

I've several motives in sending this Thinksheet in a regular five-sheet pack:

- 1 Some have asked how they could join in on UCC Confessing Christ web-conversations (memberships being by approval of the manager). The answer is by using the email address after "To" on this page.
- 2 While I continue to write & mail Thinksheets sporadically, almost daily I write & "Send" CCYG (Confessing Christ Yahoo Group) brief essays. Here are two from these two days--"Websheets," when I mail them as Think-sheets.

Willis/Loree Elliott

From: "Willis/Loree Elliott" <elliottw@comcast.net>
 To: <confessingchrist@yahoo.com>
 Sent: Wednesday, June 02, 2004 6:27 AM
 Subject: Re: CHRISTIANS MUST MAKE ETHICAL JUDGMENTS

Carl wrote--

Calvin did not, any more than St. Paul in his Epistle to the Romans, draw from this the systematic conclusion that a 'natural' knowledge of the law of God is to be ascribed to us and that this knowledge has to be put to a positive use in theology either antecedently or subsequently ('in faith'). On the contrary, he plainly denied that knowledge of the ethical good is gained by means of an ability (facultas) of man. He described it as a daily renewed beneficium, even in the case of the regenerate (Instit., II.ii, 25). There is really no need of any special exegetical virtuosity to see that in Instit., II, xviii-xxv we are in quite a different world from that of Brunner's doctrine of the imago."

--Barth "No" in Natural Theology, etc trans. Peter Fraenkel (London 1946), p. 108.

Did Barth get Calvin wrong?

Carl--

Barth got Paul right, & Calvin is in between that & Brunner (whose doctrine of the inherent "imago" is vulnerable to the sociopolitical humanism which in liberalism "suspends" (in the Kierkegaardian sense) the theological & too narrowly defines the ethical.

Barmen challenged the Nazi captivity of the "imago" to the "deutscher Geist" (the innerness of German "blood and soil"), & Confessing Christ challenges the "mainline" captivity of the gospel to egalitarian-liberation emergents (as was said for two decades, "Let the world set the agenda").

Grace and peace--
 Willis

NOTE: "Carl" (above) is Carl Rassmussen (U.Wisconsin lawyer-theologian, & CEO of his law-firm), in conversation with several of us, esp. Max Stackhouse (Princeton Seminary ethicist). Gabe Fackre & Herb Davis are among the others in this discussion looking toward Craigville Theological Colloquy XXI 7.12-16.04 celebrating (1) the 70th anniversary of the (anti-Nazi) Barmen Declaration & (2) twenty years of Craigville Colloquies.
 (Carl will be one of the speakers at the Colloquy.)

6/2/2004

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6.2.04

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Don: Your longing for "a unifying principle" parallels science's search for a testable "unified field theory." A scholar who's been working at both (& who's in our Tue.a.m. Theology Tabletalk) is Richard J. Coleman. His COMPETING TRUTHS: Theology and Science as Sibling Rivals (Trinity Press International, 2001) gets the major thinkers on the religion/science boundary into conversation, & creatively moderates the conversation. His SIN, EVIL, AND THE SOCIAL CONTRACT WITH SCIENCE is as yet unpublished, but a "Synopsis" is available.

To be published this month by Eerdmans is Alister E. McGrath's THE SCIENCE OF GOD: An Introduction to Scientific Theology. He straddles the disciplines: Ox.U. doctorates in science (molecular biosphysics) & theology (historical & systematic). This book is a guide to the three volumes--NATURE, REALITY, THEORY--of his SCIENTIFIC THEOLOGY. (And he's an evangelical.)

Willis/Loree Elliott

From: "Willis/Loree Elliott" <elliottwl@comcast.net>
To: "donniederfrank" <donniederfrank@yahoo.com>
Sent: Thursday, June 03, 2004 6:09 AM
Subject: Re: Quantum ethics + Calvin/Barth

Don wrote:

I'm trying to write of the ineffable, looking for a unifying principle, and deep inside it is a Person that unifies and that "those who know do not speak."

Don--

When I was born (during World War I), the only "unifying principle" science had was evolution--& it unified only the bio-world. Now we have the Big Bang, which so far is undertheologized.

I'm intrigued by your thought that the Person is "**deep inside**" the principle. In first naivete, everything's personal; in second naivete, nothing's personal; in third naivete, everything's personal again.

I intend to remark, at the beginning of the Colloquy's Bible meditations on the Lord's Prayer, that the disciples asked our Lord not "Teach us to pray" but "Teach US to pray [i.e., to do what we see you doing]." Life's most basic decision is whether there is or isn't Somebody who is both "deep inside" (let's call it religion) & "**deep outside**" (let's call it science). Only if that Somebody both is & is One is the convergence of religion/philosophy/science possible. Anent the latest Carl/Max exchange, I suggest that this convergence in monotheistic prayer is common to both Calvin & Barth; but Barth views it rhetorically-[either/or]dialectically (being primarily a preacher) & Calvin, discursively (being primarily a lawyer). A medieval mode of viewing this is natural/supernatural; a Reformation mode is common/special (both revelation & grace).

As for your "those who know [the Person] do not speak," yes vis-a-vis the mystery of personality, including the interpersonal. But vis-a-vis the world, the experience of this Person says "DO speak," do witness to (to use a Whiteheadian phrase) "**the Fellow-Sufferer** who understands."

Grace and peace--
Willis

NOTE to Thinksheet readers:

"Carl" is C. Rassmussen & "Max" is M. Stackhouse.

TECHNICAL NOTE: I print emails in the smallest type, then enlarge when converting into Websheets--thus the low-quality of reproduction.