HOLIER THAN THOU? PIETY AND PARADOX IN PLATO'S EUTHYPHRO AND THE BINDING OF ISAAC

by

JOSHUA KIME LAWSON

(Under the Direction of Dr. William L. Power)

ABSTRACT

This work discusses two classical paradoxes which have been offered concerning the nature of piety: the Akedah and Euthyphro's Dilemma. These paradoxes revolve around the idea that if divine reality determines piety, then piety must lie outside of the sphere divine influence. Accordingly, piety must be dependent upon the commandments of the divine or the divine must subjugate itself to the nature of piety. Many opponents of theism have offered these paradoxes as evidence against the existence of the divine from a moral perspective. In this thesis, I insist that such a theological position need not be held. From the perspective of process theology, the divine can be described as participating in every facet of the universe's existence. Piety can be described as emulating the divine by actively seeking to improve the world and its inhabitants without falling prey to the paradoxes of Euthyphro's Dilemma or Divine Command Moral Theory.

INDEX WORDS: Piety, Akedah, Euthyphro, Process Theology, Divine Command Moral Theory, Divine Impassibility

HOLIER THAN THOU? PIETY AND PARADOX IN PLATO'S EUTHYPHRO AND THE BINDING OF ISAAC

by

JOSHUA KIME LAWSON

B.A. Gardner Webb University, 1999

A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of The University of Georgia in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

MASTER OF ARTS

ATHENS, GEORGIA

2002

© 2002

Joshua Kime Lawson

All Rights Reserved

HOLIER THAN THOU? PIETY AND PARADOX IN PLATO'S EUTHYPHRO AND THE BINDING OF ISAAC

by

JOSHUA KIME LAWSON

Approved:

Major Professor: William L. Power

Committee: Thomas B. Slater
Carolyn Medine-Jones

Electronic Version Approved:

Gordhan L. Patel
Dean of the Graduate School
The University of Georgia
August 2002

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the direction of Dr. William L. Power in the formation and production of this thesis. Without his insight and experience, this work would not be possible. I would also like to thank the Religion Department of the University of Georgia for offering me a place to stand for my matriculation. I wish to thank my parents, whom I love, for their support and encouragement for all of these years. This work would be impossible otherwise. I would also like to thank all of the thinkers who have involved themselves in the tradition of process theism. Without their spiritual sacrifices, progress in the tradition of religious theology would have been seriously compromised.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

"Do two walk together unless they have made an agreement?"
Amos 3:2

"I used to look for inspiration in higher
places
but the higher you go
like to Plato or God
the less space there is in which to
stand."

Charles Bukowski

Ever since homo sapiens emerged as the dominant species on planet Earth, humans have sought to justify their existential position within the cosmos in terms of belief in divine reality.[1] Archeological records are replete with examples of this first premise, as every known cluster of ancient people has left evidence in their texts and in their material cultures which suggests that belief in a divine reality was the foundation of the world views of most people.

When one believes in a divine reality, for any reason, the question of ethical responsibility becomes existentially imperative; as the perceived theoretical structure of

[1] Since I am writing here from an historical perspective, I have chosen to use the term "divine reality" to describe that which many different kinds of theists through time have believed to be the foundation of reality itself.

divine reality will heavily influence both what an individual believes to be ethically normative and how an individual ideally behaves.[2] For this reason, most pre-Enlightenment ethical systems involve some theory of divine reality which serves to ground morally normative values in the form of standards of conduct to which all ethical inquiries can appeal. Moral standards are intended to discriminate correct action from incorrect action within a given context of human experience. Most discussions of ethics within the context of religion, whether theoretical or practical, will tend to ground moral standards in the nature of divine reality. Theoretically, religious thinkers have attempted to describe the relationship between the nature of God and the nature of moral standards within a coherent metaphysical system. In the sphere of practice, religious people have attempted to accurately describe the characteristics of correct action. In religious traditions, thinkers and practitioners have expressed both of these concerns with one question: what is piety?

Piety has been generally defined dipolarly as correct faith and correct action in the history of religions. This simple definition, however, falls into two paradoxes when one reflects upon it critically. First, one is faced with the dilemma of the nature of correct faith and action. In traditional theism, the nature of piety is thought to be a standard by which one can distinguish piety from impiety. Given this assumption, theists have argued for centuries about the ontological ground of piety, wondering ultimately if divine reality determines what is pious, or if piety determines what is divine reality? Secondly, if one

---

[2] The issue of belief also looms large in the background of the ethical question which this thesis seeks to parse, as every human action presupposes in practice some sort of world-view concerning the nature of reality. I will recognize that faith can be expressed in many different ways by various cultures; but I will

assumes that piety is correct faith and correct action, one is faced with a dilemma when correct faith and correct action are not seemingly in agreement.

For the purposes of this thesis, I seek to explore how these paradoxes of piety have been illustrated in two foundational texts from the theistic traditions of the West: Plato's *Euthyphro* from the Greek philosophical tradition and the *Akedah* from the Hebrew biblical tradition. In chapter two, I intend to introduce the *Akedah* by offering background on the composition and context of the narratives, as well as the major trends of the interpretation of these texts in Western traditions. I will devote chapter three to the exposition of the moral theory which has most often been gleaned from the *Akedah*, that is, divine command moral theory. After the completion of the chapter three, I will introduce the most prominent major theological objection to a moral theory of divine command, which is contained in Plato's *Euthyphro*. At the conclusion of chapter four, I will discuss in more detail the paradoxes concerning the theological issue of piety as it is uncovered in these texts. In the history of theology, the idea of piety has been expressed in terms of the three "theological virtues" of faith, hope and love; and the paradoxes of piety have been discussed primarily within the context of "divine command" theories. In chapter five, I intend to summarize the tradition of the theological virtues in order to show how both Christian piety has developed as an historical and cultural trend. In my final chapter, I wish to show how a model of piety based upon the process philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead can offer assistance in solving the problem of piety as it is articulated in the *Euthyphro* and the *Akedah*.

---

refrain from discussing the issue of faith itself, due to its greatly complex nature, for the purposes of narrowing this thesis.

This work discusses two classical paradoxes which have been offered concerning the nature of piety: the Akedah and Euthyphro's Dilemma. These paradoxes revolve around the idea that if divine reality determines piety, then piety must lie outside of the sphere divine influence. Accordingly, piety must be dependent upon the commandments of the divine or the divine must subjugate itself to the nature of piety. Many opponents of theism have offered these paradoxes as evidence against the existence of the divine from a moral perspective. In this thesis, I insist that such a theological position need not be held. From the perspective of process theology, the divine can be described as participating in every facet of the universe's existence. Piety can be described as emulating the divine by actively seeking to improve the world and its inhabitants without falling prey to the paradoxes of Euthyphro's Dilemma or Divine Command Moral Theory.

CHAPTER 2

PARADOX, PIETY AND THE BINDING OF ISAAC

> "After these things God tested Abraham. He said to him, 'Abraham!' And he said, 'Here I am.' He said 'Take your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burn offering on one of the mountains that I shall show you.'
>
> Genesis 22:1-2

> "By faith Abraham, when put to the test, offered up Isaac. He who had received the promises was ready to offer up his only son, of whom he had been told 'It is through Isaac that descendants shall be named for you.' He considered the fact that God is able even to raise someone from the dead – and figuratively speaking, he did receive him back.
>
> Hebrews 11:17-19

Akedah

This story of the binding of Isaac from the Book of Genesis, popularly called the *Akedah*[3] in the Jewish tradition, has captured Jewish, Christian and Muslim religious imaginations for over two millennia. To most believers, this tale represents the faith of a righteous man who simply answered God's calling with the response "Here I am," a man

[3] From the Hebrew *'-k-d*, "to bind." See Nahum M. Sarna, *The JPS Commentary: Genesis*, (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1989), 150.

who was willing to give up his only son in order to fulfill the will of God.[4] Many biblical scholars interpret this story as a polemic against the religious practice of child sacrifice which was rampant among the Ancient Near Eastern neighbors of the Israelites. Another popular reading of this narrative was offered by the Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard, who proffered the idea that a sovereign God by definition could suspend the ethical in order to accomplish any of his desired ends.[5] Erich Auerbach, commenting on this ancient tale, has aptly noted that "Since so much in the story is dark and incomplete, and since the reader knows that God is a hidden God, his effort to interpret it constantly finds something new to feed upon."[6]

The Text of the Akedah: Composition, Context, Structure

Although the major thrust of this work is not contained within the rubric of "biblical studies," I recognize the importance of interpreting stories out of their literary, cultural and historical contexts. This story was more than likely compiled as part of the Elohistic epic narrative of the ancient Israelite tradition, with later additions from the pens of redactors.[7] The tale probably first appeared in written form during the united Israelite

---

[4] See Hebrews 11:17-20 and James 2:21-23 for early Christian perspectives on the *Akedah*. See also Q. 37:91-105 for early Islamic interpretations. As foundational documents, both the New Testament and the Qur'an have heavily influenced the reading(s) of the *Akedah* for subsequent traditions.

[5] Søren Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling*, translated by Walter Lowrie (New York: Everyman's Library, 1994).

[6] Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, translated by Willard R. Trask (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), 15.

[7] Although finding agreement among Pentateuchal source critics can be problematic, most scholars agree that the *Akedah* is mostly an Elohist (E) narrative with Yahwistic (J) elements and Priestly (Rp) readactions – with minor reservations, of course. Martin Noth, following the JEDP school of Wellhausen, claimed that

monarchy of the tenth century BCE, although the story itself could have been passed down during previous centuries through the oral traditions of Semitic people.[8] The *Akedah* is found in the book of Genesis, a story in which God made a covenant with Abraham, promising him lineage and land in exchange for Abraham's obedience as symbolized by the sign of circumcision. The language of God's covenant with Abraham, articulated both in chapters fifteen and seventeen of the book of Genesis, is reminiscent of the language of "suzerain" treaties, which were common expressions of lord/vassal relationships in Ancient Near Eastern cultures. This type of treaty implies the relationship of a sovereign to a subject, and, in this case, God is understood to be sovereign over Abraham. In exchange for Abraham's loyalty, God promises to protect Abraham and to bring prosperity to his descendants who will be born of his wife Sarah.[9] The suzerain covenant between God and Abraham is the background to the story of God's test of Abraham.

---

this narrative was wholly Elohistic, but he also claimed that the Yahwistic source was the literary basis for E. See Noth , *A History of Pentateuchal Traditions*, translated by Bernhard W. Anderson, (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1972), 20-41, 264. Gerhard von Rad, following Hermann Gunkel, claimed that the story was an independent oral tradition which was appropriated by the Elohist. See von Rad, *Genesis: A Commentary*, translated by John H. Marks, (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1961), 233. Terrence Fretheim states that this story is most likely a Priestly redaction of an Elohist tradition which was addressed in its canonical form to a post-exilic Jewish community which felt, as Isaac, *almost* "sacrificed" during the experience of the Exile. Despite these objections, the commonly held consensus is that the *Akedah* is part of the E tradition. See Fretheim, "The Book of Genesis," from *The New Interpreter's Bible, Volume One*, edited by Leander Keck (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), 494.

[8] von Rad, 233.

[9] Whether or not this covenant is conditional or everlasting is a point of departure for Northern and Southern Israelite traditions.

According to the story, foregrounded in Genesis 21, Abraham fathered a child by his wife's servant, Hagar, but this son was not the child whom God had promised.[10] Rather, Abraham's wife Sarah conceived and bore Isaac. Isaac was the child of promise, the first fruits of God's covenant with Abraham. The story of Abraham, however, takes a darker turn in Genesis 22. In this chapter, God tests Abraham by asking him to offer Isaac as a burnt offering. Abraham journeys with Isaac to Mount Moriah and is prepared to sacrifice Isaac. At the climatic moment, the angel of the LORD stops Abraham to announce that he has passed God's test. Finding a ram caught in the thicket, Abraham praises God and sacrifices the animal instead of his son.

Structurally, the *Akedah* seems to be centered around the task of sacrificing Isaac, although this task itself is centered between the theological interpretation of this story as a test of God.[11] According to Claus Westermann,

> " This narrative begins with a statement of its theme (v. 1a): God tests Abraham. The structure of the text reflects the elements of the test. In verses 1b-2, the task is imposed; in verses 3-10, Abraham carries out the task up to a certain point; in verses 11-12a, he is exempted from completing the task. Verse 12b recognizes that the test has been passed and substitutes a different conclusion; verse 13 records Abraham's reaction; verses 14 and 19 conclude the narrative with Abraham's return. Verses 15-18 are a later addition."[12]

Westermann asserts that the element of the test is evidence that the *Akedah* is a theological narrative, reflecting a relatively late Deuteronomistic edition to a more ancient, Elohistic view of God.[13]

---

[10] There are important structural parallels in the stories of Isaac and Ishmael. Both are taken outside of the camp, both face impending doom, both are rescued by the Angel of the Lord and returned to the camp. Compare Genesis 21:8-19 with Genesis 22:1-13. See Sarna, 150.

[11] Claus Westermann, *Genesis: A Practical Commentary*, translated by David E. Green, (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1987), 159-163.

[12] Ibid, 159-160.

[13] Ibid.

The *Akedah* has eight characters: God, Abraham, Isaac, Sarah, Abraham's servants, the angel of the LORD, the sacrificial ram, and the reader. God is secretly testing Abraham. Abraham is secretly premeditating Isaac's death. Isaac, the one not privy to any of the secret, believes that he and Abraham will sacrifice an animal. Sarah and the servants are watching Abraham and Isaac walk out of view. The angel is the revelator, signaling the end of the test. The sacrificial ram is the final victim of the test, captured in the thicket as if by the hand of Fate. The reader is with the story from the beginning, knowing from the start that this is only a test – although the reader feels the dramatic tension at the climax of the tale.

As one can see, the *Akedah* is a story which reflects great compositional complexity. The scope of our concern, however, is more theological in its aim. In order to adequately comment on the theological nature of the tale, one must be familiar with its history of interpretation. The following section will be a brief summary of the readings of the *Akedah* which have most effected its interpretation through history.

The Akedah: Historical Interpretations

Commentators have offered many readings of this story of Abraham. Many have noted that this passage is a polemic against Ancient Near Eastern practices of child sacrifice.[14] Sacrifice, however, seems only to be a plot device to describe the covenant

---

[14] Many follow Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology, Volume One*, translated by D.M.G. Stalker (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1962), 168. Von Rad, following O. Eissfeldt, claimed that Punic steles from the Roman period reflected a practice of redeeming a child which was promised to a god by sacrificing a sheep. The *Akedah*, however, is a story which is much older than these Punic steles. The

relationships between the characters.[15] The concept of sacrifice in this story demands that one gives something valuable to a more powerful party to demonstrate loyalty and allegiance.[16] The object of sacrifice is something of ultimate value to the one who offers it. Loyalty is demonstrated by the willingness of the one who offers to suffer a deficit in order to benefit their object of allegiance with a surplus. The *Akedah*, then, uses sacrifice as a metaphor to express the more basic issue of this text, which is piety.

Following this line of thinking, many Jewish interpretations of this passage assert that the text is ultimately concerned with Abraham's commitment to his agreement with God in the relationship of vassal to suzerain through his willingness to offer his son of promise as a sacrifice to God.[17] In the Jewish tradition, this story is most often associated with the holiday of Rosh Hashanah – the Jewish new year. The horn of the ram which was sacrificed is identified with the shofar of Rosh Hashanah. Rosh Hashanah is a time

---

theory that the *Akedah* is a polemic against sacrifice is largely challenged in modern Jewish scholarship. Nahum Sarna insists that interpreting this story as a polemic against human sacrifice is unnecessary, since homicide is prohibited and animal sacrifice is instituted both in Genesis 4:3-16 (Cain and Abel) and Genesis 8:20-22; 9:1-7 (Noah). See Sarna, 392.

[15] E.A Speiser commented, "Certainly, the object of the story had to be something other than a protest against human sacrifice in general, or child sacrifice in particular – an explanation that is often advanced." And later, "The object of the ordeal, then, was to discover how firm was the patriarch's faith in the ultimate divine purpose." Speiser, *The Anchor Bible: Genesis*, (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1964), 165-166.

[16] According to Bruce Lincoln, sacrifice can also represent the unification of a community through acts of ritual dismemberment which reenact cosmogonies. See Bruce Lincoln, *Myth, Cosmos, and Society: Indo-European Themes of Creation and Destruction* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986), 41. René Girard argues that sacrifice is a communal device which purges violence from society by choosing one sacred victim to substitute. René Girard, *Violence and the Sacred*, translated by Patrick Gregory (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1972), 1-38. The sacrificial narrative of Isaac does not seem to conform to scholarly models of human sacrifice.

[17] I think this relationship is further evidenced by the element of secrecy in the story. Secrecy represents the ability of the more powerful party to hide knowledge and intentions from the party of lesser power. Particularly, God is able to keep a secret from Abraham because God is sovereign over Abraham. Abraham is able to keep a secret from Isaac because Abraham is more powerful than Isaac. In the end, the ram is sacrificed as the least powerful member in the story.

for Jewish people to re-examine themselves and their commitment to God for the coming year, just as the *Akedah* reflects Abraham's existential commitment to God through his willingness to sacrifice his own son.

The ram which was finally sacrificed instead of Isaac has been the topic of lore in the Jewish tradition for centuries. According to Robert Graves,

> Midrashic comment on the ram is expansive and fanciful. God had made this particular beast on the First Day of Creation; its ashes became the foundations of the Temple Sanctuary; King David used its sinews to string his harp; Elijah girded his loins with its skin; its left horn was blown by God on Mount Sinai; and the right horn will be sounded in the Days of the Messiah to recall the lost sheep of Israel from exile. When Abraham found the ram, it repeatedly freed itself from one thicket, only to become entangled in another; which signified that Israel would be similarly entangled in sin and misfortune, until at length redeemed by a blast on the right-hand horn.[18]

As one can see, even the minutest details of the *Akedah* have been expanded into rich, independent traditions of religious folklore.

Rabbis in the Jewish tradition have discussed the story of the *Akedah* with great fervor in their writings. Two of the most widely known interpreters of this story in Rabbinic Judaism were Rabbi Shlomo Itshaki (Rashi) and Rabbi Moses ben Maimonides (Rambam). Rashi underlined the phrase "the one you love" in his commentary of the *Akedah*. By constructing a theoretical dialogue between God and Abraham, Rashi insisted that God had chosen Isaac, the one who God commanded Abraham to love, as rightful heir to the promises of God.[19] Rambam wrote that the *Akedah* contains two great principles of faith. First, the tale shows the extent that a God-fearing person should act in order to demonstrate their faith

---

[18] Robert Graves and Raphael Patai, *Hebrew Myths: The Book of Genesis*, (New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1964), 178.

[19] Rabbi Shlomo Itshaki, *Rashi: Commentaries on the Pentateuch*, selected and translated by Chaim Pearl, (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1970), 49-52.

in God. Second, Rambam believed that this story showed that prophecy is true, because Abraham knew that God would provide a sacrifice. According to Rambam, knowledge of these two principles in the *Akedah* should assist believers who are experiencing the trial of their faith.[20] Within the Jewish tradition, these two interpretations of the *Akedah* have been dominant perspectives on the text.[21] Jewish rabbis in the modern period interpret this story much differently from the commentators from the Medieval period. In light of the Holocaust, modern rabbis underline the moral choice of Abraham in the story in an attempt to prove that Abraham did not blindly obey the orders of God, rather, he exercised his free, moral will.[22]

Many non-Jewish commentators have offered opinions concerning the content of the *Akedah*. Christians have historically associated this story with the death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. None of the writers of the New Testament made this correlation, but this interpretation of the *Akedah* has been prevalent since it was introduced in the second century by Irenaeus of Lyon in his work *Against Heresies*.[23] Muslims celebrate the event of the *Akedah* every year during the Feast of the Ram.

---

[20] Rabbi Moses ben Maimonides, *The Guide for the Perplexed*, Second Edition, translated by M. Friedlander, (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1956), 306-307.

[21] For modern literary interpretations of the *Akedah* in the Jewish tradition, see Michael Brown, "Biblical Myth and Contemporary Experience: The Akedah in Modern Jewish Literature," *Judaism*, Issue 121, Volume 31, Number 1, (New York: American Jewish Congress, 1982), 99-111.

[22] For a modern Rabbinical perspective on the theme of the *Akedah*, see Lippman Bodoff, "The Real Test of the Akedah: Blind Obedience versus Moral Choice," *Judaism*, i.165, v.42, n.1, Winter 1993, 71-92.

[23] Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 4.5.4, in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers, Volume One: the Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus*, translated by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, (New York: The Christian Literature Company, 1896), 467.

Muslims on pilgrimage to Mecca also throw stones at a pillar, symbolizing Abraham's response to the temptation of Satan in Islamic versions of the story. According to Islamic tradition, Satan tempted Abraham not to sacrifice Isaac, reasoning that God should not require a human to sacrifice their own child. Abraham responded to Satan's reasoning by throwing stones at him. This action is performed symbolically by every Muslim on *hajj*.

Modern literary critics have also been drawn to this ancient work. In his widely read work *Mimesis*, Erich Auerbach has compared how the knowledge between Abraham and God is expressed in the *Akedah* with treatments of similar instances of "background" knowledge in Homeric epics. According to Auerbach, in the Genesis story

> God appears without bodily form (yet he "appears), coming from some unspecified place - we only hear his voice, and that utters nothing but a name, a name without an adjective… and of Abraham too nothing is made perceptible except the words in which he answers God - *Hinne-ni*, Behold me here - with which, to be sure, a most touching gesture expressive of obedience and readiness is suggested, but it is left to the reader to visualize it. Moreover, *the two speakers are not on the same level* [italics mine]: if we conceive of Abraham in the foreground… God is not there too: Abraham's words and gestures are directed toward the depths of the picture or upward, but in any case the undetermined, dark place from which the voice comes to him is not in the foreground.[24]

Auerbach has identified this literary phenomenon as "backgrounding," which he has insisted is the vagueness (or secrecy) written within the foundational stories of Biblical narratives so that religious doctrines may be more easily extrapolated from these texts.[25] Auerbach asserted that "backgrounding" reflects the commitment of the writers to the literal truth of the story as it was recorded. Although I disagree with his interpretation, as Auerbach seems to have a bias regarding the formation of epic

---

[24] Auerbach, 9.

[25] Auerbach has compared this notion of "backgrounding" in the sacrificial narrative with that of "foregrounding," or the clear revelation of the specific intentions and histories of the characters within the epics of Homer in order to express his theory that the "western" ancients expressed their concepts of reality in literature through what is expressed and unexpressed by the characters of epic narratives.

narratives in Ancient Israel,[26] Auerbach's notion of "backgrounding" has been, perhaps, one of the twentieth century's most vital reinterpretation of this ancient tale.

Søren Kierkegaard, in his work *Fear and Trembling*, described how the moral concepts of obedience and ethics are underlined by Abraham's actions in the *Akedah*. Abraham suffered when God demanded that he sacrifice his son, because he could not be sure if God really demanded the sacrifice of Isaac or if he were misinterpreting God's mysterious will. Kierkegaard termed this dilemma "the paradox of faith."[27] The paradox of faith for Abraham is that God demands that Abraham renounce himself by keeping an obligation which is inconsistent with every ethical law under which human beings live. God demands that Abraham step outside of the universal ethical and step into an individual ethical which is contrary to the universal by killing his son. The tragic hero dies for something visibly attainable, and therefore understands a greater *telos*, still participating in the universal. Abraham, for Kierkegaard, is greater than the tragic hero. Abraham is the "knight of faith," one who is willing and ready to sacrifice his own son, whom he loves and whom God has *promised* despite the universal imperative not to kill your own loved ones. Kierkegaard terms this drive the "teleological suspension of the ethical."[28] God, being sovereign, may purposely transcend ethical norms in order to enact any desired end. Abraham has no greater *telos* in mind when he raises the knife to plunge into his own son. He then steps outside of the universal ethical to participate with God in

---

[26] "The Bible's claim to truth is not only far more urgent than Homer's, it is tyrannical – it excludes all other claims." Auerbach, 14. The view that the sacrificial narrative has been perpetuating theological tyranny since its original composition while Greek literature has been free of exclusivistic theological claims seems foolish in light of the Hebrew Bible's theological diversity.

[27] Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling*, 52, 65-66.

an individual ethical responsibility which is shrouded in secrecy. Kierkegaard wrote, "Faith itself cannot be mediated into the universal, for it would thereby be destroyed. Faith is this paradox, and the individual absolutely cannot make himself intelligible to anybody."[29] Faith for Kierkegaard, then, is a secret shared between God and the individual. God empowers the individual through faith, but faith remains the shared secret between the one who reveals the secret and the one who receives the secret.

Kierkegaard addresses the issue of the ethical defensibility of Abraham's secrecy in *Problem III* of *Fear and Trembling*.[30] In short, Kierkegaard wonders if the secrecy by which Abraham concealed his intentions from his wife, his servants and his son is morally justifiable. Kierkegaard never really answers this question, but closes his inquiry with this compelling statement: "So either there is a paradox, that the individual as the individual stands in an absolute relation to the absolute/or Abraham is lost."[31] If one holds that Abraham is a father of faith, then Kierkegaard's statement signifies that Abraham is not lost and therefore the teleological suspension of the ethical is a reality: God, through sovereignty, transcends the ethical –intending and acting secretly always out of God's own powerful prerogative despite what humans deem as good moral behavior. Kierkegaard extols Abraham repeatedly, congratulating him for his great faith which allowed him to participate in the universal ethics of God.

As one can see, the *Akedah* is a story which evokes some of the deepest aesthetic feelings and reflections of human beings. This narrative contains many tragic elements:

---

[28] Ibid., 45-57.

[29] Ibid., 61.

[30] Ibid., 71-107.

an nbreakable pact with God, a requirement of human sacrifice and, for Abraham, a morally responsible choice to make correctly. As a literary work and a cultural paradigm, this story lends itself easily to many interpretations; but for the purpose of this thesis, I wish to discuss in more detail the idea of piety which is implicit within this text.

The bulk of comment on this story is connected to the idea that Abraham's actions in the *Akedah* are pious. Abraham, valuing nothing more than his covenant with God, was willing to give up his promised son in order to demonstrate his loyalty. In each of the monotheistic traditions, Abraham is considered the exemplar and founder of monotheistic worship because of his actions in this narrative. The question which this thesis seeks to explore, however, is concerned with the nature of piety. Can the *Akedah* demonstrate the piety of Abraham?

The Akedah and Piety

According to many traditions, Abraham completed the requirements of God in the *Akedah*, but the original commandment of God would have led Abraham to kill his own son had not the entire encounter been only a test.[32] The fact that the actions of Abraham are ultimately preempted by the fulfillment of the divine test, evidenced in the story by the message of an angelic being, offers much for the reader to consider when interpreting this narrative. One must consider the nature of testing. As both a student and an

---

[31] Ibid., 107.

educator, I immediately think of tests academically. In an academically free environment, a teacher develops what should be considered a standard knowledge for students to possess, based upon all of the available pedagogical authorities. The teacher reflects this standard with a set of questions or requirements which the students must adequately fulfill in order gain the teacher's satisfactory approval. If the student meets these requirements, the student completes the test and "passes" onward with the teacher's assent. This definition, of course, presupposes that the relationship between the teacher and the student is that of a superior individual to a subordinate. A test, then, can be defined as a set of conditional requirements which a subordinate must meet in order to gain merit and the approval of a superior.

Tests can also be understood empirically. An empirical test, or an experiment, is performed in order to verify visibly the results of a scientific hypothesis. Presupposed within this model of "test" is a scientific subject who believes that the universe mostly operates consistently and predictably with observable laws, such as: the laws of mathematics, logic, physics and the physical sciences.[33] The subject intellectually expects a certain effect given the precise antecedent conditions, performing the empirical test by accurately constructing the set of conditions and recording the subsequent result. If the recorded results are repeatedly identical to the subject's hypothesis, the hypothesis has been proven correct by the empirical test. A test understood empirically can be

---

[32] In his theological interpretation of the *Akedah*, Claus Westermann has also discussed the theological meaning of "test." His commentary on Genesis expresses the "practical" dimension of testing, as denotated in his title. Westermann, 161.

[33] I have used the word "mostly" in this sentence to reflect that science uses both deductive, abductive and inductive forms of reasoning to arrive at its conclusions.

defined as the precise construction of antecedent conditions which repeatedly yields effects correctly predictable by a scientific hypothesis.

Each of these definitions of “test” have similarities and differences. Each implies a subjective tester with a particular purpose and methodology, and an objective datum which is tested. All tests presuppose criteria for fulfillment, which are imagined by the tester. Each definition presupposes that knowledge in the mind is consistent with reality in the world and that physical results can prove mental propositions. Both definitions of “test” are knowledge dependent, as tests must have coherent purposes. Tests must be intentional actions which reflect intellectual purpose, as an accident is not necessarily a test. Comparison of these two definitions also yields differences between empirical and academic testing. In an empirical test, the results are always determined by natural prior conditions in a controlled environment. In an academic test, the environment is not as controllable by the teacher, who cannot completely control the context of the students.

Academic tests deal purely with subjective consciousnesses through pedagogical methods, whereas empirical tests are mostly conducted on non-conscious objects. Differences also arise in the authority of knowledge between academic and empirical testing. In an empirical test, the knowledge of the tester concerning the results of an experiment is ultimately incomplete. If the tester already knew the exact outcome of the test, the test would be unnecessary unless the tester sought to offer the results of the test as evidence of a hypothesis to another subject. Empirically, a test is an exercise by which a subject seeks to demonstrate that their ideas are causally consistent with the effects in objective world, either because their previous knowledge of the world is incomplete or because they seek to convince someone else who has incomplete knowledge.

Academically, the teacher is believed to have adequate authority of knowledge by students and administrative authorities, qualifying them to issue tests. Although the teacher bases their personal authority in the authority of the academic community, the requirements which the students must fulfill are determined by the teacher. Essentially, academic and empirical tests use two different methods for justifying beliefs – the method of authority and the scientific method. As one can see, defining the concept of "test" within the domain of human knowledge is a complex endeavor. How, then, can one speak of God's "testing" of Abraham in the *Akedah*?

If one reads the *Akedah* in isolation from other Genesis materials, the motivations of God in the text are mysterious. God seems to test Abraham arbitrarily and even keeps the nature of the test hidden in secrecy. In the text, Abraham does not know that God's commandment is a test until the test is completed. Placing the *Akedah* in its context can be helpful in interpreting this tale.[34]

The first verse of the *Akedah* reads, "After these things, God tested Abraham."[35] Immediately, the narrative is connected to the events of Genesis 20:1-22:34, which records Abraham's first encounter with Abimelech, the expulsion of Hagar with Ishmael from Abraham's camp and Abraham's covenant with Abimelech which established him as a semi-permanent resident in the land. This story is connected to elements from the covenant traditions recorded in Genesis 15:1-21 and 17:1-27. The language of these traditions reflects the language of suzerain treaties, an Ancient Near Eastern covenant in which a vassal swore allegiance to a superior lord in exchange for protection. Given this

[34] Although the *Akedah* may have originated as an independent oral tradition, its particular placement in the body of Genesis by later redactors can offer clues to its interpretation.

context, the nature of the test seems to be that God wants Abraham to prove his loyalty to the covenant through his willingness to give to God irrevocably that which God had already promised as a stipulation of the covenant.[36] This proposition seems paradoxical. If Abraham refuses to sacrifice Isaac, then the covenant is void and Abraham no longer has God's promise of protection. If Abraham sacrifices Isaac, then he has forfeited the covenant by murdering its inheritor. This *aporia* is resolved supernaturally in the *Akedah*, an angel from heaven tells Abraham that God is only testing him. God never intended for Abraham to kill Isaac. God only wanted to see that Abraham was faithful to God's commands.

God's commands in the *Akedah* appear to be contradictory, however, creating another dilemma entirely.[37] First, God tells Abraham to offer his son as a burnt offering. Second, an angel (presumably from God) tells Abraham not to lay a hand on Isaac. If Abraham's piety is dependent upon following the commands of God, then Abraham must perform a contradiction in order to be pious. If piety is contradictory, then no standard but the arbitrary will of God can determine the difference between that which is pious and

---

[35] Genesis 22:1 (NRSV).

[36] The understanding of "God" can also become problematic. Assuming that the ancient writers of biblical literature had the same concept of deity as modern people seems foolish. Perhaps omniscience was not a fully-formed doctrine at the time of the composition of the *Akedah*, and the ancient storytellers thought that God had to test Abraham in order to observe the results of a hypothesis. For the purposes of this thesis, however, I am working with the theological assumptions contained within a classical doctrine of God in monotheistic traditions.

[37] Attempted resolutions of this contradiction are apparent in the divine command theories of medieval scholastics, as well as the suspension of the ethical in Kierkegaard, which assert that God's commands are arbitrary due to God's complete sovereignty. This position will be discussed in more detail in chapter four of this thesis.

that which is impious. In the history of theology, this concept has been expressed in a moral theory of divine command, which will be the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3

THE AKEDAH AND MORAL THEORY

> "And Samuel said, 'Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Surely, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams.' "
> 1 Samuel 15:22

> "If you love me, you will keep my commandments."
> John 14:15

Divine Command Moral Theory

Abraham's plight in the *Akedah* has offered a problem for theologians of every generation ever since the story was first introduced many millennia ago. In this story, a simple man humbly obeyed the wishes of his sovereign God, even when the consequences meant the death of his beloved son and rendered the fulfillment of his covenant with God impossible. Despite these consequences, Abraham proceeded with the sacrifice of his son Isaac until he was prevented from completing his action by an angel from God. God commands one thing in this tale, and then prohibits precisely that thing which he has commanded. Later interpreters of this story tried to cover this obvious contradiction with the idea of the test which is introduced in the first verse of this

narrative; but, as stated earlier, most commentators agree that the idea of God testing Abraham is a later addition to the account which attempted to smooth out the theological problem of God's contradictory will in this situation. This subject of this chapter will be concerned with this issue which is exposed in the *Akedah*: if piety is doing that which is commanded by God, what is piety if God's commandments are seemingly contradictory to each other? In order to answer this question, I will survey a moral theory which has been named "Divine Command Morality" by proponents and opponents alike. This position is most closely associated with the pre-Reformation nominalist theologians Duns Scotus and William of Ockham. After outlining divine command theory, I will briefly summarize various objections to the theory which have been offered by many theologians and philosophers during the past seven centuries, particularly since the philosophical Enlightenment of the eighteenth century.

An Historical Survey of Divine Command Moral Theory

Ever since the dawn of morality upon the consciousness of humanity, humans have deferred the origins and ground of moral principles to the existence and will of deity. Thinkers in every religious tradition have assumed that morality can have no other origin than divine mandate. The history of religion(s) is replete with examples of this assertion. In Hinduism, the Laws of Manu, which is perhaps one of the oldest legal codes in human history, claimed to have been developed from a form of divine inspiration.[38] Likewise, the Babylonian king Hammurabi believed that his legal code, which is one of the most

[38] Also, in the Eastern traditions, Confucius identified moral reasoning with the "mandate of Tian."

ancient Western works of law, came from divine origin. Hammurabi's Code subsequently had a great influence on the formulation of Ancient Near Eastern law, the milleu from which the Jewish Torah arose. The Priestly rendition of the reception of the Torah, without argument, declared that the substance of the Jewish law was handed directly to Moses from God, as the wondrous account of dreadful theophany from the book of *Exodus* recorded.[39] Without a doubt, the understanding of morality and legality in the Christian tradition was inherited from Jewish roots, which understood divine will to be the ultimate origin of all moral imperatives. Repeatedly, throughout the Christian Gospels, Jesus stated that the core of morality involved loving God and then keeping God's commandments out of love for God and fellow human beings.

Although the idea that humans should obey moral imperatives because these commands are grounded and enforced by God is as old as theism itself, a proper moral theory of divine command did not develop until the Middle Ages with the scholastic thinkers John Duns Scotus and William of Ockham.[40] Essentially, their position consists in the belief that human beings are expected by God to obey moral imperatives which are revealed by religious tradition because God is the sovereign author to these imperatives. Since this theory holds that God is absolutely sovereign, God can command anything he wishes– therefore, the commands of God are arbitrary. Most divine command moral theories are likewise reinforced by systems of divine reward and punishment, which in most cases are eternal in scope.

---

[39] Exodus 19:16 - 20:26

[40] I have not discussed the other major moral theory of the Middle Ages in this thesis, that is, the natural law theory of Thomas Aquinas. I find his position to be similar to the general divine command theory because

In her survey of divine command moral theory, which I believe to be the most adequate compilation of primary source material, Janine Marie Idziak lists seven points which she believes to summarize the rationale of divine command morality.[41]

1) "Divine command morality is a correlate of the divine omnipotence." According to Idziak, this position has been attributed to divine command moralists mostly by critics of the theory. In short, this position holds that if God is truly all-powerful, then the ground of morality must be centered in the power of God. To suggest that moral actions can be good or evil in themselves is an impossible tenet within this position, because the logic of this assertion would seemingly limit the power of God if it is carried through to its conclusion. Many divine command moralists, such as Karl Barth, reject this assertion.

2) "Divine command ethics is involved in the divine liberty." Idziak states that this position is most clearly elucidated in the work *On the Consolation of Theology*, by Jean Gerson[42], in which he wrote: "God surely does not will exterior things to be made for the reason that they are good, as the human will is moved by the presentation of real or apparent good; it is rather the contrary, that therefore exterior things are good because God wills them to be such… the divine will is the first law of nature." The idea which this position intended to convey was that God is not limited by

---

it remains purely deontological in its scope, remaining open to many of the criticisms which make divine command theory an untenable doctrine.

[41] Janine Marie Idziak, *Divine Command Morality: Historical and Contemporary Readings*, (New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1979), 8-10.

[42] Gerson was the chancellor of the University of Paris near the end of the fourteenth century. Although he is listed among the divine command moralists, he opposed the scholastic theology of the primary progenitors of divine command moral theory -- Scotus and Ockham. He preferred a mystical theology,

the way in which humans perceive good and evil; rather, God is free to decide for himself what good and evil may be for human beings. Gerson did not seem to want to advance this position in the direction of Scotus or Ockham, who both insisted that God's will concerning the Good is arbitrary. He did, however, want to free the will of God from the human perception of morality, making God's free will the first principle of the universe.

3) "Divine command ethics recognizes the importance of the divine will."

This position simply states that God's will is arbitrary by definition. This assertion is defended by many divine command moralists as an extension of divine omnipotence (see position number one).

4) "Divine command morality must be espoused in the realm of ethics because there cannot be anything independent of God."

According to Idziak, this position has also been articulated mostly by critics of divine command morality, mainly A.C. Ewing and Richard Price. They claim that divine command moralists are loathe to admit that anything could have ontological independence from God, being eternal and necessary with God. This assertion is consistent with the claims of only the most extreme classical theists; because logically this position leads to a strict theological determinism, making God the author and originator of evil. Even the most staunch classical theists in the history of Christianity are willing to give human beings enough freedom to proverbially hang themselves.

---

changing the curriculum at the University of Paris in order to instruct students in a piety which he believed to be more accessible to Christians than scholastic theology.

5) "Divine command ethics is related to [hu]man's dependency on God as creator."

Idziak offers this statement, which was offered by John Locke in his *Essays on the Law of Nature*, as a softer form of position four. Locke's position, in summary, is that God created humans out of nothing and can reduce humans to nothing if he wills. As a consequence of God's power, humans owe it to God to obey his commandments out of gratitude for existence.

6) "Divine command ethics satisfies the religious requirement that God be the supreme focus of one's loyalties."

Idziak states that this position was offered by Robert Merrihew Adams, a twentieth century ethicist, writing, "If our supreme commitment in life is to doing what is right just because it is right, and if what is right is right just because God wills or commands it, then surely our highest allegiance is to God."[43] I find Adams' quote to be replete with assumptions regarding the nature of rightness and human perception of what is right. An appropriate adage could be used to retort Adams' position: "The road to Hell is paved with good intentions." Likewise, one may object to Adams' statement, saying that equating "right" with "God's command" creates a tautology. Atheists may also strive to do what they believe to be right with no consideration of divine commands.

7) "Divine command ethics is grounded in God's graciousness to [hu]man in Jesus Christ."

---

[43] Adams, Robert Merrihew. "A Modified Divine Command Theory of Ethical Wrongness," in *Religion and Morality*, edited by Gene Outka and John P. Reeder, Jr. (Garden City, NY: Anchor Press, Doubleday, 1973), p. 334.

This position is most consistent with the neo-orthodox theology of Karl Barth, according to Idziak. In other words, since Christian believe that "God has given us himself" through the incarnation of Jesus, then God has an ethical claim on humanity by which he can command that which is moral. I find fault with this position even when it is limited to the Christian tradition (that is, I find this position to be obviously provincial), because it suggests that God may have changed his ethical policy towards humanity with the advent of Jesus Christ.

Essentially divine command moral theories, in their stronger and weaker forms, wish to preserve four theological assertions which can be described as tenets of "classical theism": divine omnipotence, divine liberty, the existence of God as the only possible necessary being and subsequent human dependence upon the divine. These theological concerns combined produce a position which insists that moral goodness is dependent upon the will of God, which God is free to determine arbitrarily.

A Short Critique of the Theory

Many philosophers and theologians have offered noteworthy criticisms of divine command moral theories. Most of these criticisms are centered around the notion in the ethics of divine command which asserts that God's commands are arbitrary. If God's will concerning morality is arbitrary, then God could command the commission of great atrocities, such as the sacrifice of Isaac in the *Akedah*. This logic has led to death, destruction and the displacement of millions of people throughout history and is completely unacceptable from a theological point of view which insists that God is

loving, caring and benevolent. Since the philosophical Enlightenment, many thinkers have needlessly rejected theism on the grounds that religious people commit acts of evil which they believe to be consistent with the will of God.

When morality is placed within the arbitrary will of an omnipotent God, morality simply becomes a matter of submission to a greater power and not a matter of moral freedom and choice. Prior to the rise of liberal democracy, this worldview was an accurate account of the way in which humanity perceived the divine rule in the cosmos (the Great Chain of Being), likewise mirrored by their governments. Many ancients, with the exception of the Greeks, believed that their laws were handed down from gods and rightly enforced by a priestly elite. Kings ruled during the Medieval period by "divine right," as power "trickled down" to the lords of manors through the system of feudalism. The rise of liberal democracy in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries put an end to tyrannical monarchies in much of Europe and North America. The twentieth century has seen democracy spread to Africa, Asia and South America – not without great social upheaval. A morality based in divine command works on a model of theological determinism, even for "free will theists," which is no longer adequate to describe the life of human beings in the modern world. I will address this issue at more length in the final chapter of this thesis.

The second major criticism of divine command moral theory is perhaps more ancient. Many have posed this theoretical question: if what God commands is right, then how does God know what is right without appealing to a standard other than himself? Divine command moral theory cannot account for the moral formation of God and its assumptions cause problems for theism itself, which we will examine more closely in the

following chapter. Before I can discuss this theological issue in more detail, however, I must introduce another ancient text which is concerned with the relationship between piety and deity. One of Plato's first dialogues, *Euthyphro*, is concerned with defining the nature of piety. After discussing the content and context of *Euthyphro* in the next chapter, I will discuss the theological problems concerning the nature of piety on which both the *Akedah* and the *Euthyphro* focus.

CHAPTER 4

PLATO'S PARADOX OF PIETY

> "Now think of this. Is what is holy holy because the gods approve it, or do they approve it because it is holy?"
>
> Socrates

> "But suppose, dear Euthyphro, that what is pleasing to the gods and what is holy were not two separate things. In that case if holiness were loved because it was holy, then also that what was pleasing to the gods would be loved because it is pleasing to them. And, on the other hand, if what was pleasing to them pleased because they loved it, then also the holy would be holy because they loved it. But now you see that it is just the opposite, because the two are absolutely different from each other, for the one [what is pleasing to the gods] is of a sort to be loved because it is loved, whereas the other [what is holy] is loved because it is of a sort to be loved. Consequently, Euthyphro, it looks as if you had not given me my answer – as if when you were asked to tell the nature of the holy, you did not wish to explain the essence of it. You merely tell an attribute of it, namely, that it appertains to holiness to be loved of all the gods. What it *is*, as yet you have not said. So, if you please, do not conceal this from me. No, begin again. Say what the holy is, and never mind if gods do love it, nor if it has some other attribute; on that we shall not split. Come speak out. Explain the nature of the holy and unholy…"
>
> Socrates

Euthyphro

According to Chris Emlyn-Jones, Plato's *Euthyprho* is perhaps one of the best introductions to Plato's works.[44] He praises this dialogue because the style is fast-paced

[44] Plato, *Euthyphro*, text with introduction and commentary by Chris Emyln-Jones, (London: Bristol Classical Press, 1991), 1.

and short, only two characters are present in the story, the argument seems fairly straightforward and the vocabulary is decipherable by any intermediate student of Greek. Theologians value Plato's *Euthyphro* because of its content: Socrates and Euthyphro try to identify the nature of holiness and end in *aporia,* or unresolved contradiction. Before one can discuss this theological issue in *Euthyphro,* however, one must have a knowledge of the general background of this classic dialogue of Plato.

The Text of Euthyphro: Composition, Context, Structure

Much like the *Akedah*, the *Euthyphro* reflects great complexity in its composition, context and structure. The form of the *Euthyphro* is a dialogue, a familiar adage of Plato. *Euthyphro* appears within the greater context of a four-part Socratic drama: beginning with Socrates as he awaits trial in the *Euthphro,* continuing with the trial of Socrates in the *Apology* and his last days in *Crito,* and finally climaxing with Socrates' death in *Phaedo*. The records of Thrasyllus, the astrologer of the Roman Emperor Tiberius, indicate that Plato's *Euthyphro* was the first dialogue written by Plato; although C. Emlyn-Jones has pointed out that this fact does not imply actual priority among Plato's early dialogues.[45] Although placing a date on the composition of *Euthyphro* is quite impossible, some scholars think that this dialogue is early because of its simplicity of style and dramatic connection to the other dialogues of Socrates' trial and execution.[46]

---

[45] Emyln-Jones, 6.

[46] Plato, *Plato's Euthyprho*, with introduction and notes by Ian Walker, (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1984), 7-9. See *Plato's Euthyphro,* edited with notes by John Burnet, (Oxford: Claredon Press, 1963), 4. See also

The date of the composition of Plato's dialogues can only be narrowed to the time between the death of Socrates and Plato's death, a period which spans from 399 BCE to 347 BCE.[47]

The content of *Euthyphro* is explicated within a dialogue between Socrates and a young man named Euthyphro.[48] The setting of the story is court of the second *basileus*,[49] where Socrates had to report for trial on charges of "impiety."[50] Meletus, an opponent of Socrates, had accused him of corrupting the youth by causing them to believe in "new" gods. The official charge was *asebia*, or impiety. The punishment for the guilt of this charge was death; and according to Plato's other dialogues of the trial, Socrates seems to have expected the reality that he would be found guilty despite all of his protests of innocence.

Emlyn-Jones, 12. According to Burnet, *Euthyphro* is considered to be an early dialogue because of its simple conversational style and, more importantly, because of its lack of narration. Emlyn-Jones points out that "It is part of Plato's purpose in *Euthyphro* to show Socrates as a man who, contrary to the claim of his prosecutors, genuinely cares about *to osion* [the holy]."

[47] R.E. Allen limits the composition of *Euthyphro* between the years 399 BCE and 388 BCE, marking the death of Socrates and Plato's first visit to Italy respectively. See R.E. Allen, *Plato's Euthyphro and the Earlier Theory of Forms*, (New York: Humanities Press, 1970), 1.

[48] Scholars debate the significance of the name *Euthyphro*. Literally, from Greek, the name can be translated "straight thinker." Given such a name, Euthyphro's "direct insight" into matters of true piety seems appropriate. (One of the joys of reading *Euthyphro* is noticing Socrates' sarcastic responses to Euthyprho's "straight thinking.") Some scholars have noted that Euthyphro may be a literary representative of Athenian orthodoxy, but this position is untenable since Euthyphro is said to be ridiculed by the Athenians in the dialogue. (*Euthyphro*, 3c1) Since a person named Euthyphro is also mentioned in Plato's *Cratylus*, many critics believe that Euthyphro was a contemporary of Plato's. Walker, 9-10. Burnet, 5-6.

[49] According to Burnet, the *Basileus* was the second of the nine "Archons," or kings, in Athens. The *Basileus* was elected once a year by lot; and was judicially responsible for supervising sacrifices and for hearing all cases involving state religion. Burnet, 2-3.

[50] Interestingly enough, Socrates' appearance before the "King" in Athens is the only historically verifiable date in the life of Socrates. C. Emlyn-Jones explains, "The source [of Socrates' prosecution] is Diogenes Laertius ii, 40, quoting the orator and philosopher Favorinus, who says that this *antomosia* (Gr. affidavit) was still preserved in his day (second century AD) in the Metroon, the building in the Athenian Agora where the archives were kept." Emlyn-Jones, 1.

The dialogue begins as Socrates, awaiting trial, is approached by Euthyphro. While discussing the charges against Socrates, Euthyphro reveals that he is on his way to charge his own father for murder. The following is Euthyphro's description of his father's crime : a servant which belonged to Euthyphro's family was killed by another slave in a drunken rage. Since the servant's guilt was not readily evident due to his intoxication, Euthyphro's father sent for a diviner from Athens to journey to his estate in order to determine the guilt or innocence of the suspected murderer. While the diviner was commuting, Euthyphro's father had the suspect bound and thrown in a ditch – where he died of exposure. Euthyphro insisted, against the wishes of his own family and the apparent ethical norms of his own society, that his father was guilty of murder. He had journeyed to Athens in order to formally prosecute his father for the murder of the servant. Euthyphro's journey, however, allowed him to encounter Socrates at the *basileus* and a dialogue between the two men concerning the nature of piety begins.

The dialogue of the *Euthyphro* seems to be structured[51] around three arguments in which Socrates and Euthyphro arrive at four attempted definitions of *to osion*, or "the holy."[52] In the first two of these four attempts Socrates allows Euthyphro to try to define

---

[51] Roland Garrett suggests that *Euthyphro* has chiastic structure. According to Garrett, this ancient rhetorical form centers around Euthyphro's definition of holy as correct knowledge of prayer and sacrifice in 14B2-14D6. Garrett, arguing that Socrates' response to this particular definition can be roughly translated "I love your wisdom (*phile -sophia*)," writes "it is perhaps not extravagant to find in the work also an answer to the charge against Socrates: namely, in a dramatic hint that philosophy itself is the answer to the question about holiness, that true holiness consists in the practice of philosophy, the vocation of Socrates." Garrett, "The Structure of Plato's Euthyphro," in *Southern Journal of Philosophy*, Volume 12, Issue 2 (1974), 179.

[52] In ancient Greek culture, "holiness" would be associated with having a correct relationship with the gods. See Emlyn-Jones, 8. This relationship should not be confused with the connotations of certain modern forms of piety, however, which refer to personal relationships between individuals and deities. An ancient Greek would understand piety theoretically in terms of virtue, practically in terms of ethics, and specifically in terms of desirable and undesirable behaviors.

"holy," but rejects each definition by showing how Euthyphro's arguments are self-contradictory in nature. In the third argument Socrates, using his classical style of dialectic, tries to prod Euthyphro into agreeing on a suitable definition of "the holy." For Socrates, an adequate definition would be one which would allow any spectator to discern the difference between holy and unholy activities.

In their first argument,[53] Socrates asks Euthyphro ambiguously to tell him what is holy. Euthyphro, thinking in terms of piously prosecuting his father, replies by saying that holiness is any activity which is loved by the gods. Euthyphro justifies his own activity by citing a mythological tale of Zeus punishing his own father for murder.[54] Although Socrates seems skeptical of mythology, he uses the mythic imagery of Greek polytheism to show Euthyphro that his first definition is not adequate. Socrates points out that the gods do not have to agree about anything necessarily and that in mythological tales the gods frequently disagree. Holiness, then, cannot be simply what is loved by the gods because the gods have the ability to disagree. Socrates objects further to Euthyphro's definition, stating that he wants a single criteria (*idea*) which would distinguish holiness from unholiness. After this, in a short interlude, Euthyphro attempts to justify his father's prosecution in terms of what the gods would agree to be just.

Finding the first definition inadequate, Socrates and Euthyphro attempt to define "holy" a second time.[55] Euthyphro refines his first definition, stating that the holy is what

---

[53] *Euthyphro*, 5c8-8b6.

[54] Euthyphro is more than likely referring to Hesiod's *Theogony*.

[55] *Euthyphro*, 9c1-11b1.

all the gods would agree to love. Given polytheism, this distinction creates three categories: what all the gods agree to love, what all the gods agree to hate and that which is both loved and hated by gods who are in disagreement. Dissatisfied with Euthyphro's second attempt, Socrates responds by posing a perplexing theological dialectic which many philosophers label "Euthyphro's Dilemma": is holiness, itself, holy because it is loved by the gods or do the gods love holiness because it is holy? Is being and doing what the gods love pious? After trying to clarify this question to Euthyphro with many examples, Socrates rejects Euthyphro's second definition of "holy," stating that being loved by gods is an accidental attribute (*pathos*) of holiness. Euthyphro's definition lends nothing to the necessary, essential characteristics (*ousia*) of holiness which Socrates seeks.

Euthyphro protests in the interlude before the third argument, claiming that Socrates has tricked him by shifting the argument. After this point in the dialogue, Socrates himself attempts to formulate a definition of "holy," assisted by the ever-ready assent of young Euthyphro.[56] Socrates, always ready to pose a dialectic, asks: is the holy part of that which is right, or is that which is right part of the holy? By asking this question, Socrates wants to uncover which of the two categories of holiness or justice is more general. The more general, or universal, category could be used to judge the more specific, or particular category. In response to this, Euthyphro gives a third definition of the holy as that part of rightness that concerns the ministry (*therapeia*) to the gods. Socrates defines "ministry" as an attempt to better something through service. Using this premise, Socrates wonders if Euthyphro's third definition is not adequate. Given

Socrates' definition of "ministry" as amelioration, the proposition that holiness is service to the betterment of the gods is self-contradictory because the gods cannot be affected by human activities in this form of polytheism. Anticipating this move, Euthyphro tries to change his latest definition of holy into religious practice: holiness is knowing how to pray and how to sacrifice correctly.[57] Euthyphro proposes a "commerce" between humans and the gods, in which humans pray and sacrifice while the gods protect and preserve them. Once again, Socrates points out that the gods do not benefit from prayers and sacrifices because they cannot be made better by human actions. Socrates insists that humans cannot influence the divine, therefore holiness cannot be centered in human ministry. Euthyphro concludes that the gods can receive virtues (honor, praise and gratitude). Socrates concludes that if gifts of virtue do not benefit the gods, then those gifts must be acceptable because the gods love them… bringing the discussion back to the first definition. At this point in the dialogue, Euthyphro departs from Socrates, leaving the discussion in an unresolved paradox, or *aporia*.

Euthyphro's Dilemma

I have introduced Plato's *Euthyphro* for the purposes of discussing the dialectical problem which Socrates poses when trying to define "holy." Is something desirable because it is loved by the gods, or do the gods love something because it is desirable? This dialectical question has been named "Euthyphro's Dilemma." According to some,

---

[56] *Ibid*., 11e1-14c5.

[57] *Ibid*., 14c5-15c10.

this dilemma poses a fatal problem, or paradox, which proponents of theism cannot satisfy.By posing the dialectic, Socrates makes two critical assumptions. Socrates assumes first that some actions are pious and that others are impious, causing him to believe subsequently that there are only two tenable solutions to the problem.[58] One must choose one or the other.

First, one could say that something is holy because it is loved by the gods. Euthyphro's first answer to Socrates' question reflects this response. Given Greek polytheism and the fact that Euthyphro believes that the mythological stories about the gods are true, Socrates is easily able to refute this answer by citing examples in Greek mythology in which the gods are in disagreement. Euthyphro refines this definition to restate that "holy" is that which *all* of the gods would agree upon as being holy.

At this point, Euthyphro's definition gains particular interest for monotheists. If all the gods agree about what is holy and what is not holy, then only one divine opinion exists concerning the nature of piety. The agreement of the gods, then, is *Euthyphro's* test case for monotheism. Socrates contends, however, that even if all the gods agree about the nature of "holy," their agreement to love that holy is an accidental attribute of holiness. The love of the gods is arbitrary, according to Socrates, so the things that they love cannot be considered holy in themselves. Selecting the first "horn" of Euthyphro's dilemma leaves the theist without an adequate definition of the "holy."

Choosing the other side of Socrates' dialectic presents another problem for theists. If one defines divine reality as ultimate reality, or the ground upon which all reality

---

[58] William Allston refers to this point as the "two horns" of Euthyphro's Dilemma, offering theological suggestions to "divine command" theorists.

stands, then the second "horn" of the dilemma is unsatisfactory. If the gods, even in disagreement, must appeal to a standard for determining what is holy or unholy, then the standard of holiness is the ultimate ground and not divine reality. The gods become dependent upon the standard in order to ascertain holiness and can no longer be considered "gods" by definition.

The Paradoxes of Piety

Having summarized the texts and interpretations of these two ancient writings, I will now connect these works together by discussing the paradoxes of piety which each of these texts uncover. The *Akedah* and its subsequent tradition of interpretation suggest that a pious individual should be willing to sacrifice anything which God imperatively requires or commands, even if God seems irrationally to require the death of another human. This story, which is in ideological accordance with Euthyphro's definition of piety as that which is loved by all the gods, has led many theists to posit that holiness is that which is arbitrarily commanded by God. I will discuss this particular position in more detail in the following chapters.

"Euthyphro's dilemma" is believed by many to suggest that the theological tenets of theism are untenable because theists cannot logically describe the relationship between holiness and God. Some have suggested that this paradox makes belief in divine reality untenable. Many theists, as a consequence of these paradoxes, have been persuaded that holiness, piety and faith must be illogical due to the paradoxes implied by these ancient tales. My contention is that each of these theological positions make unnecessary

assumptions which become obstacles to conceiving a viable form of theism. In the following chapter, I will discuss the doctrine of divine impassibility which are derived from the *Akedah* and the *Euthyphro*, showing how these two ideas perpetuate these paradoxes of piety.

Before I can begin my discussion concerning piety, however, I wish to uncover the Christian tradition of piety which was started by Paul in his *First Letter to the Corinthians*, continued by Augustine in his *Enchiridion*, and perpetuated during the Protestant Reformation in the writings of Martin Luther and Jean Calvin.[59] Relying on this tradition also are the works of Jakob Spencer and John Wesley, whose pietistic movements swept both Europe and colonial America during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

[59] Many notable theologians have written in this tradition. Thomas Aquinas wrote two treatise on faith and hope, but died before he completed his treatise on love. Desiderius Erasmus likewise wrote an enchiridion during the Reformation, entitled *Handbook for the Militant Christian*.

CHAPTER 5

FAITH, HOPE AND LOVE AS PIETY

"And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love."
Paul of Tarsus, 1 Corinthians 13:13

"For man true wisdom consists in piety."
Augustine of Hippo

A Cursory Glance at the History of Christian Piety

Piety, in the Christian tradition, has a multi-faceted and diverse history. From the earliest point in the history of the religion, practitioners and theorists alike have debated about the piety's ontological standing and how piety can be enacted on earth through the deeds of human beings. Even in the early writings of the New Testament, a precedent for describing piety was established by the apostle Paul in his famous chapter about love which he addressed to the church at Corinth. Facing the pastoral difficulty of silencing Christian elitists in Corinth who believed themselves to be more pious than other members of their own religious community, Paul expressed the idea that faith, hope and

love in simple union can be considered the basis of Christian piety – love being the most important element of this triad as the active imitation of the divine.[60]

Certainly, Paul had no idea how influential his triad of faith, hope and love would become in expressing the substance of Christian piety. Shortly after Paul's death, his followers began collecting, editing and redistributing his writings to Christian converts. His letters became the foundation for the formulations of doctrines and after a couple of centuries, his writings attained a status of authority which was equal to the Hebrew scriptures. Although Paul was not a systematic theologian, his letters became the foundational documents which inspired many of the "great" Christian constructivist thinkers to formulate definitions of piety which consist of the triad of faith, hope and love. This triad has been known to posterity as the "theological virtues," which have been considered the basis for discussing Christian piety. In the following chapter, I intend to explore the *Enchiridion* of Augustine and its subsequent tradition which was followed in the writings of Thomas Aquinas, Martin Luther, Jean Calvin and Desiderius Erasmus, each of whom composed "handbooks" for following the Christian faith. Likewise, I will survey the influence of Jakob Spener and the tradition of piety which sprung forth from his *Pia Desideria*, subsequently flourishing in the small German city of Halle. A similar strain of pious thought can also be found in the works of John Wesley, who helped to create the institution of American Christianity through the eighteenth century revival which is most commonly known as "the Great Awakening."

[60] Paul mentions this triad in some of his other letters also: Romans 5:1-5, Galatians 5:5-6, Colossians 1:4-5, and 1 Thessalonians 1:3, 5-8.

Augustine's Enchiridion

As a part of his introduction to his *Enchiridion*, Augustine wrote,

> According to your letter, you wish me to write a book, to serve you as a handbook, as they call it, something that would always be in reach. It should contain the answers to questions such as these: What is most to be sought after? In view of the various heresies, what is chiefly to be avoided? To what extent does reason come to the aid of religion, or to what extent does matter known through faith alone not fall under the scope of reason? What is the beginning and what the end of human endeavor? What is the sum total of all teaching? What is the sure and true foundation of Catholic faith?
>
> All these things which you ask about you will undoubtedly know if you understand well what man should believe and hope for and love."[61]

Augustine wrote this work as a reply to the questions of a young admirer named Laurentius, who had recently converted to Christianity in the city of Rome. The year was 421 CE. Augustine was living in the last decade of his life and had yet to write perhaps his most important work, *The City of God*. He saw the Roman Empire in decline and was concerned about the future of Christianity in a politically destabilized Eurasia. Despite his concerns, the tone of this particular writing is optimistic. Augustine intended to write an *enchiridion* which would catalogue the essentials for being a pious adherent to the Christian religion. Before his *Enchiridion*, many Christians understood piety in terms of renunciation. Athanasius' *Life of Anthony* had inspired many to retreat to the solitary wilderness in search of the pious life during the fourth century, even Augustine himself. Although Rome seemed to be slipping into a chasm of political chaos and social unrest, Augustine believed that the Christian Church would survive triumphantly until the end of the age if every Christian lived a normative life of piety. The pages of the *Enchiridion*

[61] Augustine of Hippo, *Faith, Hope, and Charity*, translated by Louis Arand for *Ancient Christian Writers: The Works of the Fathers in Translation 3*, edited by Johannes Quasten and Joseph Plumpe, (Westminster, MD: The Newman Press, 1963), 12.

are rife with his belief that Christian piety can be preserved and perpetuated through the media of proper instruction of both theory and practice as embodied in the virtues of faith, hope and love.

Augustine's *Enchiridion* was certainly not the first work of its sort. The word *enchiridion* can be literally translated from Greek as "the in-hand thing," or "handbook." The enchiridion was a popular literary genre in Classical Greece, where the Stoics used handbooks to promulgate moral instruction to young students.[62] Augustine appropriated this genre from the Classics in order to instruct young Laurentius in the essentials of the Christian faith. After spending almost his entire ecclesiastical career battling heresy, Augustine wished to compose a handbook which catalogued the essentials of Christian piety. His *Enchiridion* is intended to be a book which is ready at hand for theological questions, so that the theological musings of young Christians in the future do not get "out of hand."

In his work, Augustine narrowed the focus of Christian piety to three virtues: faith, hope and love, writing,

> …to return to those three things by which, as I have said, God is to be worshipped – faith, hope, and charity: it is easy to say what is to be believed, what is to be hoped for, and what is to be loved. However, to refute the calumnies of those who think otherwise, requires more painstaking and more detailed instruction. And to impart such instruction, it will not suffice to place a small manual in one's hands, rather, it will be necessary to enkindle a great zeal in one's heart.[63]

Augustine elaborated further concerning the basis for speaking of faith, hope and love in the tradition of Christianity: "You will see that these two (the Apostle's Creed and the

---

[62] One of the most famous *enchiridions* in Classical Greece was that of Epectitus, which exists today only in collected fragments. The catechal tradition in Christianity is a continuation of this Greek staple for moral instruction, which is also present in the Jewish Rabbinical tradition.

[63] Augustine, *Enchiridion*, 14.

Lord's Prayer) contain those three matters under discussion: faith believes, and hope and charity pray. But without faith the other two cannot exist; and thus faith likewise prays."[64]

The structure of Augustine's *Enchiridion* is patterned on these two foundational documents of the Christian religion. For Augustine, faith is primary, as more than three quarters of his work was devoted to detailing precisely what a Christian should believe in order to be considered "orthodox." Augustine was concerned with pronouncing the truths of Christian orthodoxy, which he believed to be manifested in the assertions of the Apostle's Creed. In the chapters concerning faith, Augustine wrote a simplistic summary of his doctrine of God, the difference between evil and error, his Christology and anthropology of original sin, his pnuematology, ecclesiaology, soteriology and eschatology. Augustine concluded his writing on faith by affirming the absolute sovereignty of God, which is truly the keystone to understanding the sum of his theology.

The last few chapters of his *Enchirdion* are concerned with describing the other two of the theological virtues: hope and love. According to Augustine, the objects of hope for a Christian are summarized in the prayer of Jesus recording in the New Testament synoptic Gospels of Matthew and Luke, known as the Lord's Prayer or the Model Prayer. Jesus' prayer, according to Augustine, shows every Christian both the necessary temporal and eternal goods which should be hoped for on a daily basis, such as: food, forgiveness, deliverance from evil, and accomplishment of God's will on earth every day. Augustine concluded his *Enchiridion* by commenting on the final theological

---

[64] Ibid., 14-15. Also concerning the primacy of faith, Augustine wrote, "…there is no love without hope, no hope without love, and neither hope nor love without faith." *Enchiridion*, 17.

virtue, which is love. He wrote that every commandment of the Scripture and the Church turns back towards love, just as Jesus said when he was asked which of the commandments was the greatest according to the Gospel accounts.[65]

Augustine also understood love in terms of personal development during the life of the Christian believer. He taught that humans undergo four stages of development: life according to the flesh, the law, the life according to righteousness by which the person conquers evil desires, and the resurrection of the body at the end of the age. Augustine wrote that Christian love increases throughout these stages of development until the believer has balanced their unruly passions, having conquered concupiscence. Without love, this development is impossible: faith and hope are in vain. Love has a direct correspondence to truth and goodness for Augustine. Love is the necessary condition for proper piety in the life of the believer.

Augustine's outline of proper Christian piety has been forwarded by many great theologians in the Christian tradition. Adolph Harnack, in volume five of his *History of Dogma*, recognized Augustine's contribution to the theological tradition of piety,

> "Augustine comes before us, in the first place, as a reformer of Christian piety, altering much that belonged to vulgar Catholicism, and carrying out monotheism strictly and thoroughly. He gave the central place to the living relation of the soul to God; he took religion out of the sphere of cosmology and the cultus, and demonstrated and cherished it in the domain of the deepest life of the soul."[66]

Following Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, in his work on the theological virtues was able to write a treatise on faith and one on hope. Before he could write concerning love,

---

[65] Matthew 22:34-40.

[66] Adolph Harnack, *History of Dogma, Volume V*, (New York: Russell and Russell, 1958), 4. Harnack also pointed out that Augustine could be considered the author of a practical piety which combined God, Christ, the Scriptures, the sacraments and the Catholic Church into a unified system, 66.

however, he died. Since Aquinas preferred the philosophy of Aristotle to the thought of Plato, his thoughts concerning faith accentuate the revelation of faith to the reason of humanity perhaps more strongly than the writing of Augustine, although Augustine was by no means unconcerned with the relationship between faith and reason. The Protestant Reformation also marked the continuation of the intellectual tradition of piety which was started by Augustine. Martin Luther likewise followed Augustine's tradition in his *Shorter Catechism* , which is modeled on the Commandments, the Lord's Prayer and the Apostle's Creed. Luther, however, was concerned with a different audience than Augustine. Whereas Augustine was writing to one individual, Luther was writing to ministers regarding the education of parishoners. Luther believed the learning of the masses to be lacking, writing: "and though all are called Christians and partake of the Holy Sacrament, they know neither the Lord's Prayer, nor the Creed, nor the Ten Commandments, but live like the poor cattle and senseless swine, though, now that the Gospel is come, they have learnt well enough how they may abuse their liberty."[67] Luther continued, " This was clearly seen by the worthy fathers, who used the Lord's Prayer, the Belief, the Ten Commandments all in one form. Therefore we must always teach the young and simple folk in such a manner that we do not alter one syllable, or preach tomorrow differently from today."[68] Luther was essentially continuing the tradition of Christian piety which was begun by Augustine a millennium prior.

---

[67] Martin Luther, *Enchiridion: A Short Catechism for the Use of Ordinary Pastors and Preachers*, from *Luther's Primary Works, Together with his Shorter and Larger Catechisms*, translated by Henry Wace and C.A. Buchheim, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1896), 1.

[68] Luther, 2.

Jean Calvin, in his early edition of *Institutes on the Christian Religion* and his word *Instruction in Faith*, also perpetuates the tradition of faith, hope and love as the sum of Christian piety – although he does not frame the theological virtues in terms of the Commandments, Creed and the Lord's Prayer.[69] For Calvin, faith is primary because it comes first from the human awareness of God. Faith, however, does rest upon pious ignorance. Rather, faith is founded upon the revelation of the Scripture and the revelatory work of the Holy Spirit. Against the Scholastics, Calvin asserted that faith is a matter of the heart and that every human has an original sense of God – the *sensus divinatus*. Calvin's primary concern with faith is that of the regeneration of the unbeliever through the hope of salvation. Regeneration comes through the correct combination of faith with hope, which are both founded upon the mercy of God, according to Calvin. Calvin elaborated further on the virtue of love, which he considered to be the sum of Christian living through the denial of selfish desires.

Other Traditions of Piety

In the Christian religion, the concept of piety has been expressed in many other forms, many of which have embraced or renounced reason. Alongside of the continuation of Augustine's notion of piety in the writings of Luther and Calvin during the Reformation which would subsequently influence the thought of liberal and post-

---

[69] Jean Calvin, *Calvin's Institutes*, abridged, edited by Donald M. McKim, (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 66-85.

liberal Protestantism, the writings of Johann Arndt and Jakob Spener also attracted much attention from Christians who desired to live a pious life. The movement began with Arndt's *True Christianity*[70] and culminated in Spener's *Pia Desideria*[71], which inspired many post-Reformation Europeans to begin adopting lifestyles which they believed to be consistent with the ideal of Christian piety. Many of them practiced baptism, intending to regenerate the nature of the believer, and began studying the Bible and praying in small groups. The new pietists concentrated on a "personal" relationship with Jesus and spoke of being cleansed and renewed by the blood of Jesus. One could argue that this movement was the birth of "born again" Christianity.

Many of the new pietists congregated in the small city of Halle under the leadership of August Hermann Francke, founding churches, schools and a university which quickly became the center for the new European piety.[72] Halle flourished, and the appearance of a young noble named Nicholas Zinzendorf would change the face of European piety forever. Zinzendorf studied and distinguished himself as a pious person despite accusations of over-zealousness. He inherited his family estates, whose holdings were quite vast, and Zinzendorf allowed displaced religious refugees from the whole of Europe to settle on his land and practice their religious traditions in peace. Zinzendorf's generous donation allowed many new Protestant religious traditions to survive and

---

[70] Johann Arndt, *True Christianity*, translated by Peter Erb, (New York: Paulist Press, 1979).

[71] Jakob Spener, *Pia Desideria*, (Frankfurt and Mayn: Druckts Johann Dieterich Friedgen, 1676).

[72] For perhaps the most well-informed survey of German piety in the post-Reformation era, see Ernest Stoeffler's, *The Rise of Evangelical Pietism*, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1965) and his *German Piety in the Eighteenth Century*, (Leiden: E.J. Brill 1975).

strengthen themselves in a culture of conflict which might have otherwise consumed these new groups with warfare and persecution.

Halle's position as the locus of Protestant European piety would also have great consequences on piety in the colonial Americas. The American settlement, founded largely by Anglican Puritans who already had zealously pious concerns for both the individual and society, would be swept by a pietistic revival during the 18th century due largely to the preaching of the "Methodists" John Wesley and George Whitefield. Wesley himself was concerned with piety, starting the famous "Holy Club" at Oxford University while he studied there to become an Anglican priest. In 1735, on his way by ship to his first missionary posting in the colony of Georgia, Wesley was greatly influenced by Moravians who had stayed at Halle. Their bravery in the face of adverse conditions inspired him to live a more pious life and to attempt to dispel his own religious doubts which he plagued him for almost his entire life. Although Wesley considered his trip to Georgia a pastoral failure, as he left the colony under indictment from one of his parishoners for denying Communion to a young woman whom had jilted Wesley, he never forgot the pious lessons which he had learned from the Moravians. Wesley began teaching the doctrine of "Christian perfection," by which he believed that every Christian could attain moral perfection by willfully living in a pious manner. With the help of Whitefield, despite disagreement over "Christian perfection" and predestination, Wesley was able to spread his idea of methodically living a morally pious and perfect life throughout the American colonies during a religious revival which has no rival during the history of America – called "the Great Awakening" by later historians. Wesley's tradition, both wittingly and unwittingly, would provide the springboard for American

Pentecostalism and the Social Gospel movement. Each of these religious trends would inform the American idea of piety during the 19th and early 20th centuries, along with the rise of Christian fundamentalism.

The history of piety, despite its promotion of good deeds through the intellectual and practical education of believers, often falls prey to the same philosophical problems as divine command moral theory. More often than necessary in the history of Christianity, pietistic theories have resorted to a morality of divine command, falling into Euthyphro's dilemma. Rather, theologians should have accentuated the idea the piety could be achieved through emulating God in the practice of faith, hope and love. In the concluding chapter of this thesis, I will describe a strategy by which one can theologically overcome Euthyphro's dilemma and subsequently avoid a morality of divine command. I contend that this overcoming is possible by redefining piety within the doctrine of God in the process philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead, as I will attempt to accomplish in the following and final chapter of this thesis.

CHAPTER 6

GOD'S PASSION, PIETY AND PROCESS

" It is as true to say that God is permanent and the World fluent,
as that the World is permanent and God is fluent.

It is as true to say that God is one and the World many,
as that the World is one and God many.

It is as true to say that, in comparison with the World, God is actual eminently
as that, in comparison with God, the World is actual eminently.

It is as true to say that the World is immanent in God,
as that God is immanent in the World.

It is as true to say that God transcends the World,
as that the World transcends God.

It is as true to say that God creates the World,
as that the World creates God."
Alfred North Whitehead

Paradoxes of Piety: Towards Resolution

In the history of philosophy, Plato's *Euthyphro* has been cited predominantly for the purpose of discussing the dialectical problem which Socrates poses when trying to define "holy." Is something holy because it is loved by the gods, or do the gods love something because it is holy? This dialectical question has traditionally been called "Euthyphro's Dilemma." The *Akedah*, in the Jewish tradition, offers a similar theological problem: are God's commands right because God commands them, or because they are independently correct. According to some, these dilemmas pose paradoxes which

proponents of theism cannot satisfy. By posing the dialectic, Socrates makes two critical assumptions. Socrates assumes first that some actions are pious and that others are impious, causing him to believe subsequently that there are only two tenable solutions to the problem.[73] One must choose one, or the other.

First, one could say that something is holy because it is loved by the gods. Euthyphro's first answer to Socrates' question reflects this response. Given Greek polytheism and the fact that Euthyphro believes that the mythological stories about the gods are true, Socrates is easily able to refute this answer by citing examples in Greek mythology in which the gods are in disagreement. Euthyphro refines this definition to restate that "holy" is that which *all* of the gods would agree upon as being holy.

At this point, Euthyphro's definition gains particular interest for monotheists. If all the gods agree about what is holy and what is not holy, then only one divine opinion exists concerning the nature of piety. The agreement of the gods, then, is *Euthyphro's* test case for monotheism. Socrates contends, however, that even if all the gods agree about the nature of "holy," their agreement to love that holy is an accidental attribute of holiness. The love of the gods is arbitrary, according to Socrates, so the things that they love cannot be considered holy in themselves. Selecting the first "horn" of Euthyphro's dilemma leaves the theist without an adequate definition of the "holy."

Choosing the other side of Socrates' dialectic presents another problem for theists. If one defines divine reality as ultimate reality, or the ground upon which all reality stands, then the second "horn" of the dilemma is unsatisfactory. If the gods, even in

[73] William Allston refers to this point as the "two horns" of Euthyphro's Dilemma, offering theological suggestions to "divine command" theorists. William Allston, "Some Suggestions for Divine Command

disagreement, must appeal to a standard for determining what is holy or unholy, then the standard of holiness is the ultimate ground and not divine reality. The gods become dependent upon the standard in order to ascertain holiness and can no longer be considered "gods" by definition.

Most academic interpretations of *Euthyphro* have solely concerned themselves with "Euthyphro's Dilemma," ignoring Euthyphro's other attempted definitions of *to osion*. In this chapter, I seek to explore briefly each of the definitions of *to osion* which are posed by Socrates and Euthyphro. After this short synopsis, I will focus my attention instead on Euthyphro's definition of piety as *therapeia*, or care, to the gods. This definition was hastily rejected by Socrates and has been subsequently rejected by classical theists on the grounds that divine reality is impassible. Many modern critics in the Neo-Classical theistic tradition have rejected the doctrine of divine impassibility, perhaps none more prominently than Charles Hartshorne, who stands alongside Alfred North Whitehead in the intellectual tradition known as process philosophy. In the second part of this chapter, I will discuss Hartshorne's rejection of divine impassibility within the context of Socrates' rejection of *to osion* as care towards divine reality in order to explore whether Hartshorne's critique is applicable to Socrates' assumptions regarding the impassible nature of divine reality. The conclusion of this chapter will discuss the possibilities for understanding piety within a philosophy of process as *therapeia* to divine reality.

Theorists," in *Divine Nature and Human Language: Essays in Philosophical Theology*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989), 253-273.

Divine Impassibility: Socrates and Hartshorne

Defining "impassibility" can be problematic, because the term has been expressed diversely throughout the history of theology. The word "impassible" is derived from the Greek word *pathos*, which can be translated "passion." "Impassibility," then, could be understood classically as the inability to feel passion. This interpretation, however, does not even begin to capture the meaning(s) of the doctrine because the term *pathos* carries enough lexical baggage to bewilder any competent philologist.

Historically, different thinkers have rendered impassibility diversely.[74] The Greek Stoics understood impassibility as the lack of feeling emotion, or *apatheia*. Origen of Alexandria expressed this concern in his writings, teaching that God cannot be perturbed by emotional attachments or desire. Aristotle tended to understand impassibility ontologically, defining God as the Prime Mover. Thomas Aquinas' understanding of impassibility, a synthesis of these two concepts, would become the dominant paradigm in "classical" theistic conceptions of God.

---

[74] The diversity of opinion regarding impassibility is due mostly, in my opinion, to its close relationship and confusion with the doctrine of God's necessary existence in the history of Christianity. Thinkers such as Justin Martyr, Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, John Calvin and Immanuel Kant asserted that God is the only necessary being in existence. They believed that the entire universe is wholly contingent and that God could exist independently whether a universe exists or not. Given this idea, these thinkers concluded that the world could not affect God because the world's relation to God is contingent, not necessary. As Alfred North Whitehead and Charles Hartshorne have argued, these thinkers came to this conclusion because they lacked a proper logic of relations. In most process concepts of deity, God and the world share necessary and contingent characteristics, allowing for a necessary God who is not necessarily impassible.

Richard E. Creel, in his work *Divine Impassibility*, has discerned no less than eight categories under which various historical definitions of the term "impassibility" can be organized:[75]

I_1 "lacking all emotions" (bliss not an emotion)
I_2 "in a state of mind that is imperturbable"
I_3 "insusceptible to distraction from resolve"
I_4 "having a will determined entirely by oneself"
I_5 "cannot be affected by an outside force"
I_6 "cannot be prevented from achieving one's purpose"
I_7 " has no suceptibility to negative emotions"
I_8 "cannot be affected by an outside force or changed by oneself"

Creel also shows that impassibility has also been applied to four different aspects of divine reality: divine nature, will, knowledge and feeling.[76] With such diverse possibilities for defining the doctrine of impassibility in classical theism, looking more closely at Socrates' criterion for "impassibility" will be necessary for our purposes.

In *Euthyphro*, Socrates' notion of impassibility can be inferred from his concept of *therapeia*. In Section 12d5-14a10, Socrates describes therapy as tending to something with the intentions of making it better. Medicine and husbandry would be practices of therapy, according to Socrates. In other words, therapy would define a deficiency in the patient which would require attention from a specialist, according to Socrates. Euthyphro agrees, but is reluctant to apply this category to the gods when Socrates presses him to do so. Their rejection of this particular definition of *to osion* is rhetorical, as neither Socrates nor Euthyphro wish to admit that the gods can be made better. According to their reasoning, the gods are perfect and cannot suffer deficiency or require therapy. The

---

[75] Richard E. Creel, *Divine Impassibility*, (London: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

proposition that the gods cannot be bettered (or worsened, it seems) by human care seems to have similarity to Creel's fifth description of impassibility as inability to "be affected by an outside force." In the conclusion of this paper, I intend to describe how this theological obstacle can be overcome in process models of theism.

Charles Hartshorne has insisted that this understanding of the gods in polytheism, or in any model of divine reality, arose in the Greek philosophical tradition as a consequence of an ancient misunderstanding of the concept of perfection.[77] According to Hartshorne, the classical Greek understanding of perfection was rooted in a metaphysics of being. Perfection cannot "become," according to the ancient definition, because perfection is that which cannot be bettered or worsened by any form of agency. Since perfection was thought to be unchangeable, many Greek thinkers conceived perfection as being completely unrelated to the human experience of reality, which undergoes constant change and development.[78] When this misunderstanding of perfection is applied to divine reality, Hartshorne believed, divine reality cannot conceivably relate to human experience and becomes irrelevant. Hartshorne redefined perfection as that which is perfectly ordered in its relations, as perfect order does not necessarily imply unchangeability.[79] Using Hartshorne's concept of perfection as a model, one is able to

---

[76] Ibid, ix.

[77] Charles Hartshorne, *The Logic of Perfection and Other Essays in Neoclassical Metaphysics*, (Lasalle: Open Court Publishing Company, 1962).

[78] Examples of this vein of thinking are visible in the intermediary "Logos" cosmologies of Philo of Alexandria and Plotinus, each of whom heavily influenced the development of classical theism. According to both of these thinkers, divine reality is ineffable perfection. Since they believed that the world was imperfect, they posited the necessity of intermediary beings who could mediate perfection from the divine to the world.

[79] An important distinction must be made between the doctrines of "impassibility" and "immutability." In classical theism immutability has been understood in terms of God's nature, which cannot change in such a

conceive of perfection as being relative to human experience. As a consequence of this redefinition, Hartshorne rejected the classically theistic doctrines of impassibility and immutability on the grounds that a divine reality which cannot relate to the experiences of the world is not worthy of ultimate devotion and loyalty. By applying Harthorne's rejection of impassibility to Socrates' argument with Euthyphro piety can be understood in a way which Socrates may have seen as undesirable, but is much more consistent with human experience of divine reality.

Piety in Process[80]

In conclusion, when one applies Harthorne's critique of impassibility to Socrates' rejection of piety as *therapeia*, one can formulate a definition for piety which can overcome the dialectical problem which is presented by "Euthyphro's Dilemma." Having shown how this definition can be accomplished through a rejection of divine impassibility, explaining how piety can be described as *therapeia* becomes a theological problem. Thinking that God needs therapy seems counter-intuitive to the theist, because in most theistic models God is thought to have no possible deficiency. Careful

---

way as to contradict itself metaphysically. Impassibility has been understood in terms of affect, that is, that outside agents cannot affect the divine. These two doctrines overlap in the understanding of the divine as unchangeable by outside agents, but differ in the respect that each doctrine is concerned with different aspects of the divine nature. In process theism, Hartshorne and Whitehead agree in their rejection of impassibility, although Whitehead understood impassibility in terms of compassion and Hartshorne's understanding reflects concerns of metaphysical change. Hartshorne does not agree with Whitehead that God is immutable.

[80] My intention in this section is to show how some of the core doctrines of process philosophy can be applied to a concept of piety. Defending these core doctrines has been the task of many thinkers in the process tradition, and I rely here on their assertions. See David Ray Griffin, *Reenchantment without Supernaturalism* for a strong defense of the core doctrines of process thought.

theological distinctions must be made while discussing theological alternatives to divine impassibility. If divine impassibility is dismissed as a tenable doctrine of theism, then theists must formulate a doctrine of God which describes how divine reality may be passible

without being imperfect. Neo-classical theists in the tradition of process theism have proposed two differing descriptions of divine passibility which attempt to preserve divine perfection. An aspect of the doctrine of God which receives almost unanimous assent from process thinkers is the division of the nature of God into two phases. Whitehead describes this division in terms of the primordial and concrescent phases. Hartshorne uses the term "dual transcendence" to express the simultaneous immanence and transcendence of God in his thought. The doctrines of Whitehead and Hartshorne differ in respect to the temporal nature of God. For Whitehead, God is non-temporal. Hartshorne, however, claims that God must be temporally oriented in order to remain supremely relative to experience. This disagreement concerning the temporal nature of God can lead to different rejections of impassibility. Whitehead is concerned with the ability of God to commiserate with humans, whereas Hartshorne is focused on the ordered, relational perfection of God. Despite their different approaches, both Whitehead and Hartshorne reject impassibility.

Process thinkers also defend panentheism as an adequate model of divine reality.[81] Panentheism is a theological position which attempts to describe the relationship between

---

[81] In *Reenchantment without Supernaturalism*, David Ray Griffin includes both panentheism and panexperientialism in his "Core Doctrines of Process Philosophy," 5-7.

God and the cosmos in adequate terms. In his work *What is Process Theology*, Robert Mellert has offered an excellent summary of panentheism:

> Panentheism is actually a midle position between the transcendent, immutable God of Scholastic theology and the deification of the world in pantheism. It posits that individuality and the uniqueness of God in a way that is not possible for pantheism. In Whiteheadian theology, for example, God is a unique, individual entity in at least two ways. First of all, he is the macrocosmic unity of all reality. Because in a philosophy of organism, such as Whitehead's, the whole is more than the mere sum of its parts, the unity of reality is more than the collection of all reality. The macrocosmic unity is itself an actual entity with its own reality in addition to the totality of reality that constitutes it. In this way, then, God is at the same time both the totality of reality and the actual entity that is this totality.[82]

Mellert elaborates on panentheism, writing, "The chief advantage of panentheism over traditional theism is that it more adequately describes the divine immanence in the world without compromising the divine transcendence."[83]

Panentheists believe that divine experience is really present within every actual occasion in the cosmos. As such, they believe that every actual occasion of experience is infused with the presence of God. Along with panentheism, process models are centered around panexperientialism as an accurate description of actual occasions in the universe. According to this doctrine, all actual occasions are capable of experience, but are not necessarily able to be conscious.[84] As a consequence of these two doctrines, both Whitehead and Hartshorne agree that God is passible, having the ability to "feel" every actual occasion in the cosmos.

---

[82] Robert Mellert, *What is Process Theology?*, (New York: Paulist Press, 1975), 60-61.

[83] Ibid.

[84] According to Whitehead, experience is primary. Consciousness is a more complex form of experience which is only accessible to a small variety of creatures (and God).

According to process thinkers, the universe as a whole is in a process of maximizing the enjoyment of God. God can experience this joy from his creatures in the universe as a consequence of panentheism and panexperientialism, according to the process models of Whitehead and Hartshorne. I contend that this relationship between God and his creatures necessitates an ethical responsibility to God through altruistic behavior towards God's creatures, emulating God in the tradition of faith, hope and love.[85] Although God cannot be accurately described as needing therapy, his creatures do. By maximizing the well-being of creatures, who have an intimate bond with divine reality, one can contribute to maximizing the enjoyment of God through their own choices and care.

Piety, then, can be defined as care towards the gods in a model of theism which includes process and rejects impassibility. "Euthyphro's dilemma," I believe, can be overcome within a process model of theism. This simple definition, however, raises many other questions in the areas of epistemology, axiology and ethics which the constraints of this project will not entertain at this time. As all other works, these words are also in process.

---

[85] Some outstanding works on ethics within process theology: James R. Gray, *Process Ethics*, (Lanham: University Press of America, 1983). Franklin Gamwell, *The Divine Good: Modern Moral Theory and the Necessity of God*, (Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1990).

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Adams, Robert Merrihew. "A Modified Divine Command Theory of Ethical Wrongness," in *Religion and Morality*, edited by Gene Outka and John P. Reeder, Jr. Garden City, NY: Anchor Press, Doubleday, 1973, p.318-347.

Allen, R.E. *Plato's Euthyphro and the Earlier Theory of Forms*. New York: Humanities Press, 1970.

Allston, William. "Some Suggestions for Divine Command Theorists," in *Divine Nature and Human Language: Essays in Philosophical Theology*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989, 253-273.

Arendt, Hanna. *The Human Condition*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958)

Arndt, Johann. *True Christianity*, translated by Peter Erb, New York: Paulist Press, 1979.

Auerbach, Erich. *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968)

Augustine of Hippo. *Faith, Hope, and Charity*, translated by Louis Arand for *Ancient Christian Writers: The Works of the Fathers in Translation 3*, edited by Johannes Quasten and Joseph Plumpe, Westminster, MD: The Newman Press, 1963.

Barbour, Ian. *Religion in and Age of Science*. San Francisco: HarperCollins Publishers, 1990.

Bodoff, Lippman. "The Real Test of the Akedah: Blind Obedience versus Moral Choice," in *Judaism*, Issue 165, Volume 42, Number 1. New York: American Jewish Congress, 1993. 73-92.

Bok, Sissela. *Secrets: On the Ethics of Concealment and Revelation*, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1982)

Brown, Michael. "Biblical Myth and Contemporary Experience: The Akedah in Modern Jewish Literature," in *Judaism*, Issue 121, Volume 31, Number 1. New York: American Jewish Congress, 1982. 99-111.

Calvin, Jean. *Calvin's Institutes*, abridged, edited by Donald M. McKim, Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001.

Caputo, John. *Against Ethics: Contributions to a Poetics of Obligation with Constant Reference to Deconstruction*, (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1993)

Cobb, John and Griffin, David. *Process Theology: An Introductory Exposition*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976.

Creel, Richard E. *Divine Impassibility*. London: Cambridge University Press, 1986.

Darwin, Charles. *The Origin of Species and The Descent of Man*. New York: The Modern Library, 1936.

Derrida, Jacques. *The Gift of Death*, translated by David Wills, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992)

Fretheim, Terrence. "The Book of Genesis," from *The New Interpreter's Bible, Volume One*, edited by Leander Keck, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994)

Gamwell, Franklin. *The Divine Good: Modern Moral Theory and the Necessity of God*. Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1996.

Garrett, Roland. "The Structure of Plato's Euthyphro," in the *Southern Journal of Philosophy*, Volume 12, Issue 2 (1974)

Girard, René. *Violence and the Sacred*, translated by Patrick Gregory, Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1972.

Graves, Robert and Raphael Patai. *Hebrew Myths: The Book of Genesis*. New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1964.

Gray, James R. *Process Ethics*. Lanham: University Press of America, 1983.

Griffin, David Ray. *Reenchantment Without Supernaturalism: A Process Philosophy of Religion*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001.

Harnack, Adolph. *History of Dogma, Volume V*, New York: Russell and Russell, 1958.

Hartshorne, Charles. *The Logic of Perfection and Other Essays in Neoclassical Metaphysics*. Lasalle: Open Court Publishing Company, 1962.
- *The Divine Relativity*: *A Social Conception of God*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964.
- *Omnipotence and Other Theological Mistakes.* Albany: State University of New York, 1984.
- *Beyond Humanism: Essays in the Philosophy of Nature*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1968.

Hume, David. *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion.* New York: Hafner Publishing Company, 1948.

Idziak, Janine Marie. *Divine Command Morality: Historical and Contemporary Readings*. New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1979.

Irenaeus. *Against Heresies, Volume One*: *the Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus*, translated by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson. New York: The Christian Literature Company, 1896.

Itshaki, Rabbi Shlomo. *Rashi: Commentaries on the Pentateuch*, selected and translated by Chaim Pearl. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1970.

James, William. "What Pragmatism Means." Appearing in *Essays in Pragmatism*. Edited by Alburey Castell. New York: Hafner Publishing Company, 1948.
- *Pragmatism and four essays from The Meaning of Truth*. Cleveland: Meridian Books, 1969.

Johnson, Paul. *A History of Christianity*, New York: Penguin Books, 1976.

Kant, Immanuel. *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. J.M.D. Meiklejohn. Buffalo: Prometheus Books, 1990.

Kessler, Gary. *Western Ways of Being Religious*, London: Mayfield Publishing Company, 2000.

Kierkegaard, Søren. *The Concept of Anxiety*, translated by Reider Thomte, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980.
- *Fear and Trembling*, translated by Walter Lowrie, New York: Everyman's Library, 1994.

Levinas, Emmanuel. *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence*, translated by Alphonso Lingis, The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1981.

Lincoln, Bruce. *Myth, Cosmos, and Society: Indo-European Themes of Creation and Destruction*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986.

Luther, Martin. *Enchiridion: A Short Catechism for the Use of Ordinary Pastors and Preachers*, from *Luther's Primary Works, Together with his Shorter and Larger Catechisms*, translated by Henry Wace and C.A. Buchheim, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1896.

Maimonides, Rabbi Moses ben. *The Guide for the Perplexed*, translated by M. Friedlander. New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1956.

Mellert, Robert. *What is Process Theology?* New York: Paulist Press, 1975.

Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future*, translated by R. J. Hollingdale, London: Penguin Books, 1990.

Noth, Martin. *A History of Pentateuchal Traditions*, translated by Bernhard Anderson. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1972.

Otto, Rudolf. *The Idea of the Holy: An Inquiry into the Non-Rational Factor in the Idea of the Divine and its Relation to the Rational*, translated by John W. Harvey, London: Oxford University Press, 1926.

Placher, William. *A History of Christian Theology: An Introduction*. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1983.

Plato. *Euthyphro*, text with introduction and commentary by Chris Emyln-Jones,. London:
Bristol Classical Press, 1991.
- *Euthyprho*, with introduction and notes by Ian Walker. Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1984.
- *Euthyphro*, edited with notes by John Burnet. Oxford: Claredon Press, 1963.

Power, William L. "On Divine Perfection," in *Logic, God, and Metaphysics*, edited by James Franklin Harris, Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Press, 1992, 59-72.

von Rad, Gerhard. *Old Testament Theology, Volume One*, translated by D.M.G. Stalker, New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1962.
- *Genesis: A Commentary*, translated by John Marks. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1961.

Rust, Eric. *Evolutionary Philosophies and Contemporary Theologies*. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1969.

Sarna, Nahum M. *The JPS Commentary: Genesis*. Philadelphia: JPS, 1989.

Sartre, Jean Paul. *Essays in Existentialism*, "The Humanism of Existentialism." New York: Carol Publishing Group, 1995.

Simmel, Georg. *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*, translated by Kurt Wolff, Glencoe, IL: The Free Press, 1950.

Simoni, Henry. "Divine Passibility and the Problem of Radical Particularity: Does God Feel Your Pain?," in *Religious Studies, Volume 33, Issue, 3 September 1997,* 327-347.

Speiser, E.A. *The Anchor Bible: Genesis*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1964.

Spener, Jakob. *Pia Desideria*, Frankfurt and Mayn: Druckts Johann Dieterich Friedgen, 1676.

Stoeffler, Ernest. *The Rise of Evangelical Pietism*, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1965.
- *German Piety in the Eighteenth Century*, Leiden: E.J. Brill 1975.

Westermann, Claus. *Genesis: A Practical Commentary*, translated by David Green. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1987.

Whitehead, Alfred North. *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1929.
- *Modes of Thought*. New York: The Free Press, 1938.
- *Adventure of Ideas*. New York: The Free Press, 1933.
- *Science and the Modern World*. Cambridge: The University Press, 1946.

Process Theology. Edited by Ewert Cousins. New York: Newman Press, 1971.
- Ewert Cousins, "Process Models in Culture, Philosophy, and Theology," 3-22.
- Charles Hartshorne, "The Development of Process Philosophy," 47-66.