'dialectic' what must be said should now be clear. You misread my meaning here Laurence; though the misreading is itself symptomatic of my 'Lutheran' (at least in this respect) and your Catholic presuppositions. When I say (and you quote me) 'Aquinas has a whole theological anthropology apart from revelation' (*CC* 142, H 12) I am not commenting on the (internal Catholic) debate (or 'dialectic' as you like to call it) between reason and revelation: it is not that (as you suppose) I think Catholicism to have a natural theology 'apart' from revelation – a view you then critique me and your fellow Catholics for holding. (It may amaze you, but it hasn't even occurred to me to wonder how Aquinas should be read here.) One would have hoped that my context plus my expression '*theological* anthropology' might have given you my

[22] *Sickness unto Death* (ed. and trans. Hong and Hong) pp. 82: 'And this is one of the most decisive definitions for all Christianity – that the opposite of sin is not virtue but faith.'

[23] See below pp. 41–42.

[24] Cf. Again Arthur McGill: Luther is radically against transfer to us.

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meaning. What I am saying is that Catholicism is bi-polar; that it has a doctrine of creation apart from what I had better have called 'special' revelation in Christ. I am so 'Lutheran' here that I think of that as being revelation (and don't need the word special) and the creation only known (by Christians) to be a *creation* through that revelation.[25] You comment, of creation, 'it is the context in which the creature comes to know God' (H 12): it is this which differentiates the Catholic from the Lutheran structure.[26] We are not, within Lutheran thought, speaking of a creation which is then consummated in sanctification/justification, the linear structure so apparent in for example the Tridentine decree.

Suppose it were correct that Catholicism is based entirely on revelation (as you contend), knowing nothing of an independent reason. The question would remain as to how that revelation is to be interpreted. Luther and Lutherans following him 'read' revelation as *being about* justification by faith; Luther is actually rather hermeneutically sophisticated – he knows that he is reading justification out of scripture and in turn using it as a key to scripture. The scripture is about this good news; a preacher, said Luther, is one who knows how to *differentiate* gospel from law. Now I do not think for a moment it could be said that (even though it may be that – as you contend – it gives revelation the upper hand) Catholicism sets revelation *over against* reason; such that what is revealed is *other than* what we should expect. Catholicism simply does not know the radical break on which Lutheran thought is predicated. Stephan Pfürtner (the laicised Dominican who taught in a Protestant seminary) writes: 'Anyone who affirms the message of justification, and hence the distinction between law and gospel, cannot make what is a matter of law a matter of the gospel. And this is true right up the scale. It applies to questions of contraception, as well as to the hierarchical distribution of offices.' Pfürtner judged: 'It is just this fundamental differentiation which Catholicism finds so difficult', adding that as

[25] Thus (in American discussions prior to the JD) the Catholic Carl Peter complains that Lutheran thought has no place for creation, commenting (naively): 'I wonder why Lutherans would find it necessary to derive the goodness of creation . . . from justification by faith alone. . . . Do not expect other Christians to play dead theologically while this is going on. . . . Let Lutherans use the 'flip side' of justification by faith [to reach creation]. Other Christians . . . '. ('A Roman Catholic Response' in ed. J. A. Burgess *Christian Unity*, Augsburg, 1991, 82.) To which the Lutheran Gerhard Forde responds that the whole problem is this 'other' starting point. ('Justification by Faith Alone: The Article by Which the Church Stands or Falls?' in ed. J A Burgess *In Search of Christian Unity: Basic Consensus/Basic Differences* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress Press, 1991, 64–76.)

[26] This however is probably more complex than I am able to indicate here; and more complex still if one takes Reformed Protestantism into account. (Thus for example Barth's interpretation of Calvin in his 'Nein!' may well be wrong.) Nevertheless this does not mean that Lutheranism is bi-polar with a high doctrine of creation in quite the way that is Catholicism.

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compared with this, the Catholic distinction between 'nature' and 'grace' fades into the background.[27]

So when we turn to 'the future' you seemingly give the game away, remarking that purgatory exists so that 'if we have done insufficient penance for our sins . . . this must still in some way be fulfilled . . . for . . . what it takes to lead us into perfection' (H 4, footnote). Yes of course; no wonder I constantly remark (as you point out) that for Catholicism life is a *via*. Again you write that: 'Christ is for us [Catholics] the *promise* that the human can become deiform (he is wholly human and wholly divine)' (H 22). But the idea that one should *in oneself* become what you call deiform could not be further from Lutheran sensibilities! One wonders here whether you recognise that the mature Luther's is not an analytic proleptic position: it is not that God holds us now to be just in the knowledge that that is what we shall be: we live by Christ's justice. Here we should cite Luther's famed last words, so exactly do they encapsulate his world: 'Wir sind Bettler, hoc est verum.'[28] We are beggars, empty-handed, who thus and therefore simply turn to Christ.

The meaning which 'future' has for you Laurence, what it conjures up, is infused with Catholic sensibilities. Thus you speak of it as being that eventuality in which we shall have 'knowledge' of God; a knowledge which, in our present existence, we strain after – hence also the sense of 'vision'. (You sound positively like Augustine in the concluding passages of *The City of God*!) You comment: 'After we are divinised (after we have been raised again) and our minds are flooded with the light of what God knows . . . ' (H 10). Again, of 'the truths of faith', you say: '*In faith* we can trust in what *at the end of time* we will come to know in a higher way, objectively.'(H 10). Your Catholic vocabulary fits your Catholic thought. But when you turn to Luther we are given the most bizarre of interpretations! You write that extraseity is, for Luther, 'the self coming (through faith) to have God as something more akin to a direct object of experience for itself. If I am right, that Luther makes God a more direct object of faith to one who believes . . . '(H 17). But in Luther's case we are not speaking of faith as *fides*, belief; so that God becomes an 'object' of faith. (Indeed one could argue that for Luther to think of God as any kind of an 'object', set 'over against' himself, one with whom he could 'deal', is mistaken – see his riposte to Erasmus here.[29] As Luther writes in his *Greater Catechism*, a god is that in which we

[27] 'The Paradigms of Thomas Aquinas and Martin Luther: Did Luther's Message of Justification Mean a Paradigm Change?' in eds. H. Küng and D. Tracy (eds.), *Paradigm Change in Theology* (T&T Clark, 1989). Pfürtner comments that, having failed to understand this shift in paradigm, it becomes 'quite understandable' that Catholics 'should have continually denied that Luther's doctrine could be described as scholarly theology, citing its lack of logical stringency, or the paradoxical structure of its language'.

[28] *WATR* 5.318.2–3.

[29] 'On the Bondage of the Will' *WA* 18. An extract is given in Dillenberger op.cit.

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trust, whatever we place our trust in that is our 'god'[30].) It would likewise be difficult to speak of 'experience' here. Highly suspicious of 'experience' (which he connects with the left wing of the Reformation in their introspection) and of Catholic 'mysticism' (which he thinks an attempt to climb up to God)[31] Luther turns to what he believes to be the objectivity of the text.

Thus to conclude that Luther's is 'a radicalisation of a structure of knowledge which the ancient and medieval world took for granted' (H 17–18) must be utterly wide of the mark. The Lutheran universe has little in common with light/vision/knowledge (the neo-Platonism which Catholicism has absorbed). It revolves, rather, around the (Hebraic) hearing of the word and response of faith. There is a paradigm shift. David Steinmetz captures this (in his meticulous study of the differences between even the young Luther and his Catholic confessor and mentor Johannes Staupitz). Luther casts his theology in terms of the relation to a promise – and hence faith; Staupitz, remaining within the 'well-worn tracks of medieval theology', thinks in terms of love. Steinmetz remarks – in what must be an understatement – that it was 'a theological shift of great importance in the history of Western Christianity'.[32] There is no need to deny that Luther absorbed something from the atmosphere and concerns of late medieval Nominalism. Of that we have become more aware in recent years. But this should not be allowed to obscure the fact that the kaleidoscope of Christian faith was shaken, resulting in a different pattern. The major split which Western Christendom has known was the result.

Were it in fact the case – as you imply Laurence – that Catholicism is at one with Lutheran thought, then Catholicism would in itself be schizophrenic. For how could it be both that through grace God 'establishes' us in ourselves and that we live 'from' the future, the Lutheran sense of excentricity; both that we strain towards that vision which is knowledge, and that basing ourselves *extra se* in God we are turned towards the world; both that it is for us to become deiform, and that, in ourselves nothing, we turn to another? I fail to see that 'considering all from God's perspective' solves these pressing existential and ontological questions as to what it is to be Christian. In common with so much Catholic response to Luther, it must be said that, failing to acknowledge the divergent structuring of Christian faith which is Lutheran thought, you think that the shift which Luther represents is simply one from 'an institutional interpretation

[30] *WA* 30,I.133.1–134.

[31] Thus Luther thinks it no better to rely on some 'experience' than on works. (Of the enthusiasts and the 'papists' he says they are 'two foxes tied together by their tails', *WA* 40,1.36.21–22). He looks to another's righteousness.

[32] *Luther and Staupitz: An Essay in the Intellectual Origins of the Protestant Reformation*, Duke University Press 1980 and Fortress Press, 1984, pp. 66, 140.

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of Scripture . . . to include a more personal ordering of the believer to God' (H 21). Of course there was in the Reformation some such shift as you describe. Nevertheless it must seem to me (and I discuss this) that the Catholic hang-up about Luther's 'personality' (not a Protestant concern), his 'experience', the 'subjective appropriation of faith', the 'existential' mode of his theology' (*plus ça change plus c'est la même chose*) serves Catholics ill, acting as a subterfuge which allows attention to be diverted from what is apparently so uncomfortable: that Lutherans *structure* Christian theology differently than do Catholics.

Thus you cannot (and do not) really enter into the questions which exercise me in this book. Is it that God respects the dignity of the creature whom He has made, changing that creature with his free co-operation into God's likeness? Or does this kind of to and fro between God and the human not make sense: must God essentially re-constitute us, such that what we have is a new situation, having little formal continuity with the old? Is God to be known through His changing of us? Or is to be Christian essentially a re-orientation away from ourselves? Is 'freedom' the freedom to choose (also God); or is it that we are 'free' when God (not the devil) rules our will? Does the Christian have through creation a sense of self which he essentially shares with the rest of humanity? Or does the Christian have a radically other sense of self; which should not perhaps be cast as a sense of 'self' at all? Is it by practicing the good that we become in ourselves good (the medieval idea of the *habitus*)? Or rather that, undergoing a revolution through 'accepting that we are accepted' (as the Lutheran Paul Tillich puts it) good works in abundance will flow?[33] Incidentally, to state the questions in this way shows what important human issues are at stake.

AFTER CHRISTIANITY

I come to a discussion of epistemology, best considered in conjunction with my argument in *After Christianity* and your critique. Because I do not hold to your epistemological starting point in theology I do not see that it follows that my work exhibits 'a failure to attend to or understand with sufficient gravity or seriousness the philosophical issues that underlie the practice of theology' (H 3)? For what it's worth Fergus was so kind as to comment of that book (in an editorial in *New Blackfriars*): '[It] is first of all a vigorous defence of epistemological considerations that need to be dealt with if

[33] Kant (coming from a Lutheran background) also presumes in his *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone* that a revolution must first take place. But Kant is complex, having apparently been reading Jesuit sources, and also thinks that we must make effort.

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traditional theological ideas about faith and reason are to remain tenable. . . . No theologian should evade the very deep metaphysical issues in Hampson's book.'[34]

I must give here a synopsis of my argument. I *take it for granted* that nature and history exhibit an inter-related causal nexus and that there are no interruptions or one-off unique events. Thus I would hold *a priori* that there could be no such thing as a purported 'resurrection'. Now Christians must surely by definition believe there to have been a 'uniqueness' associated with the events surrounding Jesus of Nazareth (to state what could rightly be called Christian in the widest possible terms). Incidentally my comment that 'Catholics have not faced the fact that Christianity cannot be made to fit the world as we now know it to be' (*CC* 242) relates to this epistemological question, having nothing to do with any view of the self as you, Laurence, suppose. To its credit Protestant (Continental) theology has, since the Enlightenment, faced up to the problem which the regularity and inter-connectedness of nature (as we now know it to be) poses for Christianity. In his *Philosophical Fragments* (1844) Kierkegaard states in exemplary fashion where this places Christian claims. There is the sphere of knowledge (which comprises all – except Christian claims.). How then – Kierkegaard asks – would things have to be for them to be other, to fall outside this? There would have to be revelation, in which something new was 'given', which 'knowledge' could only be related to through faith (not reason). I would simply deny that there can be any such other.

Taking this for granted and myself a theist I believe that we must needs enlarge any narrow 'Enlightenment' conception of that which is – always and everywhere – the case. For I am convinced that the experiential evidence is that there is such a – what I name 'dimension' – of reality (that one reality of which we are a part). As do many women whom I know (and surely many men also), I believe beyond reasonable doubt that quiet loving attentiveness (or prayer) for another is efficacious, that healing both of body and mind is available we know not quite how, and that something akin to extra-sensory perception may allow us to be aware of what it is not otherwise apparent how we could know. (I repeat: to credit that there is such a dimension to reality, which is always and everywhere at least potentially available and able to be brought into play, is not in anyway to think that there could be interventions in the causal nexus or one off-events.) Just as we should expect, it is evident that these things have been recognised (and described in varied ways) in societies widely divergent in time and place. Not least, it is clear from what we know of him that one Jesus of Nazareth was deeply open to and able to draw on this dimension of reality. It is our grasp that there

[34] *New Blackfriars*, Oct. 1997.

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is this which gives rise to theology; indeed it is the only basis which that discipline could have, given that there are no interventions or a revealed particularity. (Thus I would think Christianity a vehicle, or myth, which has served to carry human awareness of God; but which is itself a mistaken way of formulating what is the case – in that in Christianity this dimension of reality is hypostasised, cast an anthropomorphically shaped being, and then projected.)

I fail to follow your depiction (or judgement) of my position here Laurence. You seem to suppose that I hold what I do through some *feminist* commitment to Enlightenment thought. But the matter has nothing in the wide world to do with feminism! It is simply a question of adhering to what we now know to be the case (and not crediting that there could be purported events which contravene this). Nor, I submit, is it a 'philosophical position' to hold this; as though the matter were up for grabs and there could be other, equally tenable, positions. Thus to speak of my supposed 'commitment to progress in thought' having 'radically hampered [my] own understanding of metaphysics' (H 15) strikes me as absurd. Have we not now recognised what is the case in a way that at one time people had not? (I well recall Donald Mackinnon commenting in a seminar that we cannot think that water could be turned into wine, for wine has carbon atoms and water does not: carbon atoms cannot appear from nowhere.) That Christians may *in faith* hold something which is not a part of, indeed cannot be made commensurate with, what we otherwise know to be the case, is another matter.

Whatever one may think of my theistic, but non-Christian, position, it doesn't strike me as 'lacking attention to the philosophical issues which underlie the practice of theology' (see p. 14)? As I said, might not the boot rather be on the other foot Laurence? I could well accuse you of not facing reality. Let me go on the attack here. Take the example of a purported virgin birth, of which you make much. What for you would count against this? And if you cannot say, then what status do your remarks have? You rage against academic standards in theology. But – I may ask – how can one be an intellectual at a university while not taking cognizance, for example, of biblical and historical criticism, or progress in biological science? In the case of the virgin birth: (i) it would seem to be apparent enough that, wishing (as was his wont) to show that prophecy is fulfilled in Jesus, Matthew is making reference to the Septuagint of Isaiah 7 which speaks of a virgin, whereas the underlying Hebrew simply connotes a young girl; (ii) it was not infrequently said of eminent men in the ancient world that their father was a god and their mother a virgin – the world in which Christianity came into being knew a different cultural context; (iii) as we now know, in the creation of a foetus an equal number of chromosomes come from the female and from the male and the Aristotelian flower-pot version of human reproduction

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(whereby the male seed – for so it was thought to be, the new human in his entirety – is simply planted in the 'earth' which is the womb) is false: indeed, were there to be a case of parthenogenesis the foetus would necessarily be female as no 'Y' chromosome would be present. From my perspective, I don't see how a waving of the hand in dismissal of all this is useful to the future of theology?

CHRISTIAN CONTRADICTIONS REVISITED

In view of the above consideration and returning to *Christian Contradictions* we can elucidate another matter. What really makes you edgy is that you think (falsely) that I '[seek] to identify [myself] with what [I] believe Catholicism to be' (H 5)! What I in fact say – within the context of a certain argument – is: 'I find I am closer to "Catholicism", but it is a Catholicism shorn of revelation' (*CC*223). Let us consider this.

Lutheranism, so I would contend, particularly in the work of Rudolf Bultmann, has shown a peculiar ability to respond to the epistemological crisis brought on for Christianity by what in modernity we know to be the case. Hence I judge Bultmann the most adequate Christian apologist of whom I am aware. The debate with him (as the person most likely to persuade me that I could be Christian) has consequently been seminal for me; while the dismissal of his position leaves me clear that (on epistemological grounds) I cannot be Christian. (I may also have ethical and feminist grounds for not being Christian.)

I give here a thumbnail sketch of Bultmann; readers should please turn to *CC* chapter 6 for further elucidation. Bultmann knows well that (as I have put it) nature and history form a causal nexus and that particularity (in the sense of what earlier was called the 'scandal' of particularity) – which Christianity must needs claim – is not possible. His response is ingenious. There are – so he postulates in parallel with Kierkegaard – two spheres or realities: that of *Historie* (common or garden history) and of *Geschichte* (quite what is that? – some kind of higher history, more ultimate reality, or sphere of meaning). In the sphere of *Historie* there can of course be no resurrection. Now Christians proclaim that this man Jesus who died (an ordinary historical event) was resurrected, finding themselves delivered by this message. (Bultmann is every ounce a Lutheran.) The 'resurrection' is an eschatological event, an event of *Geschichte*. But it is the resurrection of *this particular man* who died. The two spheres are brought as close as possible while discontinuous with one another. The resurrection thus 'lends' the necessary uniqueness to this particular man in *Historie*. It may well be said that this is nothing other than a transposition into the epistemological sphere

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of Luther's *simul justus, simul peccator* (where *justus* refers to the future eschatological reality on which we base ourselves). (Indeed Bultmann himself makes this equation at the conclusion of his Giffords.)[35] For myself I must (i) deny that there could be any such other reality as *Geschichte*; (ii) say that I do not find myself 'delivered' by such preaching.

Let us probe the second of these a little deeper. What I find so problematic about Lutheran thought (which, whether in the hands of Kierkegaard or Bultmann, I think epistemologically the only possible way for Christians to stake their claim), is the concomitant structure which it gives to theology. For the structure demands that I constantly break the self (that self which – ethically – thinks it can be itself 'apart' from God revealed in Christ, or which – epistemologically – stands by what we otherwise know to be the case) in order to base itself on Christian truth (or in Bultmann's terminology 'live from the future'). But what if I don't want to break my self and base myself on that which is other than myself? What if I wish – ethically – (to adapt the poster slogan) to 'grow where I am planted' and – epistemologically – can credit no in-breaking? I must, then, hold a non-Christian theistic position. (There is no problem with thinking that there is a dimension to the one reality, which we may name 'God', and ethically no heteronomy involved.) In Catholic terms one could say that I have a 'high' doctrine of creation (though I should not be inclined to express it in that way). Minimally it strikes me that I hold in common with Catholics whom I know a strong sense of that which is God present in the world. But if in this my position is commensurate with Catholicism, it is a 'Catholicism' shorn of revelation. (It is not that I think that Catholics think they could dispense with revelation!).[36] Further, it has moved me that there have been Catholics who have apparently had no difficulty in crediting that I am, in common with them, a spiritual person (although not a Christian). This has been much more difficult for Protestants, for whom the revelation in Christ is everything – and there is nothing else.[37]

[35] Cf. *History and Eschatology* (Edinburgh University Press, 1957).

[36] Incidentally it should also now be clear what I mean when I say that I fail to see how revelation is 'essential' to Catholicism (on which Hemming picks me up). For I think that, were there to be such a revelation, that would overturn everything that we thought we knew as being correct and all else would have to be seen in relation to that revelation. With this I should have moral problems (as I do for example with Bonhoeffer's Christology lectures which clearly spell out the epistemological consequences of the Lutheran position).

[37] Cf. Richard Bauckham in a review of *CC*: 'One has the impression it is Lutheran theology that Hampson admires, even though it is the Catholic sense of the self that is more acceptable to her.'(*In Principio*, Autumn 2003).

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MISUNDERSTANDINGS

Finally, Laurence, I have the unwelcome task of responding to aspects of your article which I find distasteful, distortive and wholly unjustified. Excuse me that I must do this. I have devoted years of my life to the work which has gone into these two books and, in the present context, I must say of *CC* that it would be too bad if it failed to reach its intended readership. That intended readership is in large part Catholic. Why I have desired to explain the Lutheran structure of thought to Catholics – ever since thirty years ago I recognised the confusion present in Catholic writing – I'm not quite sure! One Anglican teaching in an Anglo-Catholic seminary – e-mailing me out of the blue and telling me that he'd have to re-write his lecture on M C D'Arcy's response to Nygren – commented, of *CC*, that it was 'much the most interesting, exciting and disturbing theology book I have read in a very long while'. I need some more of this in print if people are ever to find this book. For – as my correspondent had found in commending the book to another – it is of course inherently unlikely that Daphne Hampson, known feminist and *enfant terrible* of theology, should have written a book such as this. Perhaps I am not quite known for who I am: these debates have been integral to my whole development. Again, thank you Fergus for remarking (in a jacket commendation): 'It is a remarkably generous exposition of both forms of Christianity: not pseudo-neutral but wonderfully sympathetic all round.' (How could one not find empathy when writing of men the likes of Contarini or Seripando, or be bowled over as I was initially by Lutheran thought?)[38] There are profound issues concerning what it means to be a human being and to relate to God involved. That is why it matters so much that we should comprehend where others are coming from.

After Christianity

I start with misreadings which largely pertain to AC.

Firstly, Laurence, there is your suggestion – I should have thought in the face of all the evidence and what I clearly state – that I have an 'Aristotelian' or perhaps 'Cartesian' (in any case 'substantial') concept of the self. If such a reading could be possible it must seem to me that I (or other feminist authors) must state what we do until blue in the face. The *basic thesis* of *AC* is that masculinist theology (a God conceived of as omnipotent, 'other', and self sufficient) is a reflection of a certain (male) conception of the self; whereas it is the different understanding of the self present in much feminist writing (and I should have thought held by many women) which

[38] Cf. also the reviewer in *Theology* (March – April 200): 'I have no sympathy with Dr Hampson's own theology, but this book is a delight to read and leaves me feeling strangely in her debt.'

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should allow us to think otherwise of the relationship to God. As I suggest, feminist theorists commonly have a notion of the self as centred-in-relation. (I quote the late Roger Poole: 'All thinking is legislative. The vital moment in this process of transformation is when the *alternatives* offered in a preceding system have to be *rejected*.'[39]) For it is only as we are 'centred' that we are able to be present to others; while it is through our many and multifaceted relations that we come to be so 'centred'. Again, I should have thought that it could not be clearer than it is in *CC* that I am one with Luther in rejecting an Aristotelian understanding of reality (and critical of Catholicism's inability, at least until recently, to move forward in this regard). More especially I devote a chapter to discussing, with appreciation, Kierkegaard's conception of the self, of which I comment – as though taking this for granted – that it is a post-Hegelian, relational self and not an Aristotelian 'substantial' notion (cf. *CC* 249, 281, 284).[40] Further, it must be crazy to suggest that I could think the self to exist 'prior to any specificities it has, like gender, or freedom' (H 16). How come – were this so – the many references in my work for example to de Beauvoir's appropriation of Hegel's master/slave, whereby woman takes on the false consciousness of 'slave', as her sense of who she is is reflected back to her by the culture of the master? What more can I say? That I don't have a 'post-modern' (if that is what it is) non-existent sense of self is certainly the case: I believe in women's self-actualisation. But it does not follow that I hold to the notion of the self prevalent in (male) modernity: precisely I critique that – at length.

Secondly, I find your depiction of my understanding of that which is God misleading. But this is complex – at least given the presuppositions of a Christian perspective – and is worth going over. You quote me as commenting that God is 'intrinsically a part of what we are' (*AC*214). One must read this in context. What I am saying is that God is not foreign to that which we are, not an 'Other' to ourselves (as one might think were one to hold a notion of the self and of God as each self-enclosed and monadic). It does not follow that there is *no distinction* between that which we are and that which is God. We may say that God is that onto which we open out; that to which we are immediately present. Hence my interest (cf. the penultimate chapter of *AC*, where I dialogue with

[39] *Towards Deep Subjectivity* (Harper Torchbooks, 1972), p. 145. My italics.

[40] I am moreover unclear that I am into 'a structure of the human person as a liberatory event established as an intellectual break from anterior shackles based on a practice of reason, thus a break from patriarchy'. It sounds over-violent. In hope I take human liberty and equality for granted; until I come up against a situation (as in the church) in which this does not pertain. Nor do I know how it could be that the 'shackles' have been based on reason?!

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Schleiermacher) in that process of 'osmosis' (for want of a better word) which takes place across the boundaries of the self. (Incidentally this notion of the self must be the polar opposite to that which you claim I hold.) Could we attain to a more sophisticated conception of the self (instead of thinking of it as monadic, with rigid ego-boundaries) that would allow us the better to comprehend how it is that we can 'draw upon' or be 'open to' that love and power which is God. In other words I think we need to do away with ('deconstruct' in its technical, Derridean, sense might be the right word) the immanent/transcendent distinction (which gets us nowhere) in favour of something more subtle.

Finally, Christology. It is as you say inherently unlikely that I should have held a chair in a leading British theology faculty and have no idea what is Christian orthodoxy! (I should have thought that it is because I know my way around Christian dogmatics that my writing is the challenge that it is?) You quote one sentence, entirely bereft of context; in *CC* (235) making reference to my discussion in *AC*: 'Of course Christians do not deify Jesus; they hold that Jesus was one among others, a full human person and no more.' So far as it goes, this is correct! Christians do not deify Jesus as though he were a little god; as Kierkegaard puts it 'as though God were to appear as a large green bird'[41] (which must be some variety of Apollinarianism or perhaps Eutychianism). That Christians hold to a *two* nature Christology necessitates that my argument be other and more complex than had I simply to show that there could be no particularity of the 'large green bird/god walking around on earth' variety. I must argue that it is not possible to hold to particularity in the form of conceiving that this human being could have, conjoined with this human nature, also a divine nature in a way which is qualitatively different than in the case of all others. Hence my sentence *immediately following upon* that which you quote: that 'I would not myself find it possible to say *of such a man that he was also God*' (*CC* 235, italics added). Thus, further, I agree with Herbert McCabe (contra Maurice Wiles)[42], see my discussion in *AC* 34–35, that it cannot be said that it is not possible for a man also to be God in the way in which it is not possible also to be a sheep: to think that would be to make a category mistake. (The Cappadocians, incidentally, also made this point.) Thus, again, I cover myself here through simply saying (in ruling out the possibility of Christology) that I cannot credit, of Jesus 'that he *and he alone* had a second and divine nature' (CC 235, italics added), with the implication in a sense in which others

[41] *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, trans. Swenson (Princeton University Press, 1941), pp. 218–9.
[42] *New Blackfriars*, Vol. 58, no. 687 (Aug. 1977), p. 353.

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do not. I have expressed myself so carefully in discussing these questions over the years.[43]

Christian Contradictions

I come to *CC*.

In the first place I have to say of that book that it is not, and does not purport to be, a 'study of Luther'. Its subtitle runs 'the structures of *Lutheran* and Catholic thought'. Thus I say, at the beginning of the first chapter, that I wish to 'convey the structure of Lutheran thought' and that I shall do this through 'drawing on numerous Lutheran theologians by way of illustration', thereby giving some sense of 'different schools of Lutheran thought and divergent emphases' (*CC* 9). Killing two birds with one stone, I look at Luther through Lutheran eyes (hence the deliberate use of much *interpretative* literature). What I seek to convey is that there has been a long-standing and stable paradigm, a way of structuring Christian thought, of which Luther may have been the progenitor but which has shown itself capable of ever new formulation. (Catholics – as I have remarked – have been too ready to think Luther a one-off, consequently giving undue attention to the Reformer's 'personality' while failing to address the fact that he and Lutherans following him structure Christian theology otherwise.) To accomplish this there is no need for me to be in the narrow sense a 'Luther scholar', devoting my life to the seventy dense volumes of the *Weimarer Ausgabe*. Others have mined them. But it hardly follows from this that I have failed to read Luther over the years! – indeed since in taking my General Examinations for my doctorate in theology at Harvard I offered him for one of my 'two theologians'.

Secondly, in regard to the genre of this book. Agreed it is clearly not intended to be a sociological study as to what Christians in the pew think. (Though it impresses me, of theologians, that they take as axiomatic the thought structure of their respective traditions, working creatively within its parameters.) The book is suspended

[43] Incidentally I should have thought Hemming's Christology highly questionable. One surely cannot make anything *Christologically* of Christ's maleness. Given the principle of 'not taken on, not redeemed' women would in this case be deemed outside the scheme of salvation. One should understand Christology as having been formulated within the philosophical context of the neo-Platonism of the ancient world; such that what was being said was that in Christ God took on the 'real universal' 'humanity' – in which we all, Jew and Greek, male and female, participate. Of course in order to take on what it is to be a human one has to be of a certain race and sex; a real universal is not an 'umbrella' concept. It is the loss of this philosophical context which has led people to deify what the ancient world would have called a particular example of humanity (in this case a male Jew). I discuss this in my *Theology and Feminism*, Blackwell, 1990, pp. 53–58. Further, to say that 'Mary is the answer to why a male Christ may redeem woman' (H 23) must be Christologically aberrant. As far as I know, Christians are held to be redeemed in Christ. To think in terms of two humans, Christ and Mary, who have in effect been deified, may well be a descent into paganism may it not?

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between history and ideas. Its thesis could have been presented in terms of 'ideal types': that (given Christian presuppositions) there are two ways in which the human relation to God may be conceptualised which we shall call "A" and "B". But it is much more interesting that these ideal types have found a historical instantiation – with all the quirks that history brings. The book thus holds something in common with Scandinavian motif research (as it is known); a genre which impresses me as allowing fundamental structures and the issues which they raise to emerge. After all it is through the failure to place terms within the structure which gives them their particular connotations, but rather transposing what they read into their own and alien structure, that Catholics have gone so far astray in reading Lutheran work. Where my work differs from the ethos of Scandinavian writing is that, at the end of the day, I stand back from and *critique* Lutheran thought. Moreover I find merit also in the Catholic structure; think the disjuncture between the values and presuppositions embedded in each to be important; and want to know (see the final chapter on Kierkegaard) whether it might be possible to bring together the strengths of each in a complex model for the self's relation to God. Further, I want to ask truth questions; hence the chapter which consists in a three way dialogue also with my own position.

What to say about the attack on my scholarship (and piggy-backed on this, the current state of theology)? I might have hoped that, however one might view my position (which I only elucidate late in the book) recognition could be given to the intrinsic fascination of the diverse material, often novel or not generally available, which I consider. I have been told that the opening chapter is a particularly clear exposition of Lutheran thought. There follows a depiction of early sixteenth century Italian Catholicism and analysis of the Tridentine decree on justification. A chapter on Catholic Luther scholarship reports on much material not otherwise available in English. Again, I know of no other description of the English Anglo- and Roman Catholic misreading of Nygren.[44] It must surely be useful that I provide a chapter-long discussion of the debates in the United States and Germany leading up to the signing of the JD and a full analysis of that document. There is the three way debate based around a discussion of Bultmann (whose position is not well understood in that part of the Anglo-Saxon world ignorant of Lutheran thought). And the book ends with an original evaluation of Kierkegaard's writing on the self. This book took me years. In pursuit of material, I made use of a collection of German language material which (courtesy of the Goethe Institute) toured Britain at

[44] Thus when Nygren writes 'agape' he is read as meaning Catholic 'grace', while 'eros' is taken to be Catholic 'creation'; whereupon it is stated that in casting eros as sin Nygren wants to abolish human nature. And so forth.

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the time of the 1983 Luther centenary, raided libraries in Harvard, Cambridge, Berlin, the Kierkegaard library in Copenhagen and finally the Luther Research Centre (which had all the detailed reports on the events leading up to the signing of the JD) in Strasbourg. The book got me my chair. So I'm puzzled.

You and I had, I thought, always enjoyed a good relationship Laurence. So what is going on in these constant attempts to trip me up (I must say without success)? I really doubt that I 'demonstrate a shaky understanding of Catholic fundamentals' (H 4, footnote). I am sorry if on one small matter, indulgences, I express myself as you would not have; actually I don't see that what I say is different from you – as I remember I took my phraseology from a Catholic text-book. Of course I know the mass is considered an *anamnesis* of the one sacrifice of Christ; the point I am making (see my text) is that the Latin mass, understood as a sacrifice, exemplifies (whether in Anselm or in Schillebeeckx) a two-way action between God and humanity, in contrast with the Lutheran one-way action from God to humanity. I agree I did not study in depth Otto Hermann Pesch's voluminous *Theologie der Rechtfertigung bei Martin Luther und Thomas von Aquin*. Having moved around in that book I decided, as precisely I said (*CC* 137), that a *more recent* article in which he considered the Lutheran *simul justus et peccator* (which I was using as an organising theme to discuss Catholic writing on Luther) was what I needed. I would be interested if you think he says anything in the book which contravenes his distinction between 'ontological' and 'existential', which is what I wanted to critique? It is of no relevance that (as I point out) Luther himself uses the term *simul justus et peccator* to convey an early (analytic proleptic) position which he later abandons: what we need to discuss is Luther's mature position, which has been that of subsequent Lutheranism and which the phrase *simul justus et peccator* is used to encapsulate. It is not sensible to complain that I compare Pesch unfavourably with Pfürtner, whom '[I] clearly think understands Luther better because of his work in a Protestant environment' (H xx) while it is the case – as you point out – that Pesch also held such a post. My favourable estimate of Pfürtner is on account of the fact that he has grasped the paradigm shift which takes place in Luther (which may indeed have come about through the context in which he worked). But so be it.

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