Destroying Idols

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Revisioning the Meaning of 'God'

By

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INTRODUCTION

"SUSPICIONS OF SOMETHING OTHER"—A BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

It is perhaps incumbent upon me to clarify at the outset that I consider myself today neither Jew nor Christian if, by these designations, one means one who is a confessant and practitioner of the "faith" or "religion" normally understood to be Judaism or Christianity. I am not, in other words, one committed in faith and practice to what is understood in modern parlance as "orthodox" Judaism and "orthodox" Christianity. I am, perhaps, instead one whose confession would better be characterized as "heterodox" from the perspective of these denominations or ways of life. Although, given the discourse of this book, I do not doubt that some may well prefer to ascribe to me the appellation "heretic," given the philosophical clarification of a theological conundrum I endeavor to advance in the following chapters.

I might note, further, that my lack of committed confession and practice in the conventional sense of "Jew" or "Christian" has its basis in what I call "suspicions of something other" at the historical base of partition of these two claimants to religious truth in the history of the Abrahamic faith. I was raised a Roman Catholic Christian, only later to discover through the memory of my father and a paternal aunt that my paternal grandfather Francisco (who spelled his surname alternately either "Suazo" or "Suaso"), without explanation to my father or to his siblings lit a candle on Friday evenings, said nothing of his religious convictions, and surely would not participate in otherwise Christian celebrations of church holidays and such. He was, perhaps—the memories of my father and his siblings are scant and official records lost—one of those from the American southwest (in his case, from the Taos, New Mexico area) who are known as *converso*- or *crypto*-Jews, seeking to make their way in life with minimum expressions of Jewish identity amidst Spanish colonial rule, at the time Spain very much an ally of Roman Catholic missionary authority in the New World.

As my genealogical search has turned out information here and there, I have discovered the surname "Suazo/Suaso" (spelled 'Suazo' in the Castilian Spanish, 'Suaso' in Portuguese) has its Jewish forbears in Jewish immigration to the United States under the names "Suasso" and "Suaso." Furthermore, the name "Suasso/Suazo/Suaso" also has its distinguished pedigree in Jews of this surname who fled the Spanish Inquisition and the Edict of Expulsion of 30 July 1492, some eventually to settle in Amsterdam to become known as Dutch Sephardim, others eventually moving to the shores of the New World, there to find refuge from the religious dogma that united the spiritual rule of the Church and the temporal authority of the Spanish throne. Howard Sachar reports in his *Farewell España: The World of the Sephardim Remembered* (1994), that the Sephardic Jew Francisco López Suasso (his adopted Christian name, otherwise known by his Jewish name as 'Abraham Israel Suasso', his father 'Isaac Israel Suasso' having adopted the Christian name, Antonio López Suasso), "substantially financed" (to the tune of two million crowns) William of Orange's ascension to the British throne. Thus, the high probability is that my ethnic heritage is Sephardic Jewish, even as it has some remnant of conversion or cryptic identity imposed by Spanish Roman Catholic missionary rule in the American southwest.

With this "fuzzy genealogy" compounding my suspicions of something other in my own unsettled religious comportment, as a philosopher with interest in the philosophy of religion, I have sought over the years to make sense of the philosophical and theological perspectives that are part and parcel of the conceptual divisions of orthodoxy, heterodoxy, and heresy within Judaism and Christianity, and to work out what these concepts imply for possibilities of identity, association, and a personal confession of faith, or, failing that, an abandonment of a scripturally-based faith altogether.[1] One is moved to understand the claims to veracity that come from religious doctrine. For, as that master depth psychologist of the human psyche Carl Gustav Jung commented, "We have experienced things so unheard of and so staggering"—one notes here

[1] See here: Norman K. Swazo, "Waiting for God: A Hasidic View," *Comparative Civilizations Review*, No. 38, Spring 1998, 15-50; Norman K. Swazo, "Dissenting from Rabbi Neusner: A Critical Interaction with *A Rabbi Speaks with Jesus*," *Kesher: A Journal of Messianic Judaism*, Issue 13, Summer 2001, 108-122; Norman K. Swazo, "A Meditation on Heresy and Rational Ignorance," *Philosophy, Culture, and Traditions*, Vol. 7, 2011, 195-209; Norman K. Swazo, "Rabbi Elisha ben Abuyah 'at the Mind's Limit': Between Theodicy and Fate," *Philosophy and Literature*, Vol. 38, No. 1, April 2014, 153-168.

all that characterized the twentieth century in unprecedented World Wars 1 and 2; the prosecution of that second world war in the two "theaters," European and Pacific; the dreadfully indiscriminate and punitive fire bombing of Dresden and Tokyo; the fully destructive power of the atomic bomb unleashed on Hiroshima and then the hydrogen bomb dropped, without the slightest hesitation, on Nagasaki; the Nazi genocide of six million European Jewry dubbed for its singularity as "the Holocaust;" to name the most prominent. And now, in the 21st century, we have the "promise" and "peril" of science and technology that highlight the unfathomed antinomies of human thought and action, from both the prospect of *enantiodromia* as these antinomies displace each other in the configurations of world order and disorder, disclosing for all to see that, as Lord H.B. Acton warned, "power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely." All of this is such that, "the question of whether such things are in any way reconcilable with the idea of a good God has become burningly topical."[2] From Jung's perspective, "It is no longer a problem for experts in theological seminaries, but a universal religious nightmare…" Except, this "nightmare" is not a benign dream suffered by a single person, but instead a manifest reality disclosing the human potential for evil for the whole of humanity.

What I have discovered, then, is that there is ample reason to find orthodoxies suspect, be they those consequent to time-honored rabbinic or patristic tradition. The "partition" of Judaism and Christianity, at least as we claim to know it historically, is by no means a simple or settled story for scholars of late antiquity—despite the prejudice of religious traditions that speak of orthodoxy, heterodoxy, and heresy so as to deliver to our present those configurations of religious identity that we denominate "Judaism" and "Christianity." The "border lines" between the two, as Daniel Boyarin has argued, are suspect, subject to disputation. As Boyarin argues, "The question of when Christianity separated from Judaism is a question whose answer is determined ideologically. We need always to ask: Whose Judaism; whose Christianity?"[3]

In contemporary experience, it is common to forget that both Judaism and Christianity have a range of differing convictions and association: Within Judaism—Hasidic Orthodox, Orthodox, Conservative, Reconstructionist, Reform, Secular/Cultural; and within Christianity—

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[2] Carl J. Jung, "Answer to Job," para. 736, *Psychology and Religion*, Vol. 11, Collected Works (New York: Pantheon Books, 1958), 453.

[3] Daniel Boyarin, *Border Lines: The Partition of Judaeo-Christianity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004)

Roman Catholic, Protestant (denominated variously Lutheran, Episcopalian, Anglican, Presbyterian, etc.), Russian Orthodox, Greek Orthodox, Coptic. There is further the twentieth century development of Messianic Judaism, seeking to connect the twain by rehabilitating the value of torah-observant Judaism (i.e., the written and the oral law) joined to the teaching of Yeshua (Jesus) acknowledged as Israel's *mashiach*, messiah. In asking his question via an exploration of the sources of late antiquity (that of the *tannaim* and ante-Nicene authors), Boyarin would have us understand this separation as one of "twins" parting at the hip rather than through the usual relational notion of "offspring" (Christianity) to "mother" (Judaism).

Similarly, although with some criticism of the extended argument of interpretation provided in Boyarin's more recent tome, *The Jewish Gospels*,[4] Peter Schäfer has written to say, "That the historical Jesus was a Jew, that his followers were Jews, and that the Gospels as well as the letters written by the apostle Paul are Jewish writings, firmly embedded in first century C.E. Judaism—all this has become almost commonplace. After long and bitter battles, this fact now has a foothold not only among historians of ancient Judaism but even among the most dedicated Christian theologians and the old influential school of New Testament scholars who tried to relegate the new message of the New Testament to a less Jewish, more Hellenistic background."[5] This sort of position about partition—whether and when such a concept is warranted by the relevant sources—is important if, as Boyarin allows in part, "There seems to be no absolute point, theological or otherwise, at which we could say for this early period: It is this that marks the difference between Judaism and Christianity."[6] The argument, if it is to be made, it seems, will be largely ideological, according to long-contested intellectual battle on matters of faith and for which formalities of religious conviction and association require clarification of what is orthodox, heterodox, and heretical.

Like Boyarin, I prefer to adopt "a perspective that refuses the option of seeing Christian and Jew, Christianity and Judaism, as fully formed, bounded, and separate entities and identities in late antiquity." Yet, of course, insofar as I am also in quest of a philosophical engagement of *post-modern* theology (assuming that is what it may yet be called in the

[4] Daniel Boyarin, *The Jewish Gospels: The Story of the Jewish Christ* (New York: The New Press, 2012)

[5] Peter Schäfer, "The Jew Who Would Be God," *New Republic*, 18 May 2012. See also Schäfer's, *The Jewish Jesus: How Judaism and Christianity Shaped Each Other* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012)

[6] Schäfer, "The Jew Who Would be God," 7.

contemporary taxonomy of religious discourse), I cannot ignore the subsequent history of religious disputation. Transmitted as rabbinic and patristic traditions, this history has served the task of separation and formation of identities that today allow us to speak (more or less comfortably) about "orthodox" Judaism and "orthodox" Christianity. Again, I concur wholly with Boyarin in his notice that, "Indeed, speaking for Judaism, it seems highly significant that there is no word in pre-modern Jewish parlance that means 'Judaism'…It might seem then, that Judaism has not, *until some time in modernity*, existed at all, and that whatever moderns might be tempted to abstract out or to disembed from the culture of Jews and call their religion was not so disembedded nor ascribed particular status by Jews until very recently."[7]

My task in this book, however, is to try to *un-build* or *de-construct* walls of partition that seem to be built on the basis of faulty understanding. More precisely, I work here to un-build one part, perhaps the central part, of this wall of partition: viz., that of the *theological* commitment that depends for its assumed veracity on one or another determinate biblical hermeneutic. Specifically, I write to challenge (1) "orthodox/rabbinic" Judaism's commitment to "absolute" monotheism (e.g., as expressed in the theological commitment of the "*Shema*" given in the *Torah* as, "Hear, O Israel, YHWH your God is one God"); and (2) orthodox/patristic Christianity's commitment to trinitarianism (e.g., as expressed in the Roman Catholic doctrinal Nicene Creed (at Constantinople in 318 CE), "We believe in one God, the Father Almighty…and in one Lord Jesus Christ…son of God…true God of true God…and in the Holy Ghost…"). To un-build a wall of partition, of course, is not to engage in a merely negative work in the classical philosophical sense of negative refutation or an act of total destruction. To un-build is not to destroy; thus, it is not an act intending hostility or associated violence somehow to be done against one or the other religious commitment. It is, instead, first of all a philosophical project of *de*-construction of a wall of partition; and, by intent this act of deconstruction enables a *re*-construction of a site of possibly meaningful and shared spiritual confession and congregation among those who are confessant as either religious Jew or Christian. This "deconstruction/reconstruction" is warranted, I submit, primarily because, as Daniel Abrams puts it,

> One of the central aspects of Jewish theology, and Jewish mysticism in particular, is the conception of the nature of God's being and the

[7] Schäfer, "The Jew Who Would be God," 8.

> appearance of the divine before humanity. *No one view has dominated the spectrum of Jewish interpretations*, since the biblical text is the only common frame for the wide variety of speculations. At issue is whether the one God depicted in the Hebrew Bible is manifest to humans directly or through the agency of a divine, semidivine, or created power.[8]

No one view has dominated interpretation within Judaism. That is an important proposition central to all theological and philosophical discourse. And so, the historical boundaries of given interpretations are reasonably to be recognized and delimited. Majority opinion within rabbinic Judaism, as a tradition of biblical exegesis, is the basis for the dogma of absolute monotheism. However, it is important to acknowledge that this exegetical position was engaged by minority opinions, that even as this majoritarian rabbinic dogma distinguished itself from "trinitarian" (three persons in the godhead) conceptions of deity represented by the new religious expression of Christianity, so this majority opinion worked against another minority rabbinic position known as "binitarianism," i.e., a theology of "two powers in heaven."

With these preliminaries stated as something of my "personal prejudice" at play in this project of deconstruction, let me turn to substantive remarks of introduction to the extended argument I adduce in the chapters that follow.

The author of *Ecclesiastes* (*12:12*) remarked, "of making many books there is no end." Accepting the point and recognizing the implication of so many works being made to no good or meaningful end, it is reasonable to ask, then: Why this volume of analysis and commentary? This book is, first and foremost, an applied exercise in *philosophical hermeneutics* (to be distinguished thereby from *biblical* hermeneutics), broadly construed. It represents my attempt to make new sense of an old problem that is of course at once philosophical and religious (*qua* biblical)—the *meaning* of 'God'/'god'—as this word might be engaged by methods of contemporary interrogation.[9] It is part of my intent here to demonstrate by way of my analysis that the question of the meaning of 'God'/'god' is by no means settled, neither by the methods of

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[8] Daniel Abrams, "The Boundaries of Divine Ontology: The Inclusion and Exclusion of Metatron in the Godhead," *Harvard Theological Review*, Vol. 87, No. 3, July 1994, pp. 291-321, at 291 (italics mine).

[9] The placement of single quotes here—'God'/'god'—is a convention of logic to distinguish when one means "the word …" and when one uses the word with reference to the entity denoted.

biblical (rabbinic, patristic) exegesis nor those of systematic and philosophical theology.

It has been said in recent years that "one of the primary tasks of a postmodern theology" concerns "how the past, and through it the present, is [to be] re-configured." The call for reconfiguration follows from contemporary philosophical (i.e., recent European) challenges to the very concept of tradition, and also as consequence of historical-critical assessments of the status of ostensibly authoritative texts and practices. Historical-critical scholars are likely to say something like, "The primary task of the critical religious thinker is to examine the tradition, not to repeat it, and through examining the tradition to allow the present to be reshaped more closely along the lines of what the tradition truly stands for." If they are scholars such as S. David Sperling, they will even go so far as to hold that the Torah of the Hebrew *Tanakh* ('Tanakh' here meaning the entire biblical corpus that includes the Torah, the Prophets, and the Writings) is to be read *allegorically* because—consequent to the empirical evidence and conclusions of historical and archaeological research—this "text" cannot be read as a record of *history*: "If 'historical' means that an event [happened??] in the time and place in which it is set, then nothing in the Torah is historical."[10]

Though biblical scholars may differ on the merits of the proposition, I submit that a postmodern theology stands legitimately to be influenced, in the methodology and in the content of this theological discourse, by contemporary philosophy. Surely this can be no surprise to anyone familiar with the history of the Jewish and Christian traditions in particular. Philosophy, i.e., as represented by the thought of early Greek and medieval, scholastic periods in particular, over many centuries was considered the handmaiden of theology. Only in recent time has there been something of what has been called a "mutual antipathy" between practitioners of the two disciplines. At issue today, however—as part of a postmodern reconfiguration of the theological present—is an examination of that tradition which has come about as a result of continuity and discontinuity, convergence and divergence, i.e., of what the history of religions call "Palestinian Judaism" and "Hellenistic Christianity." At issue, in short, is the self-understanding of contemporary Judaism(s) and Christianity(ies) in relation to what Schäfer refers to as "a process…set in

[10] S. David Sperling, *The Original Torah: The Political Intent of the Bible's Writers* (New York: New York University Press, 1998), 9. In relation to this, see also Yoram Hazony, *The Philosophy of Hebrew Scripture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

motion [after the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 C.E.] that was geared toward taking stock and distilling some kind of 'normative Judaism,' aimed at defining what is 'in' [thus, orthodox] and what is 'out,' [thus heterodox, heretical] and thus eliminating trends and directions that were regarded as unwelcome or dangerous."[11]

This self-understanding is characterized by both convergence and divorce, exemplified all too starkly in the respective conceptions of 'God'/'god' historically articulated by religious authorities who set themselves to the task of delimiting a normative Judaism and a normative Christianity—the former declaring itself strictly monotheist, the latter expressing a commitment to monotheism, but in a trinitarian frame. A postmodern theology cannot reconfigure the present gainfully without addressing the perennially problematic question about the meaning—or, better, *meanings*—of 'God/'god' without simply assuming such meaning to be settled. However, this reconfiguration need not, just because it is characterized as postmodern, abandon the theistic tradition entirely (i.e., that tradition that holds to a concept of "the God" (denominated in the *Torah* by way of the tetragrammaton, *YHWH*, otherwise by the title, '*Adonai*', who is described as the divine being purposely intervening in human affairs according to a plan of revelation, sanctification, and/or salvation). In particular, I will note, the tradition need not be abandoned in the direction of what is today called "process theology," for various reasons noted here in passing.

Process theology sought to be revolutionary *vis-à-vis* traditional theism, deriving much of its method and content, however, from a conceptual scheme that is quite philosophical (e.g., that of the British philosopher, Alfred North Whitehead). But, this strategy was not sufficiently radical, which is to say it did not get to the roots of the matter. That is, process theology—no less than systematic theology of the Christian tradition—sustains a suspect *metaphysical* commitment. A reconfiguration of the theological present, it seems to me, may rather find its substance in a different strategy (following the philosopher Martin Heidegger here), viz., a strategy of *deconstruction* and *retrieval*—(a) "deconstruction," insofar as the alleged legitimacy of Hellenistic influences (viz., Platonist and Aristotelian metaphysical categories appropriated by Christian theology) is critically examined; and (b) "retrieval," insofar as the distinctly Aramaic/Hebrew lexical heritage is allowed to speak anew, and so enable a contemporary appropriation of a more genuinely *convergent* "Jewish-Christian" theology.

[11] Schäfer, *The New Republic*, 2012.

This means, as a matter of methodological commitment, that *Semitic*, rather than *Greek*, categories of thought become central to a conceptual clarification of 'God'/'god'. This means, further, that both the Judaism of rabbinic tradition and the Christianity of patristic tradition stand to be reconfigured through an examination of ancient Israelite religion, wherein those Semitic categories are articulated without the intrusion of unexamined, and thus tacit philosophical/metaphysical, conceptual commitments. Hence, rather than continue simply to acquiesce in the prevailing doctrinal divorce of rabbinic Judaism and patristic Christianity, a postmodern theology can legitimately pursue, engender, and promote a Jewish and Christian convergence through the examination and retrieval of a common theological origin. Thereby, such a theological endeavor may inaugurate a "spirit of renewal" which in the end sustains the principal affirmations of religious faith proper to contemporary Judaism and Christianity (albeit sustained against both rationalist and empiricist critiques always all too current in the philosophy of religion in its vigilant demand for justification of the testimony of faith). I do not say, thereby, that such convergence will lead us to appropriate a taxonomy so as to identify in contemporary time with what has been called "Jewish Christianity," since this term is itself ambiguous in the scholarship to date.[12]

What I do propose to show in the chapters that follow is that the ancient Hebrew sense of 'God'/'god' is, in its intension (i.e., its meaning), to be distinguished from the metaphysical sense of 'God'/'god' that is concerned to answer (after Hellenistic influence) the question of *what* God/god *is*. The latter is properly an "onto-theo-logical" question insofar as it is concerned with knowing *what* "the supreme being among beings" (the *summum ens*) *is*, i.e., knowing the essential nature, thus essential attributes, of this supreme being. It can be argued that it is in this philosophical concern for "definition," i.e., for a systematic clarification of the nature or essence of God/god, that the Hellenist development was a *deviation* from the original Hebrew emphasis on *recognition* and *acknowledgment* of the revealed God/god. Thus the act of definition functions differently from the acts of recognition and acknowledgement. In rejecting such intrusions of Greek metaphysics, the early Christians (called *Netzarim*, "Nazarenes," by Palestinian Jewry, thus who at this time are simply and properly still "Jews") were, in their beliefs, entirely continuous with an ancient Israelite conception of God/god. When this

[12] Matt Jackson-McCabe, *Jewish Christianity Reconsidered: Rethinking Ancient Groups and Texts* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007)

historical datum is given its due, then it becomes a matter of some consequence to concede that the "Greek element" in Christian theology is not essential, that it never has had, and does not today have, a claim to permanence in any clarification of the meaning of 'God'/'god'. Any intellectually honest postmodern critique of the Jewish and Christian traditions cannot but admit that even the language of theology succumbs to the fallacy which privileges traditional wisdom, whether it be that of the post-temple rabbis or the early church fathers. Such a critique would then have, at the very center of its confrontation, a quest and a vision of conciliation of the currently divorced couple, holding both retrieval and suspicion in tension in the interrogation of both theological traditions.

The fact is that claims to orthodoxy of rabbinic Judaism and institutional/ecclesiastical Christianity are today largely in force as a matter of historical inertia (again, bearing in mind the contested term "orthodoxy"). It is as if all that really matters intellectually has arrived at some settlement not to be contested, that quite simply Judaism and Christianity are entirely distinct. I submit, this inertia can and must be overcome in the direction of a reconfiguration of the present, but governed by attention to a marginalized historical fact: Christianity properly characterized cannot be legitimately divorced from its nascent historical context of significance, viz., a *Palestinian Judaism* the religious contours of which were more demonstrably derivative of Hebrew and Aramaic tradition than that of diasporic Hellenism. As Tom Wright put it, "early Christianity, claiming the high ground of Israel's heritage, was first and foremost a movement that defined itself in opposition to paganism, and only secondarily in opposition to mainline Judaism itself."[13] In short, the doctrinal positions of the quite "Jewish" apostolic church *at Jerusalem* and its direct descendents, the *Netzarim*, are such that we cannot afford to ignore the doctrinal disputes between (a) the originary "Christianity" of Western Asia Minor and (b) the subsequent "Christianity" of Rome and (c) the *political* victory that established the primacy of Rome and Roman Catholicism after the Council of Nicaea. It was this political victory that effectively marginalized the Jewishness of the primordial Christian faith and practice, but which Jewishness is today in need of restoration for a right conception of the "most high God" (*el elyon*) who is ever first and foremost "the God of Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov," rather than "the god of the philosophers, *Q.E.D.*" It is the comportment of a postmodern theology, pursued here in philosophical clarification, to recall this

[13] Tom Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1992)

distinction in both sense (*intension* of the term) and reference (*extension* of the term).

In the same vein, the relation of Judaism to Christianity has to be recast in a way such that we are careful about (mistakenly) identifying the Netzarim as *merely* "Jewish-Christians" and then contrasting them from the "catholic/Gentile Christians" by reading into supposed "doctrines" of the Netzarim a "proto-rabbinic" comportment. A right (not to say here 'orthodox') conception of early Christian doctrine cannot be so readily separated from the Judaism of the second temple period—a Judaism which cannot be made merely equivalent to rabbinic or Pharisaic Judaism so as to legitimate thereby the divorce of Christianity and Judaism, especially in the manner held by post-Luther polemics and those distortions that issue from "Protestant-Catholic controversies read back into the first centuries A.D."

A right conception of 'God'/'god' is also, of course, dependent on the manner in which one engages the scriptural texts. In this respect, one inevitably makes some kind of commitment concerning the *reliability* of the transmitted texts as well as whether and why a given version is to be *privileged* for purposes of exegesis and hermeneutics. Here one must defer (albeit with appropriate critical distance) to the authority of contemporary textual criticism and current results of the historical-critical method, especially as concerns the primary text that is the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Christian Bible), i.e., the *Torah* component of the *Tanakh*. At issue here are problems associated with the reliability of the transmitted biblical text as well as with its interpretation. That is to say, within contemporary historical-criticism the analytical task often turns out to be one of textual emendation to correct graphic errors as well as one of explaining the text in a new way, while accounting for critical standards that distinguish the plain sense or context (*peshat*) and rabbinic interpretation (*derash*) that is generally a more expansive reading. Since (so I argue) it is the ancient Israelite religion that is critical to a rehabilitated conception of 'God'/'god' over against later (e.g., medieval, scholastic) philosophical intrusions, the Masoretic Text unavoidably becomes the preferred text for interpretive insights. Both linguistic and theological exegeses cannot but privilege the Masoretic Text over the "diasporic-Alexandrian" Septuagint (also known as "the LXX") in making sense of the interpretive tradition of ancient Israel. Of course, all of this presupposes some settlement on reliable codices (e.g., the Leningrad Codex, the Aleppo Codex) of ancient manuscripts. It is thus that Semitic thought patterns and conceptual categories may be rehabilitated in the direction of a renewed historical efficacy that can speak to our day.

The foregoing remarks serve to point out the methodological and substantive contours of this volume. It is distinguished from other work in the domain of applied philosophical hermeneutics by the *interdisciplinary* approach deliberately and determinately taken—attention being given to philosophy of religion, systematic theology, ancient philosophy, theoretical expositions of biblical and philosophical hermeneutics, poststructural criticism, early Church history, history of ancient Israel, and textual criticism. One might consider, for example, that much contemporary study in the philosophy of religion (especially that associated with twentieth century analytic philosophy) works with argumentative positions that are presented almost entirely in terms of English-language locutions. Thus, one may learn much about the meaning or "logical status" of 'God'/'god' within the frame of that analytic-philosophical "semantic regime" and correspondent interpretive commitment. But, this strategy of analytic-philosophical interrogation neglects relevant claims and parallel insights to be gained from attention to Greek-language locutions and Hebrew-language locutions when examining Jewish and Christian religious discourse. Working only in the method of analysis of English-language locutions thus loses out on insights that are to be gained from what is called a "contrastive analysis." It is when one attends to locutions in these semantic regimes (biblical Hebrew; biblical Greek) that one will be confronted with conclusions about the meaning of 'God'/'god' widely disparate from those conclusions advanced by analytic philosophy. Furthermore, attention to issues of text and interpretation inevitably draws one into the domains of hermeneutics, philology, and textual criticism—philosophers of religion often neglecting to account for the work being done in these disciplines. It is precisely because of this interdisciplinary approach to the question about the meaning of 'God'/'god' that this book seeks to deliver some novel insights.

Accordingly, the structure and content of this volume may be summarized as follows:

- Chapter I sets forth the parameters of the problem in terms of the confrontation between the *testimony* of faith, on the one hand, and the philosophical demands for *justification* of faith, on the other hand.
- Chapter II is concerned to highlight basic features of the monotheistic commitment proper to rabbinic Judaism and the monotheist, yet trinitarian, commitment transmitted by patristic Christianity. Here the Platonist-Aristotelian metaphysical influences are made evident and, thus, suspect, in light of the interpretive

approach proposed here, i.e., an approach not governed by the prejudices of onto-theo-logy (by which is meant a "metaphysical" methodological commitment).

- Chapter III concerns the "logical status" of 'God'/'god', with attention to the issues of sense (meaning, connotation) and reference (denotation) as these issues have been articulated in the work of some representative scholars.
- Chapter IV then turns to rethinking the meaning of 'God'/'god' in light of ancient Israelite religion, with attention to the Masoretic text and with emphasis upon Semitic categories, without this search for meaning succumbing to the tacit and distorting influence of (philosophically derived) Greek categories. It is here that I advance an interpretive position that warrants re-examination and support for the "two powers in heaven" doctrine that circulated in early rabbinic disputations.
- Chapter V concludes the volume by considering the place of twentieth century Messianic Judaism (not to say, "Jewish Christianity" here) in contemporary theology, given the ostensibly "historical"/"interpretive" connection of this movement to the Netzarim of the first century C.E. It is the aim of this chapter to show that clarification of the logical status of 'God' (accomplished in Chapter IV) justifies a more positive assessment of Messianic Judaism in the current engagement of Jewish and Christian theology, although not without signaling the need for a more critical self-examination by those who are proponents of a "messianic" Judaism that combines torah-observant practice with fidelity to the teaching of Yeshua as messiah.

As I present my musings here, whether as fully structured argument or as preliminary and tentative suggestion, I do not expect that all or even most who encounter these thoughts will have their minds changed so as to concur with what I say. And, surely I would not attribute a lack of their "turn of mind" to those two supposed intellectual failures depicted as either invincible ignorance or naïve faith. I do expect, however, that what I have to say here is sufficiently insightful as to engender in a reader of this work a certain degree of wonder. With *that* wonder engendered, though someone may respond to my arguments and suggestions with an "I am not yet persuaded," even so, I will take that "not yet" as the sort of wondrous beginning that every philosopher sustains in his or her dialogue with an interlocutor. Who knows? That wonder, sustained in that

anticipatory "yet," may in due course of time find its fulfillment in the remainder of the original response: "...I am persuaded."

Accordingly, I prefer to characterize the intellectual work of this volume with the apt observation of the biblical text critic, Emanuel Tov: "There are no ideal discussions in scholarship...and many questions remain unanswered."[14] In short, I recognize in advance that I will not satisfy all readers in their own approach to my discussion. Inevitably for them, indeed as for me, many questions remain unanswered. But that is a *bonum*, a good, not the least because the questions are ever themselves signs to avenues of inquiry that may yet be pursued, and which inquiries may yet prove fruitful.

So, to reiterate, with a yet further personal reflection: I discuss here the question that is today for me the most urgent, as it has always been, for the philosophy of religion: *What does 'God'/'god' mean?* But, it is a question that I, in contrast to others, ask with reference to the Hebrew words first and foremost, thus to distinguish between proper nouns (names of "God") and other appellations (e.g., titles, attributes). This question urges itself upon me as one who is at once skeptical and ambivalent about the tradition of theism, but also as a professional philosopher—as a philosopher inasmuch as I have ever been suspicious of the well-rehearsed stock answers given as the orthodoxy of both Judaism and Christianity, answers that speak too much of Hellenists and the intellectual offspring of Plato and Aristotle than of the ancient Israelites and children of the named forefathers, Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaacov. As it turns out, though, the question I ask is transformed gainfully along the way into several inseparable questions that are not answered to my satisfaction by rabbinic tradition heretofore:

- What does *'elohim'* mean?
- What does *'YHWH'* mean?
- How do these two words—'*elohim*' and '*YHWH*'—relate to each other?

And, most important:

- What does the philologically difficult expression *'ehyeh asher ehyeh'* given in *Exodus 3:14-15* mean?

[14] Emanuel Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible* (Minneapolis: Augsberg Fortress, 2001), 167.

Following the example of one recent commentator in the philosophy of religion, I would have to say that what I have done, in the end, is to explicate and define *interpretive possibilities* rather than to establish or demonstrate *irreformable truths* that are guaranteed to convince the doubter or decisively answer the questioner. The quest for demonstration, for decisive answer, is the comportment of both classical and modernist systematic theologies. Whereas, in contrast, or so I suggest, the explication of interpretive possibilities is the comportment proper to a *post*-modern theology. Thus, I leave it to my reader to determine whether my position is cogent in a way which adduces novel insights or lacks cogency inasmuch as it suffers, at best, from a heterodox "synthesis of errors" and, at worst, from "a collage of heresies" of the sort that ever have called forth the apologies and disputations of "the defenders of orthodoxy." Ultimately, I suppose it is to be said that I offer my own interpretive witness to "the biblical truth" as I discern it, even though the well-known classical objection may be spoken: "*Testis unus testis nullus"* ("A single witness is no witness"). And when I say here, 'biblical truth', this is to be understood only in terms of the *coherence* of statements given in the context of the traditions of narrated religious experience, not to commit to their *correspondence* to a divine reality (which is a matter not settled by belief).

Such an approach of interpretive witness, of course, brings to the fore any number of questions of interpretation at a time characterized as one of "critical encounters," indeed as a time of "traditions in transformation." Thus, David Tracy, professor of theology at the Divinity School of The University of Chicago, remarked some years ago that, "The problem of interpretation becomes a central issue in cultural periods of crisis. So it was for the Stoics and their reinterpretation of the Greek and Roman myths. So it was for those Jews and Christians who developed the allegorical method. And, so it is for Jews and Christians since the emergence of historical consciousness."[15] So it is, I add, for Jews and Christians yet seeking a post-Holocaust settlement about the foundations of their faith. I write as one of those yet seeking such reasonably sufficient intellectual settlement—assuming that is at all plausible. In short, I too write as one struggling with the claims to historical consciousness that are nonetheless in tension with the demythologist's project that questions the validity of religious claims, and thereby affects the commitments to belief of both orthodox Jews and orthodox Christians today. But, I write precisely because of my dissatisfaction with the historical and

[15] David Tracy, *Dialogue with the Other: The Inter-religious Dialogue* (Peeters Publishers, 1990), 59.

contemporary discontinuity in the Judaism and Christianity we have inherited; and so, I write out of a desire to overcome whatever sustains this (to my mind) entirely artificial and unfounded divorce. Thus, while I respectfully listen to, and am instructed by, the Jewish rabbis of the Talmudic tradition and by the Church Fathers of the patristic tradition, as well as by the philosophers of the Western (i.e., Greek and Latin) tradition of philosophical theology, in the end I find myself having "something other" to say, something *other than* the prevailing orthodoxies. While I may well be characterized, in the end, as "heterodox," hopefully I shall not be indicted as a heretic by the household of Israel, both Old and New, without a just hearing and re-hearing of the interpretive position I adduce here, in the same way Talmudic disputation is gainfully to be pursued.

As a professional philosopher engaged with the question about the meaning of 'God'/'god' in the twenty-first century, I do not imply that our Western philosophical heritage is likewise entirely or mostly lacking in meaningful, reasonable, and relevant contributions aimed at resolving the dilemmas that make Judaic and Christian monotheistic doctrine perennially difficult. On the contrary, as Michael Murray put it, "for the Christian philosopher, the history of philosophy is in large measure a story of other thinkers who were confronted with the same puzzles and dilemmas we face."[16] Thus, with this in mind, we are surely benefited by an examination of the questions they frame and the answers they offer, however roughly hewn. Our task, however, is to listen to their discourses without yielding uncritically to any obvious or unwitting dogmatism, be that dogma in the questions, in the answers, and, most important, in the presuppositions and tacit prejudices which provide the interpretive frame for their questions.

As the reader will discover, then, the chapters that follow concern matters of interpretation, but thereby matters of translation, inasmuch as every translation is itself already an interpretation—given the attempted fusion of semantic regimes, each with its set of concepts, categories, rhetorical style, and even "ideological" frame of presupposition and methodological commitment. Accordingly, to clarify this point further, as a philosopher trained in recent European philosophy I share by way of foreword to this volume the instruction from German philosopher Martin Heidegger that, to my mind at least, speaks aptly to what is for me at issue "philologically" in any reading of the ancient Hebrew scriptures:

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[16] Michael Murray, "Seek and You Will Find," *God and the Philosophers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994); https://edisk.fandm.edu/michael.murray/seek.pdf.

> Yet who decides, and how does one decide, concerning the correctness of a "translation"? We "get" our knowledge of the meaning of words in a foreign language from a dictionary or "wordbook." Yet we too readily forget that the information in a dictionary must always be based upon a preceding interpretation of linguistic contexts from which particular words and word usages are taken. In most cases a dictionary provides the correct information about the meaning of a word, yet this correctness does not yet guarantee us any insight into the truth of what the word means and can mean, given that we are asking about the essential realm named in the word. A "wordbook" can give pointers as to how to understand a word, but it is never an absolute authority to which one is bound in advance...Viewed with regard to the historical spirit of a language as a whole, on the other hand, every dictionary lacks any immediate or binding standards of measure....
> *Making something understandable means awakening our understanding to the fact that the blind obstinacy of habitual opinion must be shattered and abandoned if the truth of a work is to unveil itself.*[17]

Accordingly, along with the above guidance from Heidegger, I take instruction from Rabbi David Wolpe, another contemporary thinker in the quest for "God," who writes that, "the central quest in Judaism is the attempt to bring the sacred into language, to make the ineffable expressible."[18] It is thus my hope, in receiving the judgment of my readers, that what is written in this book—especially what I take to be my principal contributions in Chapter IV—honors this enduring quest, even as we cannot but remain attentive to the instruction of the Talmud that "there is no true beginning or end to the journey of language, of study, of speaking sacred words." Our journey will continue responsibly if we, like the patriarch Avraham before us, "rise above the assumptions" of our own age. That is what I have tried to do here—to rise above the assumptions of my own age, imbued as it is with the authority of traditions while facing assaults on their foundations. Clearly, and inevitably, I have my own prejudices. But, having learned from the instruction of Hans-Georg Gadamer, master of philosophical hermeneutics, I have worked to keep these prejudices explicit rather than tacit, which is to say I have worked to keep these prejudices questionable and thus subject to surrender. Inasmuch as my approach is that of the professional philosopher and not that of the formally trained biblical philologist or Hebraist, it is entirely

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[17] Martin Heidegger, *Hölderlin's Hymn, "The Ister,"* trans., W. McNeill & J. Davis (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), 62-63, italics added.
[18] David Wolpe, *In Speech and in Silence* (Owlet Publishers, 1993), 114.

likely that the latter specialists may have some disagreement with both my method and my conclusions. That disagreement, however, I welcome as an occasion to continue the examination of the questions interrogated here.

Finally, I am reminded that Everett Fox, in his inspiring and instructive translation of the Pentateuch (in the *Schocken Bible*), said all too aptly, "careful and loving attention to ancient words may help us to form the modern ones that we need." Such, I believe, must be our attention to the ancient Hebrew words that yet speak to us of an "experience" of "God," even as we can welcome and take into account the work of contemporary textual criticism in relation to the governing texts that report such an experience.[19] Not that we *would* come away from such an encounter with *newly* formed "modern" words fitting for our time of need. Rather, in my view, our hermeneutic engagement with the ancient lexicon instructs us of the continuing and authentic ring of the ancient words as they speak to our contemporary hearing, even as we may be temporally distant from those words initially. Such is the impetus of a task of deconstruction and retrieval.

I wish to close these introductory comments with a personal note. What I say in this book is for me an intellectually plausible bridge between Jew and Christian as two confessions long in quest of the divine. I say 'bridge between Jew and Christian' fully aware, of course, of the diversity of views within both contemporary Judaism and Christianity. But, I am hopeful that my challenges to the central doctrines of each—viz., those formulae of belief known as the *Shema* and the *Trinity* (e.g., as given in the Apostle's Creed)—may provide a basis for fruitful dialogue and reconciliation at the level of intellectual disputation even if not at the level of institutional and communal association.

Ours is a time in which there is a dire need to rethink the basic theological questions. This rethinking may be undertaken in the service of what Hasidic Jews know and pursue as *tikkun ha olam*, i.e., the task of *mending the world*. There are contemporary voices that speak to us of the atrocities of the last century and that seek to capture "sacred fragments" amidst the modern processes of secularization, assimilation, demythologization, and "death of God" theology that have assaulted

[19] I strongly recommend to my readers the thoroughly instructive work of Emanuel Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1992/2001).

classical theism with the force of a destructive power.[20] Others, observing the spiritual situation of the age, conclude that ours is a world beyond redemption by the hand of man. And yet, it is this claim that is infused with considerable existential anxiety, for it leaves us at once confronted with the nineteenth century Nietzschean assertion of the death of God and the twentieth century "speechless horror" at what men do with their unprecedented crimes against humanity. The latter, as the Jewish political philosopher Hannah Arendt understood, is a profoundly disquieting antithesis to the positive "wonder" (*thaumazein*) that is said to have moved the Western philosophical tradition of inquiry as inaugurated by Socrates and Plato. One who confronts this time seriously, who confronts it *hopefully*, cannot rest content with either acquiescence in "mystery" or surrender to the necessity of "the ineffable," both evident strategies pursued by some in the tradition we must engage anew. As Milton Steinberg might say were he alive today, we cannot be like Job who "reconciled himself to the enigma of his fate." Rather must we ask ourselves the same question Steinberg would ask of Job: "how could he make a truce with mystery when his soul cried out for understanding?"[21]

To be sure, Job can speak at the end of his ordeal and say, "Of things too wonderful for me, things which I knew not, have I spoken. Wherefore I abhor my words and recant" (*Job 42:3*). Like Job, we live in a world that bestows life and death, hope and despair, joy and sadness—all of this sometimes seemingly bestowed all too indiscriminately and to the bewilderment of many. And, like Job, we speak of what we do not understand, and perhaps speak of what we shall not understand until, as with Job—assuming the veracity of narrated traditions—our ears hear the voice of God, or, in death our eyes see the face of the very God who alone redeems the faithful. Yet, again and again, despite our human failures, even despite the acceptance of the reality of divine punishment in the present life, whether as believers or as skeptics we are installed historically into the presence of Jewish and Christian traditions of faith. Despite our ambivalence, we are at this or that time moved to acknowledge what may be accepted as redemptive acts of the divine, thus to express our gratitude for "the remnant" of faith that ever remains charged with a spiritual quest, especially in our own day. And, precisely because human souls cry out for understanding, the prophetic word offers its guidance to those who are so inclined: "'Come now, let us reason

[20] See, e.g., Neil Gillman, *Sacred Fragments: Recovering Theology for the Modern Jew* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1990).
[21] Milton Steinberg, *As A Driven Leaf* (Behrman House, 1939/1996), 135.

together', says *YHWH*" (*Is. 1:18*). And so, with this fundamental right and duty of inquiry given in this call, we can seek to reason about this ineffable *YHWH*, even to the point of arraigning him before the bar of a humanly conceived justice, as we seek to make sense of the creative act and purpose spoken in the scriptures.

The exercise I have undertaken here, then, is my most personally interrogatory contribution to *tikkun ha olam* as I appropriate the word of Isaiah in the service of Jews and Christians "reasoning together." Surely, it is long past the time that we should disabuse ourselves of the recriminations and apologetics that have alienated Judaism and Christianity from each other. If my engagement of the theological tradition and my "re-reading" of a key passage of text in *Exodus* are compelling in the conclusions I adduce therefrom, then there is hope indeed. We might concede that, yes, in the end, this world is beyond redemption by the hand of man. Yet, this is hardly to exclude the mending of the world that humans are nonetheless both empowered and obligated to do. Some, reasoning together, may find a faith sufficient to await the coming of the Messiah, as orthodox Judaism has continued to do for centuries of belief. Perhaps it is as the Hasidic masters believe, however: that with acts of *tikkun* undertaken together we hasten the coming of the Messiah. With that comportment, severally and jointly both Jew and Christian may then declare, with the reasonable conviction of that faith that is essential to religious experience: *Ani ma'amin beviat ha mashiach—I believe in the coming of the Messiah.*

It is my hope, then, to provide here a bridge whereupon Jew, Christian, agnostic, atheist, skeptic, each of us, may visit and speak (at the least); appealing thereby to those who have a common love of the God of the forefathers Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaacov, as well as a common desire among those who believe to find favor in the advent of the Messiah. This concern for mending the world, even if short of its redemption, can and must take precedence over long-standing parochial and communalist commitments, especially since Judaism and Christianity are together faced with the same problem of articulating a meaningful post-Holocaust theology. The contemporary Jewish philosopher Emil Fackenheim observed that, "we dare not ignore Eichmann's boast that in murdering East European Jewry he effectively destroyed Judaism as well. *This* time it was precisely the holy remnant that did not survive—and history may yet prove Eichmann right. Something radical has happened in our time, not

only to Jews but also to Judaism."[22] Fackenheim then posed the question that is entirely acute for any post-Holocaust theology: "Can Jewish faith reconcile itself to the loss of the many because of the faith of the few?" He submits for our consideration this proleptic proposition: "In destroying the holy remnant the Holocaust also suspended, for the post-Holocaust world, the idea of a holy remnant."

This proposition is, for me, disturbing; and, in the end, it is even unconvincing. It is unconvincing because its premise is unconvincing. If the musings and assorted conclusions of this volume are correct, then it is quite plausible—I do not argue beyond that minimum—that a "Messianic" Judaism avowedly observant of the great principles of the Torah can yet respond to the crisis of faith that disturbs the present time. In this way, the historical alienation and hostility of Judaism and Christianity may be overcome in an encounter that cannot but be mutually transforming of the substance of faith and communal practice. The "Romanized" Christianity of Western Christendom cannot but then yield before the instruction of its earliest *Netzarim* heritage, re-appropriating a redemptive hermeneutic. For its part, the Judaism that binds itself historically to the founding discourse of rabbinic tradition must then also surrender the philosophical categories of Hellenist influence that have confounded its conception of its "one" God, thereby giving place to the marginalized discourse of its own internal "two powers in heaven" doctrine. Thereby, Judaism may re-read its holy scriptures. Only through this mutuality of instruction, surrender, and revision can there be a unity of Jewish and Christian traditions having for the twenty-first century a post-Holocaust, historically effective, promise of universalizing significance.

"Come, let us reason together," the scripture says. Let us say, *Amen*—so be it.

[22] Emil L. Fackenheim, *To Mend the World: Foundations of Post-Holocaust Jewish Thought* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 91.

CHAPTER I

POSTBIBLICAL TRADITION AND INTRUSIONS PHILOSOPHICAL

It is noteworthy that for both Jew and Christian, neither faith nor practice requires *proof* of the existence of God, be that proof methodologically rationalist or empiricist. For both Jew and Christian, the objective fact of scripture and its historical testimony are the basis of faith and its corollary practices. Indeed, as E.G. Hirsch remarked in his classic article, "God," in the 1907 edition of *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, "The existence of God is presupposed throughout the Bible, no attempt being anywhere made to *demonstrate* his reality. Philosophical skepticism belongs to a period of thought generally posterior to that covered by the Biblical books".[1] This is not a trivial point. The *reality* of God is not at issue for the true believer, meaning here that religious statements about God correspond to the reality of an "existing" divine being, whatever the "nature" of that being. For a believer, the scriptures attest to the reality of God, and the veracity of that record is attributed (in a derivative sense) to the experiences of a people who have in one way or another encountered that reality. As Abraham Heschel put it, "Faith does not spring out of nothing. It comes with the discovery of the holy dimension of our existence."[2] Similarly, J.S. Chestnut put it some years ago, "The faith of Israel, conditioned and determined as it was in concrete realities, had little reason or room for abstract realities."[3] Thus, for "the people of the book" the question about God's existence is never a *philosophical* question *per se*, i.e., never a matter requiring demonstration, never a matter requiring

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[1] E.G.Hirsch, "God," *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, Vol. VI (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1907), p. 1; italics added.

[2] Abraham Heschel, "The Meaning of Faith," *Sabbath and Festival Prayer Book* (The Rabbinical Assembly of America & The United Synagogue of America, 1962), 280.

[3] J.S. Chestnut, *The Old Testament Understanding of God* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1968), 14.

first and foremost an intellectual response such as is demanded by the skeptical mind. At issue is never what is considered to be "a question of primary importance in the philosophy of religion: how can religious belief be justified, given that the evidence for its conclusions seems so inadequate to the degree of its commitment?"[4]

At issue for the community of the faithful is *whether* and *how* any one (present or future) of that community will respond to the call that emanates in that testament which is accounted "holy" scripture, even as that testament may be mediated by the authority of an oral and a written tradition, e.g., *rabbinic* tradition in Judaism (expressed as *halakha* and having its written form in the many tractates of the Jerusalem and Babylonian versions of the Talmud), and *patristic* tradition in Roman Catholic Christianity. The prospective believer is called to respond to a testament of what others have seen or heard. In the absence of a primary encounter of his or her own, the prospective believer can have only belief that has *neither* (1) the demonstration of sensory experience *nor* (2) the demonstration of reason exercised independently of the revelations of scripture and/or the oral testament of the tradition that appeals to such revelation and installs itself as the authority of correct interpretation (orthodoxy). In short, the believer's stand is one of what has been called "acquiescence in testimony," i.e., accepting the attested word of another, e.g., one such as the Christian apostle John (*1 Jn. 1:1 ff.*).[5]

In contrast, for the philosopher of religion in particular, or for the skeptical mind more generally, such a stand is characterized by *inadequacy*: "the grounds are conjectural"—and, conjecture is hardly solid (rational) ground at all on which to stand. That which is a statement of conjecture may be either a true belief or a false belief, and until such a belief is *justified* as a *true* belief it fails to have rational ground. It seems,

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[4] See Anthony Kenny, *What is Faith? Essays in the Philosophy of Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992); see also Kenny's *The God of the Philosophers* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979). For insightful and instructive discussions from religiously committed philosophers touching on the relation of faith and philosophy, see Thomas V. Morris, ed., *God and The Philosophers: The Reconciliation of Faith and Reason* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994); also see K.J. Clark, ed., *Philosophers Who Believe* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1993).

[5] Kenny, *What is Faith?* 93. John speaks of "what we have heard," "what we have seen with our eyes," "what we beheld," and what "the hands of us touched," thus to which "we bear witness" and "we announce." For the Greek text see the 21st edition of E. Nestle's, *Novum Testamentum Graece* as given in A. Marshall's *The NIV Interlinear Greek-English New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976).