Believing Into Christ: Restoring the Relational Sense of Belief as Constitutive of the Christian Faith

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BELIEVING INTO CHRIST:

RESTORING THE RELATIONAL SENSE OF BELIEF

AS CONSTITUTIVE OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH

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BELIEVING INTO CHRIST:
RESTORING THE RELATIONAL SENSE OF BELIEF
AS CONSTITUTIVE OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH

A Dissertation Presented to the Graduate Faculty of
Dedman College
Southern Methodist University

in
Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

in Religious Studies with a Focus on Systematic Theology

by

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May 19, 2018
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That natural disaster and personal crisis could not prevent this dissertation from reaching completion on time is due in no small part to the stalwart support of numerous special people who bear mentioning here. Yet no single Acknowledgements section could contain my gratitude to everyone who deserves it without growing longer than the work itself, upon which audiences both academic and popular would surely frown. The unnamed here are not so in my heart.

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even as it approached and reached publication, demonstrate his commitment to the success of PhD students and candidates in the GPRS. Natalia Marandiuc similarly brought her freshest research and insights to my courses with her, to my teaching with her, and to my defense, in ways that have made the GPRS a great home in which to make my contribution to knowledge.

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Across our various disciplines and differences, my colleagues in the GPRS and I have striven to foster a sense of community. Among the many lasting friends (you know who you are!), I am particularly grateful to Lisa Hancock (my marvelous mentee), Julie Mavity Maddalena (my first fierce female friend), Courtney Lacy (my twin in the Spirit), David Mahfood (my mentor through the morass), and my cohort of May the Fourth candidates, Andrew Hamilton, Andrew Mercer, Ben Robinson, and Leslie Fuller. I saved the best for last in that cohort list, because Leslie’s friendship has saved me from a long list of hardships. It may be from different fields, in different guilds, with different purposes, that we write about relationship, but I am eternally grateful for ours.

As I turn to family relations, I am mindful of the many communities in which my family has itinerated. Church and community members whom I served as pastor were the first to hear my take on the formula and to express their wish that the Christian faith had been explained to them thus before. I especially thank Christina Underkoffler for voicing that wish and Heather Baker-McAllister for helping me bear it responsibly. Atwood and Carolyn Cherry prayerfully prepared the way to Texas and made space for writing through grandchild care. Susan Adler and David Adler offered wise reflections from their own doctoral pursuits (and boots!). My first literary mentor, Carver Collins, and first teachers – my parents, Gordon D. Sharp, Jr. and Laurie Adler Anderson – left lasting, loving impressions that have remained life-giving even after their deaths. To all of them I am grateful, but to none more than to my loving husband Paul, the discerner, who pronounced the time and championed the talents for this push, and to our brave little theologian Gregory, who abandoned his fondness of snow to embrace his penchant for sun. I am glad that this finish line is but one of many across which we get to cheer each other in love.
Believing Into Christ: Restoring the Relational Sense of Belief as Constitutive of the Christian Faith

Advisor: Professor William J. Abraham
Doctor of Philosophy conferred May 19, 2018
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The beginning phrase of major Christian creeds, *Cred(ere) in Deum* literally means “to believe into God.” What has been lost in translation of this admittedly awkward construction is the relational sense of active and living belief, fit for the flourishing of human agents who relate to a living and active God. This loss occurred, despite Augustine’s describing this phrase as the culmination of Christian faith, distinct from *credere Deo*, “to believe God,”¹ and from *credere Deum*,² “to believe that God exists” (which today is taken to be the basic meaning of “believing in God”). Despite the resulting formula’s having been systematized by later theologians, it has been replaced by a predominant understanding of Christian belief that is purely propositional and excludes anything other than propositional evidence. “Belief into Christ,” by contrast, brings about an element of bold surrender in believers’ practice and defense of the Christian faith. The twofold aim of this dissertation, therefore, is to restore the relational sense of “believing into God” as constitutive of Christian theology, catechesis, and public discourse, and to connect

Christian belief with action to undergird a compelling Christian epistemology and more graceful interfaith dialogue.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS........................................................................................................... xii

CHAPTER 1 The Formula, Established in Augustine, Unique to Christianity .................... 1
  1.1 What’s at stake: a note on flourishing............................................................................ 2
  1.2 The Greek behind Augustine’s Latin .......................................................................... 4
  1.3 Augustine’s Latin ....................................................................................................... 7
  1.4 Augustine’s formula .................................................................................................. 10

CHAPTER 2 The Formula, Systematized by Bede and Lombard ......................................... 30
  2.1 Bede ....................................................................................................................... 30
  2.2 Lombard ................................................................................................................ 46
  2.3 Thomas Aquinas sanctifies the formula ................................................................... 49
  2.4 Late Medieval England ............................................................................................ 58
  2.5 Lutheran Scholastics ............................................................................................... 61
  2.6 Translations of credere in Deum into English ......................................................... 62
  2.7 20th – 21st Centuries ............................................................................................ 64

CHAPTER 3 Contrast with Propositional Locutions of Belief .............................................. 68
  3.1 Questions and Theoretical Approach ....................................................................... 68
    3.1.1 What is Lost in Theological Translation ........................................................... 69
3.1.2 Why Might Such Interpretative Choices Have Been Made? ......................... 74

3.2 Analytic Philosophers ................................................................................. 81

3.2.1 H.H. Price .............................................................................................. 81

3.2.2 Robert Audi ............................................................................................ 102

3.2.3 Louis Pojman .......................................................................................... 114

3.2.4 Basil Mitchell .......................................................................................... 130

3.3 Closing Thoughts on Analytic Philosophers and Belief-into ..................... 140

CHAPTER 4 Restoring the Relational Sense as Constitutive of the Christian Faith .... 144

4.1 Operation of the Credere Formula .............................................................. 145

4.2 Bodily Imagery, Bodily Actions: the Sacraments ......................................... 157

4.2.1 Baptism .................................................................................................. 159

4.2.2 Eucharist ................................................................................................ 165

4.2.3 Creed ...................................................................................................... 172

CHAPTER 5 Test case: Believing into Christ and Wesley’s Twin Doctrines of Justification and Sanctification .............................................................................................................. 187

5.1 Wesley’s Faith Developments and the Twin Doctrines of Justification and Sanctification .................................................................................................................. 188

5.1.1 Wesley’s Earliest Concept of Faith: Assent and Little More (credere Deum) ..... 191

5.1.2 Transitional Concept of Faith: Trust in God’s Love (credere Deo) ............. 198
5.1.3 Fully Developed Faith: Spiritual Experience of God’s Love (credere in Deum)... 208

5.1.4 Beyond the Canonical Sermons ................................................................. 214

5.2 “Belief Into Christ” in Action: Bold Surrender as Evidence and Encounter ........... 224

5.2.1 Bold Surrender as Compelling Evidence .................................................... 227

5.2.2 Bold Surrender and Encountering Others in Interreligious Dialogue............ 233

5.3 Conclusion: Relational Sense ........................................................................ 234

BIBLIOGRAPHY ........................................................................................................ 237
## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In Septem</td>
<td><em>In Epistolas Septem Catholicas</em>. Charles Williams Jones, and David Hurst, eds. <em>[Bedae Venerabilis Opera. Corpus Christianorum Series Latina CXXI Pars II (Opera Exegetica)]</em> (Turnholti: Typographi Brepols, 1955).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scriptum</td>
<td><em>Scriptum super Sententiis, liber III a distinctione XXIII ad distinctionem XXV.</em> (Corpus Thomisticum, Opera omnia S. Thomae)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
DEDICATION

For my dearly departed father, Gordon Doremus Sharp, Jr., artist, journalist, visionary, and would-be pastor/professor, whose search for beauty and justice still instructs and inspires today.
CHAPTER 1

The Formula, Established in Augustine, Unique to Christianity

This chapter will offer an overview of the formula and its establishment by Augustine. Since the unusual nature of this construction comes from its preposition, “into,” a brief explanation of the Koine Greek constructions with \( \pi\sigma\tau\epsilon\omega \) (pisteuo) and more extensive exploration of the Latin construction with \( \text{credere} \), with which Augustine worked, is necessary. First, however, before understanding translation that reveals the relational sense of active and living belief that has been lost in translation, it is fitting to clarify precisely what is at stake. The word “relational” throughout this work describes belief that is aimed at union with God and participation in God through Jesus Christ by the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit.\(^1\) Thus “believing into Christ” is “believing so as to be united vitally with Christ.”\(^2\) It results in a shift

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\(^1\) David Meconi’s recovery of “deification of the human person (as) in fact a central doctrine in the overall thought of St. Augustine of Hippo” supports this characterization, though Meconi does not include the \( \text{credere} \) formula among many metaphors in his thematic argument for the ways that “transformative union” is spread throughout the Augustinian corpus. Meconi sees more “diverse roles deification plays in Augustine’s theology” than the eighteen uses of \( \text{deificare} \) alone might suggest. David Meconi, *The One Christ: St. Augustine’s Theology of Deification*. (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2013), xi-xii, xvi.

\(^2\) Edward H. Sugden, ed. *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, Vol. I. (London: The Epworth Press, 1921), 162. Sugden was one of few 20\(^\text{th}\) century scholars to take note of “believing into” but focused on the Greek, not Augustine’s Latin. The treatment of the relational sense, then, as constitutive of the Christian faith, involves evaluating every tenet, every doctrine, every decision, and every action in light of whether and how it is moving the believer – and those with whom the believer relates in the world – into more vital unity with Christ. It also acknowledges that the more completely one entrusts one’s life into Christ’s keeping, the more “vital” is the “unity” – recalling biblical language expecting love of God with all one’s heart, soul, mind, and strength (in various
from philosophical discourse in the marketplace to relationship with fellow human beings as the primary means of spreading the Christian message. What remains to be clarified, then, is what precisely is meant by “the flourishing of human agents who relate to a living and active God,” and what makes such flourishing a desirable end.

1.1 What’s at stake: a note on Flourishing

The most recent scholarly treatment of this question is that of Miroslav Volf in *Flourishing: Why We Need Religion in a Globalized World*. The relational is intricately related to flourishing, as Volf considers “God’s relation to human beings and human beings’ relation to God to be the condition of possibility for human life and flourishing in all dimensions.” Volf introduces and presses beyond a simple definition of flourishing as “the life that is lived well, goes well, and feels good.” He does examine these “three formal components” of flourishing in some detail, giving examples of the different ways that various world religions conceive of each component and its relationship to the others.

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3 Sanders, E.P., *Paul: A Very Short Introduction*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 24. Sanders suggests that Paul, not known as an eloquent speaker, likely did not rely principally upon public address, but rather “was probably most effective…one-to-one, or in small groups.”


5 Volf, ix.

6 Volf 75. While references to the components arise throughout the book, here Volf expands upon Nicholas Wolterstorff’s *Justice: Rights and Wrongs* (Princeton, 2008) to identify “life being led well (in Jesus’s teaching, loving God and neighbor; in Job’s case, fearing God and being righteous), life going well (in Jesus’s practice, healing the sick, feeding the hungry; in Job’s case, health, abundant possessions, many children), and life feeling good (in Jesus’s teaching, joy; in Job’s case, feasting).” Other world religions have something similar, Volf contends, though they may differ in “how they conceive the nature of life lived well (‘love of God and neighbor,’ ‘submission to God,’ ‘extinction of desire,’ to name some), in how they imagine a life that is going well (for
He presses beyond the simple definition, however, taking as his major thesis the words of Moses (Deuteronomy 8:3) echoed by Jesus in the gospels (Matthew 4:4; Luke 4:4), that “One cannot live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.” Volf depicts at the heart of human flourishing the Word as “the bread of life” that “gives abundant life,” without which, “…we shrivel even when we are in overdrive, we fight and destroy, we perish.” While world religions – over and against a reputation for being escapist – are promoters of ordinary goodness, they prioritize transcendent goodness in a way that infuses that ordinary goodness with abundant life. It is after this life that humans yearn.

The yearning that Volf describes exceeds the confused requests of Jesus’s hearers, whether of his invitation to living water at a well or of his bread of life sermon, who arguably misplace their focus on the ordinary while Jesus offers the transcendent. Hearkening to the “famous line” from Augustine’s Confessions, “addressed to God: ‘You move us to delight in praising you; you have formed us for yourself, and our hearts are restless till they find rest in example, the difference in the importance of progeny in Judaism and Christianity), in what positive emotion they highlight in life that feels good (‘fun’ in contemporary Western cultures or ‘joy’ in Buddhism, Confucianism, Christianity, and Judaism), and in how precisely they see the relation among the three.” According to Volf, leading life well has primacy over and in fact sustains the other two components in all world religions.

7 Ibid, 22.
8 Ibid. (cf John 6:35, NRSV)
9 Here I have in mind the Samaritan woman at the well, who responds to Jesus’s description of the living water that becomes a spring in the drinker and gushes to eternal life, “Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water” (John 4:15 NRSV) and (even more germane to Volf’s focus here, from the same chapter of John’s gospel that is a major focus in Augustine’s formulation, see 1.4 below) the crowd that follows Jesus to Capernaum after the feeding of the five thousand, hears of life-giving bread of God that comes down from Heaven, and responds “Sir, give us this bread always” but soon makes it clear that what they are requesting is food for the stomach, and not Christ himself, when he identifies himself as the bread to which he refers (John 6:34).
you,’” Volf insists that, “when we come to love God and surrender to God in faith, to formulate the matter in Christian terms – the relation to the divine becomes the axis of our lives.”\(^{10}\) For Volf there is no other axis around which life can turn well. “Relationship to God…belongs to the very makeup of human beings,”\(^{11}\) Volf concludes, having claimed from the start that world religions “articulate visions of flourishing, at whose center is the ultimate attachment to the divine.”\(^{12}\) This attachment echoes Augustine’s description of *credere in eum*, believing into him.

Within Volf’s argument about world religions, he calls expressly for reformation and renewal of the Christian faith, even as he has cited John 6:35 for the vision of abundant life described above: “Jesus said to them, ‘I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty’” (NRSV). Similarly Augustine emphasizes the need to embrace the relational sense of Christian belief as constitutive of true Christian faith and appeals to a grammatical structure unique to Christian literature as he exegetes the same gospel, and in one instance even the same chapter, that Volf cites. In order to understand the turn of phrase as Augustine plays upon it in Latin, a brief background in the Biblical Greek is helpful.

### 1.2 The Greek behind Augustine’s Latin

The grammatical rules of the Koine Greek and of the Latin into which it was translated in the *Vetus Latina* and the Vulgate are not identical. It is from the uniqueness of the grammatical

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\(^{11}\) Volf 202.

\(^{12}\) Volf, 24.
structure in Latin that Augustine, like many medieval preachers to follow, draws a play on words to make a point, in his case to emphasize the relational sense of belief. Thus examining the Greek at all may seem superfluous, especially given Augustine’s relative lack of facility with that language.\textsuperscript{13} The purpose of this seeming excursus, however, is threefold: 1) it foregrounds the discussion of a grammatical-structure-turned-theological-tool, 2) it aids in understanding one of many reasons the formula may have been lost in translation, and 3) it raises issues of deliberate linguistic innovation to undergird the constructive proposals in this dissertation’s later chapters.

\(\textit{Ei} \zeta\) (eis) is a preposition used exclusively with the accusative case, which is mainly the case of the direct object,\textsuperscript{14} and its primary meaning is “into.”\textsuperscript{15} It most often appears with verbs of motion, as in John 1:9:

\[\textit{Hv} \, \textit{t} \, \phi \zeta \, \textit{t} \, \alpha \lambda \eta \theta \iota \iota \nu \{\nu}, \, \delta \phi \omega \tau \zeta \iota \varepsilon \, \zeta \alpha \nu \tau \zeta \alpha \mu \nu \, \epsilon \rho \chi \mu \epsilon \nu \, \delta \zeta \, \tau \nu \kappa \iota \sigma \mu \omicron \nu.\textsuperscript{16}\]

The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming \textit{into the world}.\textsuperscript{17}

\textsuperscript{13} Peter Robert Lamont Brown, \textit{Augustine of Hippo: A Biography}. (University of California Press, 1967, 2000), 24. Brown expresses dismay that the great rhetor of Milan and Bishop of Hippo, Augustine, was a “casualty” of late Roman pedagogy, in which Greek lessons bored him even as Latin classics fascinated him: “He will become the only Latin Philosopher in antiquity to be virtually ignorant of Greek.”

\textsuperscript{14} There are adverbial applications for the accusative case as well, for example those denoting “extent to which.”


\textsuperscript{17} Here I agree with the New Revised Standard Version, though I could choose the literal “all humanity” in place of “everyone.”
In some instances, ἐἰ can be used interchangeably with ἐν (en), which takes the dative case, the case serving primarily as that of the indirect object. The latter, ἐν, can mean either “in” or “into,” or even “on,” depending upon context, though its primary indication is that of static location, “within.” This preposition is the obvious cognate for the Latin preposition “in,” which ends up doing the work of both ἐἰ and ἐν. As we shall see in 1.3 below, the result of this etymological evolution is that the different meanings that result from the case of the noun with which the preposition is paired will become more distinct.

The verb πιστεύω (pisteuo), to believe, can mean either “believe something or someone is true or truthful” as in the case of believing someone’s testimony, or – as is newly the case in Koine versus classical Greek – to trust someone or entrust something to someone. In classical Greek, πιστεύω is used mainly in a propositional sense, followed by ὁτι (hoti, “that”), and does not take a preposition nor the accusative. While this propositional sense with ὁτι continues to be used in Koine Greek, πιστεύω also may be followed by prepositions throughout the New Testament, including both of those mentioned above. The result appears to be a growing sense

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18 Perschbacher, 121.

19 Friberg et al, 147.

20 English lacks, as did Latin before it, a verb for “to faith in.” “Trust” doesn’t quite convey it. To be explored later.

21 Thomas Camelot, “Credere Deo, Credere Deum, Credere in Deum: Pour l’histoire d’une formule traditionnelle,” in Les Sciences Philosophiques et Théologiques T.1 (a.k.a Revue des Sciences Philosophiques et Théologiques 30), (Paris: Saulchoir, 1941), 149. Fr. Camelot does indicate that occasionally the neuter adverbial accusative (used to express the extent of an action, for example – see my footnote 14 above) could be used with πιστεύω. Camelot infers that this change in structure (to using prepositions, etc.) and meaning emerges from the influence of Hebraic structures and is related to tendencies in modern Greek generally to replace ἐν + dative with ἐἰ + accusative.

22 In Koine, πιστεύω may also be followed by ἐπί (epi, “on/upon”), which also takes an object in the accusative.
of πιστεύω as more than merely cognitive or intellectual assent. It is not uncommon to see both πιστεύω ἐν and πιστεύω εἰς in close proximity, such as in John 3:15, in which πιστεύω describes the one who believes as having life ἐν οἴδατο (“in him,” that is, Christ), and the ensuing, too-famous verse 3:16, in which πιστεύω εἰς ἀπέκτησεν ἀπό τῷ Ἑωσphen “believing into him” (to translate that preposition and case literally), does not perish.

1.3 Augustine’s Latin

Augustine worked throughout most of his life with the collection of Latin translations of the Bible known as the Vetus Latina, and only slowly did he come to use the translation that Jerome completed during his lifetime, which has come to be known as the Vulgate. While Augustine expressed awareness of the difficulties and dangers of not having access to the biblical texts in their original language, an appeal to the basic rules of Latin grammar suffice to understand what he makes of the phrases under consideration in the present study.

23 Friberg et al, 314. This entry on πιστεύω lists the first meaning as “primarily an intellectual evaluation” and the second as “primarily a religious commitment, especially with God or Christ as the object of faith.”

24 While the sense of “within” works perfectly well here, it is worth noting that Aland et al footnote variations in other manuscripts, including the appearance instead of ἐν ἤλπις ἁπτό (“in him,” that is, Christ), does not perish.


26 Augustine, Teaching Christianity (The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century: pt. 1, v. 11), Translated by Edmund Hill. (Hyde Park, N.Y.: New City Press, 1996), 138: II.13.19. “But the proper meaning of a passage, which several translators attempt to express...can only be definitely ascertained from an examination of it in the language they are translating from; and translators frequently deviate from the author’s meaning, if they are not particularly learned. So one should aim either at a knowledge of those languages from which the scriptures have come to their Latin...versions, or else get hold of translations which have been the most strictly literal, word for word, renderings of the original, not because they are sufficient in themselves, but because they can help one to
In Latin, the functions of the Greek ἐξ and ἐν are covered by a single preposition, in, and the difference in meaning is governed entirely by the case of its object. This arrangement is unusual even within Latin, in which most prepositions take either the accusative or the ablative case for their objects, but rarely both. Only sub and in are used with both the accusative and the ablative, and “with the Accusative they denote motion; with the Ablative, rest.”27 In with a noun in the ablative case carries the same simple meaning as its English cognate, “in.” In with the accusative case becomes “into.”

A predictor of the difficulties and loss in translation that will be the later focus of this dissertation arises here, as the word supplanting the Koine Greek’s πιστεύω is the non-cognate credo, “I believe.” Discussion of loss in translation and of doctrinal impact thereof in later chapters will address the ongoing complications of etymology with regard to this verb. Further complicating matters for now is the way in which Latin, having already two ways of using this verb without prepositions (with the dative or with the accusative), also takes on from Biblical Greek two more uses of credere with the preposition in and an object of the preposition in either the ablative or the accusative.28

control the freedom, or even the mistakes, of those translators who have preferred to follow the meanings rather than the words of the authors.”

27 Charles E. Bennett, New Latin Grammar. (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1918), 108.

This last construction, *credere in* with accusative, is unique to biblical and Christian literature, rooted in the *εἰς θεόν* (eis theon) of the Septuagint and New Testament.\(^2^9\) Whereas Latin literature had long used the construction *credere deos* (*credere* + accusative without preposition) in reference to believing in gods (i.e., that they exist),\(^3^0\) the new *credere in* + accusative construction brought in the awkward equivalent of a construction of movement with what had traditionally been a verb of intellectual assent, the equivalent in English of “believing into God.” Initially the *credere in* + ablative and *credere in* + accusative constructions seem to be used side by side, but gradually a tendency to distinguish among the various expressions describing the act of faith arose, between the prepositional constructions (of which *credere in* + accusative overtook *credere in* + ablative in frequency) and the use of *credere* alone with the dative, such as *credere deo*, “to believe God” (i.e., believe God’s words are true, consider God credible).\(^3^1\) While in the time of St. Cyprian, these distinctions have not yet been fully established,\(^3^2\) Augustine seizes upon this uniqueness most distinctly in two different places, drawing contrasts between the constructions, in order to identify a distinction in the Christian faith. Both places are in sermons.

\(^{2^9}\) Eugene TeSelle, “Faith” in Fitzgerald, Allan, and John C Cavadini. *Augustine through the Ages: An Encyclopedia*. Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 1999, 349. A thorough consultation of the occurrences of this phrase throughout the Septuagint confirms that it is nowhere paired with *πιστεύω*, most frequently occurring in multiple prophetic utterances in which God looks forward to Israel being God’s people and God being their God, καὶ ἐγὼ ἔσομαι αὐτοῖς ἡς θεόν.

\(^{3^0}\) Mohrmann, 277. Examples Mohrmann offers include Seneca and Pliny.

\(^{3^1}\) Ibid., 278.

\(^{3^2}\) Ibid., 279.
In light of the distinctions’ not yet being fully established in Cyprian, it is worthy of note that these sermons are delivered in the period between the suspension and continuation of Augustine’s work that is frequently treated as the foundational Christian preaching manual, *De Doctrina Christiana* (DDC).\(^{33}\) For it is in DDC that Augustine responds to a reluctance on the part of predecessors such as Cyprian to employ rhetoric in the service of the gospel.\(^{34}\) In both of the sermons in which Augustine focuses on the distinctiveness of *credere in* + accusative, the pulpit serves as laboratory for Augustine’s ongoing experiment with rhetoric as effective means of moving hearers likely to be unfamiliar with Scripture into an understanding of its good news, resulting in a formula for entering into relationship with God through Christ.

### 1.4 Augustine’s Formula

*In Johannis Evangelium Tractatus XXIX* (29\(^{\text{th}}\) Tractate [or Homily] on the Gospel of John, henceforth abbreviated *In Jo Ev*) carries a superscription, “*Habitus Dom. XII post Pentec., die 17 Augusti 413,*” indicating that the Bishop of Hippo preached it on 17 August 413, the 12\(^{\text{th}}\) Sunday after Pentecost, most likely at Hippo.\(^{35}\) Its ostensible text is John 7:14-18, Augustine

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\(^{34}\) Amy K. Hermanson, Drew M. Loew, Kristi Schwertzfeger Serrano, Lisa Michelle Thomas, and Sarah L. Yoder, “Saint Augustine and the Creation of a Distinctly Christian Rhetoric” in Richard Leo Enos, Roger Thompson, Amy K. Hermanson, Drew M. Loew, Kristi Schwertzfeger Serrano, Lisa Michelle Thomas, Sarah L. Yoder, David Edler, and John W. Burkett, eds. *The Rhetoric of St. Augustine of Hippo: De Doctrina Christiana and the Search for a Distinctly Christian Rhetoric.* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2008), 4. The authors name Cyprian in a list of “Christian leaders” who considered rhetoric a dangerous pagan practice to be avoided by Christian preachers, including Titian, Gregory of Naziensuses (sic), and Basil of Caesarea. See also footnote 66 below.

having preached on 7:1-13 the day before, as part of a continuous series of messages working through the gospel of John by preaching – sometimes daily – over the course of five months, beginning with the fifth chapter, where he had left off in a series many years earlier. We are here hearing from the mature Augustine, who is otherwise busy working on the early chapters of *De Civitate Dei (City of God)*, writing and preaching against the Donatists, and recently has begun to write against Pelagius, who has passed through Hippo shortly after the fall of Rome to the Goths only three years earlier.36

Yet, busy as the theologian is, the Bishop – for whom the prologue of John’s gospel was once pivotal in his own recognition of the Christian Scriptures as superior to neo-Platonist doctrine – remains determined to fulfill his pastoral intention to preach in depth upon the entire gospel.37 Seven years into that effort, he preaches this sermon within a week of the previous three sermons, a relevant detail, as the passage from which the *credere* formula begins to emerge is actually one outside the present pericope, to which he is referring back in greater depth to undergird a present point.

The tone of all the *Tractati* continues here, concern for his hearers/readers to gain a genuine understanding of the words of Jesus in John’s gospel, to recognize the transcendent plane on which Jesus is operating, rather than missing it for lack of ability to look beyond the ordinary that is the fixation of Jesus’s hearers within the text. Pausing to acknowledge that his

36 Brown, 280.

unpredictable audience may be confused by Christ’s statements in John 7:16, “My teaching is not mine, but is his who sent me,” he asks, Intellegere vis? Crede. Augustine is blunt: “Do you wish to understand? Believe.”

He emphasizes this point thoroughly, raising Isaiah 7:9 from the Septuagint (“Unless you have believed, you will not understand”) and connects his advice to the next verse of the gospel, in which Christ continues, “If anyone wishes to do his will, he will learn concerning the teaching, whether it be from God, or whether I am speaking on my own” (John 7:17, translation mine). Augustine asks what the first phrase means and, anticipating (or perhaps seeing with his own eyes) his congregation’s confusion, he reminds them: Si non intelliisti, inquam, crede. Intellectus enim merces est fidei. “‘If you have not understood,’ I said, ‘believe. For understanding is the wages of faith.’”

Language of wages raises the idea of work, which takes him back to a previous day’s passage and encourages his listeners toward more than only intellectual understanding. He has connected “he will learn” with understanding and made it the result of “do(ing) his will,” which he connects with believing. That doing God’s will means doing God’s work, Jesus himself has explained in a portion of the previous chapter of the gospel, which Augustine exegeted in Tractatus XXV (Homily 25) and now examines in greater depth.

Ipse autem Dominus aperte alio loco dicit: Hoc est opus Dei, ut credatis in eum quem ille misit. Ut credatis in eum; non, ut credatis ei. Sed si creditis in eum, creditis ei: non autem continuo qui credit ei, credit in eum. 40

38 Augustine, In Jo Ev XXIX,6, p. 287. Translations mine.
39 Ibid.
40 Ibid.
Indeed the Lord himself openly said in another place: “This is the work of God, that you believe into him whom he has sent.” 41 “That you believe into him,” not “that you believe him.” But if you believe into him, you believe him: however, who(ever) believes him does not necessarily believe into him.” (emphasis mine)

Augustine explains that doing the work that God requires amounts to *ut credatis in eum quem ille misit*, literally “that you believe into him whom that one has sent.” He wants to be sure that his listeners note Christ’s choice of words (admittedly in the Greek and then Latin translators’ reporting). What Jesus describes is apparently more than just acknowledging the veracity of his words as ambassador of the one (*ille* “that one,” indicating from a distance) who sent him. What he describes does involve such acknowledgement inherently, but the reverse is not automatically true – believing Jesus does not equate to believing into Jesus. Not all who believe him also believe into him. He offers an example:

> Nam et daemones credebant ei, et non credebant in eum. Rursus etiam de Apostolis ipsius possumus dicere, Credimus Paulo; sed non, Credimus in Paulum: Credimus Petro; sed non, Credimus in Petrum. Credenti enim in eum qui iustificat impium, deputatur fides eius ad iustitiam. For the demons also believed him, and yet they did not believe into him. Again also, of his own apostles we are able to say, “We believe Paul” but not “We believe into Paul;” “We believe Peter” but not “We believe into Peter.” For believing (who believes) into him who justifies the wicked, their faith is credited toward (as) righteousness.

Even demons believed Jesus, but that’s as far as the relationship went between them and him. Augustine employs the example of demons’ belief to illustrate the limit on *credere* + dative

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41 Translator’s note: I am deliberately keeping the awkward construction to highlight its uniqueness, to distinguish it from the use of “believe in God” to mean “to believe that God exists” (or “believe in Christ” as in “to believe that Christ is divine”) or any other construal of that phrase, and to make it easier to distinguish in translation from the other part of the formula that arises from the next sermon to be considered here.
(ei/Christo) elsewhere in his writings.\footnote{In In Psalmum CXXX Enarratio (Expositions on the Psalms 130), as we shall soon see, Augustine echoes (most likely – the exact dating of the Enarrationes is difficult) some developments made here in this regard, and goes into far greater detail about the demons to demonstrate the contrast between their belief and “ours.”} Here he quickly proceeds to a holier example, that of belief as it regards the Apostles. We (Augustine and his listeners) may talk about believing the apostles. The testimonies of Paul and Peter are accepted as true, but no one talks about believing into Paul and Peter, as Jesus is calling for in this “believe into the one whom he has sent.” He then recalls Romans 4:5, in which believing into him who justifies the wicked is “credited toward righteousness.” He now wonders and responds to his own wondering:

> Quid est ergo credere in eum? Credendo amare, credendo diligere, credendo in eum ire, et eius membris incorporari.
> What is it, therefore, “to believe into him?” By believing to love, by believing to hold dear, by believing to go into him, and to be incorporated in his members.

Augustine lingers here, asking what is “credere in eum?” What is Jesus talking about, Augustine asks? His answer will echo through the centuries, before eventually dying out in translation: *credendo amare, credendo diligere, credendo in eum ire, et in eius membris incorporari.* The phrase builds from the ethereal to the concrete, if complicated, and it bears examination, part by part:

1) *Credendo amare,* “by believing to love,” seems simple enough. *Amare* is the quintessential first conjugation verb that remains Latin students’ first grammar lesson. The classifications of love in Greek are not directly mappable onto Latin.

2) *credendo diligere,* “by believing to hold dear,” is as complex as *amare* is simple. The Oxford Latin-English Dictionary offers two choices of definition for *diligere,* “esteem highly” or “hold dear,” but every dictionary offers different choices, ranging from
“select” (in Notre Dame’s online Latin-English dictionary of “William Whitaker’s Words”) to “cherish” (the choice of *The Works of St. Augustine* translator Edmund P. Hill). Despite the numerous options, English translations of the Vulgate and other Latin Christian literature default to “love.” In fact, throughout the Vulgate, the most famous passages on love from all four gospels use the verb *diligere*, not *amare*. Indeed, as Augustine further develops the concept of *credere in eum/Christum*, he will frequently use *diligere*. Peter Brown notes that its noun form, *dilectio*, is an important concept for understanding Augustine’s view of religion and society: The motivations of people groups – which can be assessed by the quality of the loves they share for good or ill – could be explained by *dilectio*, “which, for Augustine, stands for the orientation of the entire personality, its deepest wishes and its basic capacity to love…”

43 For example, in all three synoptic gospels, as here in Matthew 22, the famous “Golden Rule” appears with *diligere* as the verb:

37 *“Diliges Dominum Deum tuum in toto corde tuo et in tota anima tua et in tota mente tua:”*

38 *hoc est magnum et primum mandatum.*

39 *Secundum autem simile est haec:* *Diliges proximum tuum sicut teipsum.* ” It could just as easily be translated:

“You shall hold the Lord your God dear in all your heart, and in all your soul, and in all your mind: this is the greatest and first commandment. The second is similar: You shall hold your neighbor as dear as yourself.”

The Vulgate is freely accessible on The Vatican’s website: [http://www.vatican.va/archive/bible/nova_vulgata/documents/nova-vulgata_nt_evang-matthaeum_lt.html#22](http://www.vatican.va/archive/bible/nova_vulgata/documents/nova-vulgata_nt_evang-matthaeum_lt.html#22)

The same *diligere* is present in John 3:16 (“For God so loved the world…”) and 1 John 4:8 (“God is love.”)

3) *credendo in eum ire*, “by believing to go into him,” plays upon the uniqueness of the grammatical construction that emphasizes *motion*, which conjures concrete, intimate images of bodily union, and also evokes the movement of catechumens into the baptismal waters, in which persons die with Christ and rise to newness of life and a new body of believers.

4) *et eius membris incorporari*, “and to be incorporated in his members,” may sound to the modern mind like a simple reference to being received or “incorporated” into local church membership, but the language to original listeners in the church of Hippo would also carry connotations every bit as concrete as the previous phrase with which it already has in common baptismal implications. *Membrum*, the neuter second declension noun Augustine uses here, means “limb” and especially refers (according to both Oxford and Notre Dame) to the “male genital member.” The plural here most likely encourages the listener to take the simpler meaning of limbs. It permits listeners to consider their hands and feet intricately bound up with those of Christ, moving in love and reaching out to those whom Jesus touches, the poor, sick, and powerless. Nevertheless the choice of a word that also has such intimate reference is likely designed by the rhetor of Milan to capture his hearers’ attention and communicate the intimacy of the incorporation that *credere in eum* entails.45

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45 In a very recently discovered and authenticated, extended version of a previously translated and published sermon on the martyrs Perpetua and Felicity (*Sermo CCLXXXII*), Augustine uses the language of “member” to suggest that Perpetua was able to withstand the devil despite the weakness of her sex by supernatural intervention that converted her into a man, complete with being awarded a “very special member” so that she was lacking in manhood in no way. I am grateful to Dr. Meg Cotter-Lynch, who brought the “new” sermon to my attention in response to my presentation on *In Jo Ev XXIX*. See Isabella Schiller, Dorothea Weber, and Clemens Weidmann, “Sechs neue Augustinuspredigten: Teil 1 mit Edition dreier Sermones” in *Weiner Studien* 121 (Vienna: Austrian Academy of...
Problems of attention span among Augustine’s listeners in the sanctuary at Hippo are considered a reason for his sprinkling sermons with “words that seek to revive the attention of his listeners.” Nevertheless, he would only use such attention-getters to drive the listeners’ attention toward the truth, in this case, the truth that union with Christ exceeds the fulfillment even of sexual union. The relationship resulting from believing into Christ is marked by a caritas intimacy of a quality that is unimaginable except by raising the imagery of cupiditas intimacy, in order to associate it with the all-consuming nature thereof.

It is worth noting here that this incorporation in limbs/members accurately describes “the ultimate attachment to the divine” that lies at the center of Volf’s definition of flourishing. It reveals Christianity’s particular way of carrying out world religions’ “crucial and abiding role in a globalized world,” which is to “…attend to the structural restlessness of the human heart by offering connection to the transcendent realm and meaningful and joyous life in response to it.”

The cupiditas intimacy mentioned in the last point of the previous paragraph is a form of such restlessness that Augustine was decrying when linked with concupiscencia and libido in The City

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46 Fitzgerald, 26-7.

47 In the sense of concupiscencia (concupiscence) or libido (lust), with which it is negatively linked.

48 Volf, 83.
of God. 49 There the physical “members” (membra) that such desire “stirs or fails to stir at its own whim, so to speak, and not at our own choice, should be called our shameful parts.” 50 In In Jo Ev, however, using “members” to capture his congregation’s attention, he redirects it to the intimacy of members who through credere in eum are stirred by the rightly-ordered love of Christ. That credere in eum therefore is deeply relational and constitutive of Christian faith continues to be clear, as Augustine proceeds to assure his hearers:

_Ipsa est ergo fides quam de nobis exigit Deus; et non invenit quod exigit Deus; et non invenit quod exigat, nisi donaverit quod inveniat. Quae fides, nisi quam definivit alio loco apostolus plenissime dicens: Neque circumcisio aliquid valet, neque praepetium, sed fides quae per dilectionem operatur? Therefore it is the very faith which God requires of us: and he does not find in us what he requires unless he has given what he finds in us. What faith is this, if not that which the apostle in another place has most fully defined, saying “Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is worth anything, but faith that works through love?” 51_

God is here depicted as wanting so much to put “us” (Augustine and his hearers) in right relationship with God that what God requires of us, God also generously supplies. Augustine earlier connected credere in eum with right relationship of the sinner to God by quoting Romans 4:5 and now turns to Paul’s other famous “justification by faith” epistle, Galatians. Utilizing Paul’s imagery related to the male “member” from the original covenant, he now identifies credere in eum, an act made possible by God’s own gift to us, as faith working through love. He


50 Ibid., 124: XIV.17.

51 _In Jo Ev_ XXIX.6.
emphasizes the relationship of the Son and the Father and the surrender of Jesus’ ownership of his own teachings, because he is so rooted in relationship with the one who sent him.

The place in which Augustine distinguishes credere in eum again, but this time from credere eum, is in a sermon on a portion of the Farewell Discourse in which Jesus is about to surrender himself to be crucified. In Sermo CXLIV (Sermon on the New Testament 144), Augustine addresses John 16:8-11, about the Holy Spirit’s role in challenging the world with regard to sin, justice, and judgment. Even as Augustine wonders with his listeners why, as he interprets it, the sin of not believing into Christ is the sole source of the Holy Spirit’s challenge, he draws a distinction between proud unbelievers and believers into humble Christ:

*Credere Christum, et credere in Christum, differunt. De peccato igitur arguuntur infideles, id est, dilectores mundi: nam ipsi significantur mundi nomine.*

To believe in Christ, and to believe into Christ, differ. Therefore the unbelievers are challenged about sin, that is, the lovers of the world: for that is what is meant by the name “the world.”

Here Augustine seems to suggest that those who love the world don’t even know what it is to believe into God. It is important to understand that Augustine is not representing the kind of asceticism that rejects and despises the world. On the contrary, Brown identifies as the fundamental difference between Donatism and Augustine’s Catholicism the issue of whether to abstain from the world completely and set Christian communities as far apart from it as possible,

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52 While this text is from John’s gospel, this sermon is not part of the Tractati project on the entirety of John’s gospel, which, at the time that Sermo CXLIV was preached in 416, was still in progress.

in order to keep them unstained by the world (the Donatist view) or to see the mission as that of risking relationship with outsiders who can be positively influenced by being absorbed into and transformed by Christian community.\textsuperscript{54} It is for this reason that he preaches this message to a likely mixed congregation whom he hopes will hunger for the “more than \textit{credere deum}” that he describes.

\textit{Cum enim dicitur, Arguet mundum de peccato; non alio quam quod non crediderunt in Christum. Hoc denique peccatum si non sit, nulla peccata remanebunt, quia justo ex fide vivente cuncta solvuntur.}

For when it says, “(The Spirit) will challenge the world about sin,” it will not be about any other than that they did not believe into Christ. In fact, if this sin did not exist, no sin would remain, because for the just one living by faith, all (sins) are released.

Now Augustine is identifying a lack of \textit{credere in eum} as the root of all sin. He is not abandoning a doctrine of original sin here. Rather, if pressed on the matter, he would likely identify in Eve and Adam the error of having believed in God’s existence as their Creator but not believing into God by, in the terms established in \textit{In Jo Ev} three years earlier, loving, holding him dear, going into him (instead of being taken in by the serpent), and being made one with his hands and feet, which would not have then reached for forbidden fruit. For that matter, in \textit{In Jo Ev} terms, he could argue that humanity’s first parents didn’t even believe God, taking the serpent at his word instead. However, Augustine in this sermon has yet to establish the terms for the distinction that he is making here. He has only pointed out that the one who believes into Christ has faith that frees from all sin. So we cease speculating and continue:

\textit{Sed multum interest, utrum quisque credat ipsum Christum, et utrum credat in Christum. Nam ipsum esse Christum et daemones crediderunt, nec tamen in Christum daemones crediderunt.}

\textsuperscript{54} \textit{Brown, Hippo, 220.}
But it makes plenty of difference, whether someone believes in Christ (believes him to be actually Christ), or whether they believe into Christ. For even the demons believed him to be actually Christ, nevertheless the demons did not believe into Christ.

Once again the demons set the example of insufficient belief to constitute Christianity. He does not elaborate here on the distinctions from demons, as he does in *In Psalmum CXXX Enarratio*. There he lays out that to believe into Christ is to hold Christ dear; not how demons believe but don’t hold dear and instead question, “What do you have to do with us?” With that reference to Matthew 8:29, he advises believers into Christ not to ask that question but instead to declare that we belong to Christ, for he has redeemed us. For now in *Sermo CXLIV*, however, he finally begins to lay out the terms of *credere in Christum*:

*Ilie enim credit in Christum, qui et sperat in Christum et diliget Christum. Nam si fidem habet sine spe ac sine dilectione, Christum esse credit, non in Christum credit.*

That is to say, you believe into Christ when you both hope in Christ and hold Christ dear. For if you have faith without hope or without love (lit. without holding him dear), you believe in Christ, but you do not believe into Christ.

Here, apparently for the first time, Augustine links the three theological virtues of faith, hope, and love with regard to *credere in eum/Christum*. Without making direct reference to the famous thirteenth chapter of Paul’s letter to the contentious church at Corinth (the best biblical example of the kind of risks Augustine is willing to let the church take to absorb the world in

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56 Literally “one” or “one who,” but for flow and ease of pronoun selection, I am siding with Rotelle and selecting the second person singular.
order to transform the love of it into love of God), he is standing in agreement with the Apostle that the three virtues remain together, but that love, when paired with hope, is superior in its ability to transform faith into “faith into Christ” that frees from sin.

 Qui ergo in Christum credit, credendo in Christum, venit in eum Christus, et quodam modo unitur in eum, et membrum in corpore ejus efficitur. Quod fieri non potest, nisi et spes accedat et caritas.

When you believe into Christ, therefore, by your believing into Christ, Christ comes into you, and you are in some way made one with him (literally “united into him”), and made a member in his body. And this cannot be, unless both hope and charity are added.

Again, he has emphasized that righteousness in the Christian faith relies on the act of credere in Christum and now describes what it entails. The language of body and members returns, and there is a counterpoint to the movement of In Jo Ev, as here it is Christ who comes into the believer. Christ, in this mutual indwelling, equips the believer with love of neighbor, which Augustine then describes in terms of Christlike humbling of self for others.\(^{57}\)

Between the two types of credere he describes here and the two in In Jo Ev, there are three identifiable steps of Christian faith: credere eum/Christum, credere ei/Christo, and credere in eum/in Christum. The order of the first two is not as important as is the constitutive nature of the third for Christianity. Eugene TeSelle refers to this three-step formula (using Deum/Deo, “God’ as placeholder for the object) as the framework by which one can view Augustine’s understanding of the Christian faith.\(^{58}\)

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\(^{57}\) Sermo CXLIV, 4. This whole section is a rehearsal of the Christ Hymn of humility in Philippians 2:3-11, seeking the advantage of others.

\(^{58}\) TeSelle, 348. He is drawing from writings such as the Enchiridium and The Spirit and the Letter.
It is clear from the Sermons considered thus far that purely propositional *credere eum/Christum* merely affirms that God exists or that Jesus is actually the Christ and by extension affirms the propositions of the Creeds as facts. It is when the believer observes the promises of God coming to fruition that *credere Deo*, believing God, becomes possible—a matter of respecting God’s authority. Either may accompany or precede the other. But it is clearly *credere in eum/Christum*, viewing the Person(s) of God described in those creeds and keeping promises as the one into whose hands we wish to place our lives, with whom we wish to become one, that Augustine considers to be saving faith, that which results in right relationship with God and ultimately neighbor.

For Augustine, baptism is not merely going through the motions of initiation into a club, but rather an entry into relationship with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and the texts of three baptismal creeds can be reconstructed from his writings, all beginning with “*cred(ere) in Deum*...”cej59 Candidates for baptism were given the creed a few weeks beforehand, *traditio symboli*, and expected to “give it back” *redditio symboli*, upon their baptism (phrases used often by Augustine). Under Augustine’s instruction, such as what is clear in the sermons here

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**Creed of Milan** (*De Fide et Symbolo, Sermones 212-214*)

*Credo in Deum* *Patrem Omnipotentum...ascendit in caelum*

**Creed of Hippo** (*De Fide et Symbolo, Sermo 215*)

*Credimus in Deum* *Patrem Omnipotentum... ascendit ad caelos*

**Creed from De Symbolo ad Catechumenos**

*Credimus in Deum* *Patrem Omnipotentum... ascendit in caelum*
considered, what do new believers know believing to entail as they go into the water? They know that believing into the God whom their creed describes is a gift of that God and unites them intimately, almost bodily, with the Son of God in such a way that where his limbs go – to surrender self on behalf of the sinner, the needy, the sick – they will now go, too.

In one sermon, Augustine is so convinced of this reality that he defends infant baptism, because the parents who are believers-into-Christ are so united with Christ that (since it is through them that the infant inherits original sin) their vows are sufficient to answer the prayers embedded in their babies’ cries by declaring the infant’s own belief.\(^{60}\) He further emphasizes the motion of the believer into Christ’s presence and connection with him in another sermon, as he points to the woman with the hemorrhage who touched the hem of Christ’s robe as demonstrating “the approach of the person believing.”\(^{61}\) A contrast here arises that makes it necessary to identify and consider, a potential problem. As infants are not responsible for their own approach to the baptismal waters, does the language and relational aspect of “believing


\(^{61}\) Augustine, *Sermo CCXLIV, 3*. Accessed January 3, 2017 at [http://pld.chadwyck.com.proxy.libraries.smu.edu/all/fulltext?ACTION=byid&ID=Z100055775&WARN=N&TOCHITS=N&ALL=Y&FILE=../session/1484518368_20207](http://pld.chadwyck.com.proxy.libraries.smu.edu/all/fulltext?ACTION=byid&ID=Z100055775&WARN=N&TOCHITS=N&ALL=Y&FILE=../session/1484518368_20207) Tactus fidei significat. Tangendo enim acceditur ad eum qui tangitur. Mulierem illam videte, quae fluxum sanguinis patiebatur. Dixit in corde suo: Sanabor, si tetigero fimbriam vestimenti ejus. Accessit et tetigit, sanata est. Quid est, Accessit et tetigit? Propinquavit et credidit. Ut sciatis eam credendo tetigisse, Dominus dixit: Tetigit me aliquis. Quid est, Tetigit me; nisi, Credidit in me? Touching means faith. For touching she came near to him who is touched. See that woman, who suffered from the issue of blood. She said in her heart, “I shall be healed, if I touch the hem of his garment.” She approached and touched, and she was healed. What is “She approached and touched?” She drew near and she believed. That you may know that touching is believing, the Lord said, “Someone touched me.” What is “touched me,” but “believed into me?”
into” break down in the circumstance of infant baptism, with Augustine curiously seeming to endorse causal efficacy of the sacrament? It is a problem that Augustine does not consider in what Edmund Hill calls this “extraordinary, important, interesting, and yes, rather bad sermon.”62 Its logic is as muddled as its superscription, “Preached in the Basilica of the Ancestors on the birthday of the Martyr Guddens on 27 June (On the Baptism of infants, against the Pelagians),” so it is tempting simply to dismiss the issue altogether. On the contrary, it is wise to consider here how the language works with infant baptism, even if one struggles to embrace Augustine’s notion of baptized infants’ believing “with the faith of their parents,” which makes more sense in the context of Antiquity, wherein an understanding of the individual believer and the believing community of Christ’s body the church is not separable.63 As credere in Deum engenders bold surrender, while the parents’ expression of faith does not itself prove effective for the infant (who certainly does not cease crying or dedicate itself to a life of holiness in relationship with God upon baptism), their believing into Christ entails their surrendering of self in order to nurture the growth of faith in this little one with the same love with which Christ incorporates children in the kingdom of God throughout the gospels. In this way infant baptism signifies the grace that will enable the child to become one who believes into Christ herself or himself. More on the implications of infant baptism and believing into Christ will appear in Chapter Four.

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62 Hill, Sermons (273-305A) on the saints, 195 (fn 1). Hill continues, “In it we seem to see Augustine arguing for a theological conclusion, which he treated as almost a dogma, of which his intellect was utterly convinced, and from which his heart recoiled: that babies dying unbaptized go to hell. So he is prey to an inner conflict that produces what is, as I have suggested, really a rather bad sermon.” Hill goes on to clarify that the Church of the late 20th century is “much less dogmatic on this point than Augustine was.”

63 Augustine, Sermon 294. 17, in Hill, 192. I am indebted to James H. K. Lee, to whose work on Augustine and the sacraments I shall turn in Chapter 4, for this observation that “the individual believer is best understood in relation to the communal body, and therefore saving faith is communal as well as individual.” Personal correspondence, January 11, 2018.
Returning then to the far superior sermon *In Jo Ev*, it is clear that Augustine would find this relational, touching, and incorporating understanding of believing into God useful even in combating heresy. The hearers he urged to understand by believing into God, would, by believing to love, hold dear, go into, and be incorporated in Christ’s members, see through the Sabellian heresy. They would now understand that the teaching that is “not mine” according to Jesus, because it was “from the Father,” affirms the distinction of persons. Augustine seems confident that his hearers, now clear on what believing into God is, will be able to understand the Trinity, because they can know God intimately. Incorporation in Christ’s members enables believers to recognize the Father and the Son in right relationship to each other’s distinct persons, because they are in right relationship with the Father and the Son themselves.64

He will even go so far as to insist that by believing into God, the spirit entrusts itself to the Spirit of God, and rather than merely believing God the way one does any fellow human, one is able “to cling by faith to God, who effects good works in such a way that we collaborate well with God, for we are told, without me you can do nothing.”65 Such clinging and collaboration certainly align with Volf’s portrait of flourishing from 1.1 above and its image of “when we come to love God and surrender to God in faith, …the relation to the divine becomes the axis of

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64 *In Jo Ev* XXIX, 7.

our lives.” Volf’s own description of flourishing owes a debt to Augustine’s aforementioned defense of preaching with a rhetorical flourish. Augustine’s choice to evoke from grammatical uniqueness a distinctly Christian rhetoric of “believing into” represents well his effort to rescue rhetoric from the ash-heap of paganism.66

His rhetoric of “believing into” uses the types of devices he identifies as being used by inspired writers of Scripture, even if not deliberately. Both his credere formula in general, and the credere in eum as it appears in In Jo Ev in particular, can be perceived to use the figures of speech that he will claim in Book IV of DDC to see in Paul’s letter to the Romans. The Romans passage is but one example that Augustine gives of biblical writers using rhetorical devices (while acknowledging that it is laughable to suggest they had striven to observe the rules of rhetoric67), but he identifies two different devices in this one example, both of which are useful in describing the rhetoric of Augustine’s own credere formula. He lifts up Paul’s use of κλίμακα (klimax) in Greek, gradatio in Latin, in Romans 5:3-5, building in stages from tribulations to patience, to approbation, to hope, to the love of God that is poured into believers’ hearts. Similarly, as Augustine’s formula comes together across Augustine’s writings, it is possible to see him employing a form of this device in building from believing God and believing that God exists/that Jesus is Christ – like demons do – to believing into Christ.

66 Hermanson, et al, 3-4. This opening essay notes the changing place of rhetoric from ubiquitous tool of the Roman Republic to academic subject and specialty of the Sophists. It claims that as the Edict of Religious Tolerance (313 A.D.) afforded Christianity protections, “Many church leaders, skeptical and suspicious of ‘pagan’ rhetoric, used their new authority to confront what they believed were rhetoric’s dangerous worldly aims and pragmatic perspectives.” Augustine meanwhile recognized that “…the need to win souls for the Christian faith necessitated that clergy be able to reach audiences unfamiliar with Scripture and to move them toward Christ, making rhetoric attractive as an evangelical tool.”

67 Hill, Teaching Christianity, 206: IV.7.11.
Further, within the culminating step of the formula, _credere in eum_, as it is described in _In Jo Ev_, there is another climax, as the above-analyzed phrases that build upon one another with the repeated first word, _credendo_, “by believing” escalate in intensity. Augustine takes the phrase he finds in John’s gospel to describe belief and does with it what Paul does in describing hope, both of them involving love. As he builds from by believing to “to love,” to “to cherish,” to “to go into him,” he both builds to a climax and arrives at a point, which evokes the second set of devices he sees at work in Romans 5:3-5 according to DDC Book IV, “another embellishment to be observed.” The _κολα/κόμματα_ (kola/kommata) and _περίοδος_ (periodos), which are related to modern language punctuation terms, involve a series of phrases followed by the use of a pause and concluding phrase (signaled in Augustine’s case by a phrase not beginning with _credendo_). As Paul uses a _periodos_ to describe the hope that does not disappoint because of the love of God poured out through the Holy Spirit, so Augustine punctuates the series of “by believing” with a description of it as being incorporated in (Christ’s) members. As Augustine himself did not enumerate the three steps of the formula in one location, it is not possible to apply this device to the formula itself, but the effect is the same.

This formula, which draws a contrast between what Volf will describe as loving surrender to God in faith and lesser forms of belief, retains some of his rhetorical flourish as it comes to be systematized by Bede and Lombard.68 They choose to assemble in one place and to order the three steps of _credere_ in order to distinguish _credere in_ + accusative from the other two; however, even in this early stage of the formula’s establishment, it is important to note what

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68 Sarah Wood, _Conscience and the Composition of Piers Plowman_. (Oxford: OUP, 2012), 120.
is included and what is left out from Augustine’s description of \textit{credere in} + accusative. It will be helpful to bear in mind the aggregate from across Augustine’s corpus, that “believing into Christ” entails “By believing to love, by believing to hold dear, by believing to go into him, and to be incorporated in his members.” Furthermore, by believing into Christ, “Christ comes into you (the believer-into), and you are in some way made one with him (literally “united into him”), and made a member in his body.” It also involves the theological virtues, as “this cannot be, unless both hope and charity are added.” And finally, as the believer’s spirit entrusts itself to the Holy Spirit, the believer-into is able “to cling by faith to God, who effects good works in such a way that we collaborate well with God, for we are told, without me you can do nothing.”

In the next chapter we shall explore this systematization. We shall look at the first known systematization, by Bede – who sought to follow Augustine’s method of commentary closely.\textsuperscript{69} Then we shall examine similar systematization by Lombard – who would draw from the influence of Bede as well as of the growing medieval genre of \textit{sentences} which had begun with Prosper of Aquitaine’s own collection of sentences glossing his contemporary and friend, Augustine.\textsuperscript{70} We can then consider the ensuing sanitization that downplayed the relational aspects of \textit{credere in eum} and hastened its loss in translation.

\textsuperscript{69} Benedicta Ward, SLG, \textit{The Venerable Bede.} (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1998), 46.

CHAPTER 2

The Formula, Systematized by Bede and Lombard

2.1 Bede

Aliud est enim credere illi, aliud credere illum, aliud credere in illum. Credere illi est credere vera esse quae loquitur, credere illum credere quod ipse sit Deus, credere in illum diligere illum.

In fact it is one thing to believe him, another to believe in him, another to believe into him. To believe him is to believe to be true that which he says, to believe in him is to believe that he is God himself, to believe into him is to love (cherish) him.

Beda Venerabilis (The Venerable Bede),
In Epistolae Septem Catholicae (On the Seven Catholic Epistles), lines 174-176

The first to count Augustine as one of the Four Great Church Fathers, the Venerable Bede was an Anglo-Saxon monk of Northumbria at the turn of the 8th century CE. While most widely regarded for his magnum opus, Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum, or Ecclesiastical History of the English Speaking Peoples, declaring his primary purpose as “applying myself entirely to the study of the Scriptures,” Bede judged his own exegetical works to be equally important as his Ecclesiastical History (EH), listing them first among his works in the catalog

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1 Bede. In Epistolae Septem Catholicae Charles Williams Jones, and David Hurst, eds. [Bedae Venerabilis Opera. Corpus Christianorum Series Latina CXXI Pars II (Opera Exegetica)] (Turnholti: Typographi Brepols, 1955), 197. Hereafter abbreviated In Septem. Commentary on James 2:19.

2 Ward, 8-9. "He was the first to name Augustine, Ambrose, Jerome and Gregory as the four great Fathers of the Church and their commentaries provided his main source for biblical exegesis."
thereof with which he concluded the EH.³ Bede stood in the stream of early church tradition whereby to do theology was to do Biblical commentary.⁴ Fully immersed in scripture by the Divine Office of his monastic life, Bede also was thereby immersed in readings from the Church Fathers, which were woven into the Office of Matins. Just as Augustine had established the formula across commentaries and sermons, so Bede seems to have distilled the formula from these sources and systematized them in one locus of Christian thought.

It is worthy of note that Bede, who pioneered academic citation, did not consider himself much of a theological innovator, offering nothing new (at least nothing that survives) on the works of Paul. He admitted in the list of his works that appears in the Historia Ecclesiastica, “On the apostle I have transcribed in order whatever I found in the works of St. Augustine.”⁵ While his reluctance to identify himself as an innovator may be perceived as an act of self-deprecation, it was also rooted in dedication to a task of transmission to and education of the monks and priests of an emerging people. Brought to the monastery at Wearmouth very young (likely as an orphan), and being perhaps the sole survivor of plague in 686, save the Abbot Ceolfrith to whom he thenceforth clings, Bede perceived his work as a means of providing continuity with tradition.⁶ It is therefore likely that, when he systematized Augustine’s formula, he expected it to be perceived as acceptable, even customary, and to carry a pedagogical, catechetical purpose.

³ Ward, 41. Find the original EH p. 567 acc to BW’s dictionary of biblical interpreters entry
⁵ Ward, 51.
⁶ Ward, 3-4.
It is fitting that Bede should have appreciated Augustine’s play on words, as one primary task he faced with his illiterate pupils was improving facility with and appreciation of the Latin language, from its most basic grammar to the most powerful biblical allegories, en route to the Anglo-Saxons’ crafting of a written form of their own language.\footnote{Ward, 23.}

Whether we look to the writings of St. Augustine of Hippo or Cassiodorus or, nearer home, the letters of Aldhelm, we find abundant evidence of the importance which Christian writers attached to the study of grammar as unlocking the door through which the pupil gained access to the Word of God. Bede himself was certainly no exception...\footnote{Peter Hunter Blair, The World of Bede. (London: Secker & Warburg, 1970), 248.}

His earliest work (ca. 700) is believed to have been a helpful handbook, De Orthographia, “On the Art of Writing Words Correctly,” a loosely alphabetized collection of Latin words and their nuances for interpretation.\footnote{Bede, De Orthographia Charles Williams Jones, and David Hurst, eds. [Bedae Venerabilis Opera. Corpus Christianorum Series Latina CXXIII A Pars I (Opera Didascalica)] (Turnholti: Typographi Brepols, 1975).} In addition to Biblical usages, many of the entries contain examples culled from the Fathers.

While the library lists no longer exist for the monastery at Wearmouth-Jarrow, it is known that the abbots’ Mediterranean travels supplied Bede with an abundance of early Fathers’ works over which to pore as he developed his commentaries. The availability today of manuscripts from the period gives a sense of which of the Fathers were outstanding in popularity in Bede’s England: Jerome, Augustine, Isidore of Seville, and Gregory the Great.\footnote{Blair, 292.} The latter
two were closer to Bede’s time period, but the influence of Augustine on Bede’s method is undeniable.

Ward observes that his method in general displays features common to that of the Church Fathers. For Bede as for them, any part of the Scriptures can be used to interpret any other part thereof, though the first step is always an intent focus on grammar and face-value meaning, referring to original languages to the greatest possible extent.¹¹ Beyond that, however, Ward sees exact parallels specifically to the method of crafting commentary – the equivalent of preaching¹² – that Augustine describes in DDC.¹³ First and foremost for Augustine, love of God and neighbor and the Christian life must be the accompanying action and context of reading Scripture – the first step in preparing commentary on which is to read it in its entirety. Next Augustine encouraged memorization, then awareness of the difficulties presented by reading the texts in a language other than the originals. If no knowledge of or access to these languages is possible, a comparison of available Latin translations is an acceptable substitute for identifying potential nuances of meaning. Both Augustine and Bede go so far as to recommend an understanding of Scripture’s original milieus, including flora and fauna and numerological understandings. Both also approach even the most poetic of expressions in scripture with the grammatical scrutiny

¹¹ Ward, 46.


¹³ Ward, 47.
common to the Fathers first, extrapolating spiritual meaning only after careful consideration of the “art of grammar” and its issues.\footnote{Ibid., 47.}

One possible assessment of Bede’s method, therefore, is to declare him wholly unoriginal, a mere compiler of the Fathers before him. His own humble insistence that he was merely repeating the wisdom of those who went before him (consider his description, above-described, of “his” method of copying everything from Augustine on Paul verbatim) appears to undergird this assessment. However, his own self-deprecating description of his work reads more as a rhetorical expression of humility than an accurate self-assessment. Even his compilations involve the making of choices, the placing of various voices in dialogue with one another, all of which would for him be themselves instruments to amplify the voice of God. That he saw himself as one such instrument is clear from the acknowledgement, in the opening of his commentary on Luke, of his having added “some token of my own efforts as the Author of Light revealed them.”\footnote{Ibid., 48, with reference to Bede’s In Lucae Evangelium Expositio, ed. D. Hurst, in the Corpus Christianorum Series Latina CXX.} Far earlier than in that commentary, Bede similarly mounted a defense of his method in his commentary on Revelation, indicating that his innovations are in obedience to “the commandments which we have received, to return to the Lord with usury the talents which have been committed to us.”\footnote{Ibid., with reference to what appears to be Ward’s own translation of Bede’s Revelation as it appears in the Patrologia Latina database, a work hitherto only partially translated elsewhere by E. Marshall.}
Having obeyed the “commandment” as he completed that, his first exegetical work, Bede next applied himself to the exegetical work in which he presented Augustine’s formula, a commentary on the seven catholic epistles. This work, *In Epistolae Septem Catholicas*, “to judge by the number of extant manuscripts, was the most popular of all Bede’s theological expositions. One reason for this may have been the lack of other commentaries on this group of canonical letters; for Augustine’s *Treatises on I John* seem to stand alone….”¹⁷ Yet it was not in commenting on the first letter of John that Bede made use of Augustine’s formula. Rather it was in the first commentary in the order in which he chose to present them, on James. It is worthy of note that it emerges in epistolary commentary, and not the gospel of John (upon which Augustine had been commenting in the two most prominent treatments of *credere in* + accusative outlined in the previous chapter, above), nor a gospel at all. This fact suggests the ubiquity and broad applicability of the *credere* formula in the Christian canon.

The logic of his choice to begin his work with James (who comes first, Bede noted here, in the list of three apostles named in Galatians 2:9, James, Peter, and John,¹⁸ and who was the first of those three, he had noted in the preface of *In Septem*, to be martyred¹⁹) is not germane to his presentation of the formula. What is important is that he began his epistolary commentary by examining the New Testament text that most emphasizes a faith that either works or is dead, a fitting corollary of the “faith working through love” that Augustine borrowed from Galatians to

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¹⁸ Bede, *In Septem* I.1-2, lines 3-5, 183.

¹⁹ Bede, *In Septem*, Prologus line 23, 182.
describe credere in eum in In Jo Ev. Bede laid out the formula in his comments on the second chapter of James, both as exegesis of a specific verse and in an effort at systematizing Augustine’s attention to this grammatical structure. As he elaborated on the formula, the systematization appears to have been an effort to develop an ethics of belief. The introduction of the formula might itself seem out of place, as it comes immediately on the heels of Bede’s commentary on verses 14 and 15-17, none of which contains “credere in illum” in any form. They do, however, discuss fide, faith:

“Quid, proderit, fratres mei, si fidem quis dicat se habere, opera autem non habeat?” (v14a) 
What will it benefit, my brothers, if anyone claims to have faith (itself) but does not have works?

Ita et fides, si non habeat opera, mortua est in semet ipsam. (v17) 
So faith, if it does not have works, is dead in itself.

Bede’s commentary on verse 14 is a direct quotation of Augustine’s commentary on the previous verse, which the former would have found in the latter’s letter to Jerome (Letter 167 in Augustine/132 in Jerome).20 In that letter, Augustine had suggested that the discussion of works pertains to works of mercy, which are necessary because of how easily unmerciful behaviors such as the favoritism that James describes emerge in human lives, even in those of humans with the best of intentions.21 Augustine had indicated to Jerome that the reason James added the phrase “but mercy triumphs (or exults in its superiority, in Augustine’s interpretation) over judgment” had been to console those who would otherwise be disheartened by the previous


21 Ibid., 104 (6.20)
sentences about transgressing in even one bit of the law being to transgress in all of it.\textsuperscript{22} In Bede’s application of Augustine’s commentary to the next verse, there seems to be a suggestion that the comfort comes in knowing that works of mercy inseparably constitute Christian faith. Working through love is a defining characteristic of this faith, not merely one variety of it or a possible result of it.

In commenting on verses 15-17 together, Bede expanded on this notion in his own words:

\begin{quote}
Manifestum est quod sicut verba sola pietatis nudum vel esurientem non recreant, si non et cibus praebetur ac vestis, ita fides verbo tenus servata non salvat; mortua est enim in semet ipsa si non operibus caritatis quibus reviviscat animetur. Neque huic sententiae contrarium est quod dominus ait: Qui crediderit et baptizatus fuerit salvus erit; subintellegendum namque ibi est quod tantummodo vere credat qui exercet operando quod credit. Et quia fides et caritas ab invicem separari nequeunt, Paulo attestante qui ait: Et fides quae per dilectionem operatur, apte Iohannes apostolus talem de caritate sententiam qualem de fide Iacobus profert dicens: Qui habuerit substantiam mundi et viderit fratrem suum necesse habere et clauserit viscera sua ab eo, quomodo caritas Dei manet in eo? (lines 148-160)
\end{quote}

It is clear that just as the bare words of faith do not revive the naked or the hungry, if food and clothing is not also provided, so faith does not save the saved by word; indeed, \textit{it is dead in itself if it is not animated by works of charity that revive it}. Nor is what the Lord says contrary to this thought: “Everyone who believes and is baptized will be saved;” for here it is implied that \textbf{only the one who practices what he believes by working truly believes.} Because both faith and love cannot be divided from one another, which Paul confirming says: But “\textit{faith working through love}” (Galatians 5:6), \textit{so to fit exactly the apostle John saying such things about love as the sort of thoughts about faith James advances: “Anyone who has the wealth of the world and sees his brother to have needs but closes his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?” (1 John 3:17).}

Bede’s connection of these passages with one another and insistence that faith and love are inseparable undergird a robustly relational conception of faith – both in terms of relationship

\textsuperscript{22} Ibid. 103 (6.19)
with God in Christ and of relationship with fellow humans in need. Language of “truly believing” anticipates the formula that he was about to systematize.

While this pericope from James will frame the Reformation debate of “faith vs. works,” Bede’s distance from that debate is evident.23 He did not address James 2:18 at all,24 with its rhetorical use of an imagined interlocutor, “But someone will say, ‘You have faith and I have works,’” and the retort of James, ”Show me your faith without works, and I by my works will show you my faith.” There was no interest for Bede in positing potentially adversarial proofs. Nevertheless, the Adversary’s minions who are mentioned in the next verse do provide Bede with a fitting contrast between faith that works through love and the merely propositional assent to tenets or doctrine that James dubs “barren.” It is in his commentary on this verse that Bede’s innovation on Augustine’s theme becomes evident. First he patiently parsed the verse, *Tu credis quoniam unus est Deus, bene facis; et daemones credunt et contremescunt.* “You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe – and tremble with fear.”

He elaborated on Augustine’s example of demons’ belief as contrast to belief into Christ:

*Ne putes quia magnum aliquid facis credendo unum esse Deum; hoc enim et daemones faciunt nec solum Deum patrem sed et filium Dei credunt. Unde dicit Lucas: Exiebant etiam daemonia a multis clamantia et dicentia: Quia tu es filius Dei; et increpans non sinebat ea loqui, quia sciebant ipsum esse Christum. Nec solum credunt verum etiam contremescunt. Unde ad illium legio quae hominem obsidebat supplici uoce proclamabat: Quid mihi et tibi, Iesu filii Dei summi? Adiuro te per Deum ne me torqueas. Qui ergo Deum esse non credunt vel creditum non timent profecto sunt daemonibus tardiores ac proterviores aestimandi. Sed nec Deum credere et contremescere magnum est si non et in eum credatur, hoc est si non eius in corde amor teneatur.* (lines 161-173)

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23 Ward, 78-9. Having described Bede as deadly serious about Christian faith, Ward nevertheless notes that he “had no simplistic categories of those who can be known to be saved or damned.” What follows in Bede’s writings is not simply a matter of a shibboleth to determine whether a pilgrim is “in” or “out” of the heavenly kingdom.

24 (and omitted similar language previously by use of an “etc.” to cap his quotation of 2:14)
Lest you should think by believing God to be one you do something great; for this the demons also do, they believe in not only God the Father, but also the Son of God. Whence says Luke (4:41): “Demons also came out of many, shouting and saying, ‘Because you are the Son of God;’ and rebuking them he did not permit them to speak, because they knew him to be the Christ.” Not only do they believe but they also certainly tremble with fear. Whence the Legion that was possessing the man did cry out to him with begging voice, “What is between me and you, Jesus Son of the most high God? I urge you by God not to torture me” (Mark 5:7). Therefore any who do not believe God to exist or who having believed do not fear certainly will be judged slower and more shameless than demons. Yet to believe in God and tremble with fear is not great unless also he is believed into, that is, unless love of him is held in the heart.

From two gospels’ distinct accounts of demons that recognized and even feared Christ in terms of the first two types of credere, Bede drew the conclusion that such faith is “no great thing.” It is not the real Christian faith of credere in Christum. While lacking it makes one worse than demons, having it alone, in the final judgment, does no more than put one on par with demons. His last sentence, before launching into the explanation of the formula that appears at the opening of the present chapter, identifies the missing ingredient: holding love of God in the heart. It is the distinguishing factor that sets credere in Deum apart.

As Bede proceeded to lay out the formula, he did not follow exactly the text of Augustine in In Jo Ev, with its crescendo of credendos and its going into Christ and being incorporated in his members. He did, however, clearly enumerate and clarify each of the three types of credere all together in one place for the first time known in extant Christian literature, with brief explanations of each. As prone as he was to the kind of quotation and citation of Augustine and the Fathers that he had provided in his commentary on verses 15-17, he was culling this formula from at least two different sermons, so direct quotation would be less accessible to his pupils. Instead he simply glossed:
Aliud est enim credere illi, aliud credere illum, aliud credere in illum. Credere illi est credere vera esse quae loquitur, credere illum credere quod ipse sit Deus, credere in illum diligere illum. (lines 174-176)

In fact it is one thing to believe him, another to believe in him, another to believe into him. To believe him is to believe to be true that which he says, to believe in him is to believe that he is God himself, to believe into him is to love (cherish) him.

So far he had merely collected in one place the formula established throughout several of Augustine’s writings. Next he began his innovation by describing the ones doing the believing, beginning to give a sense of the manner of participation (or lack thereof) in divine relationship that operates in each type of credere, presented in order here:

1) Credere uera esse quae loquitur multi et mali possunt; credunt enim esse uera et nolunt ea facere sua, quia ad operandum pigri sunt. (lines 177-179) “Even many evil ones are able to believe to be true that which he says.” About this first of the three types of credere that Bede had enumerated, he now reiterated that even many evil ones are capable of doing it. He appears by “evil ones” to mean the demons, but he leaves it open-ended. Anyone who merely takes Christ at his word has done nothing more than even the worst can do. There appears to be no love required in order to believe thus far, and there appears to be no positive effect in the one believing only this way. As Bede had emphasized already from James, even the demons believed Christ, albeit trembling in fear.

2) Credere autem ipsum esse Deum, hoc et daemones potuerunt. (lines 179-180) “Moreover, to believe that he is God himself, this also the demons have done.” Bede
has illustrated how far demons believe, which is more than imitating those who don’t even want to believe in God at all but is still not far enough for Christian faith.

3) **Credere uero in Deum** soli nouerunt qui diligunt Deum qui non solum nomine christiani sunt sed et factis et uita, quia sine dilectione fides inanis est, cum dilectione fides christiani, sine dilectione fides daemonis.(lines 180-183) “However, they alone know how to believe into God who cherish God, who are Christians not only by name, but also by deeds and by life, because without (this kind of) love faith is void, with (this kind of) love faith (is that) of Christians, without (this kind of) love faith (is that) of demons.” What Bede described here is the true and living faith of one who is a Christian, not in name only, but in life and deed. For Bede, cherishing-love is the very content of Christian faith. This love is not merely a fondness or any feeling, but that active *dilectio* that Augustine so prized and prioritized as the cornerstone of religion and society. He sharply contrasts this believing into with a confession of faith arising solely out of fear of punishment, which can be made while still hating Christ. In fact, while the confession of demons may seem to have the same wording

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25 Bede, *In Septem* II.19 lines 180-184, 198.

26 Bede, *In Septem* II.19 lines 180-181, p. 198. I reiterate my translation of *qui non solum nomine christiani sunt sed et factis et vita* and paraphrase it thus to show how close Bede’s notion is to contemporary attention to the idea of consistency in “word and deed,” often colloquially expressed as “You must walk the walk if you talk the talk.”

27 Recall from Chapter 1 of the present work that *dilectio* involved for Augustine, on Peter Brown’s analysis. “the orientation of the entire personality, its deepest wishes and its basic capacity to love.” See above discussion of *dilectio* in 1.4, in the second enumerated paragraph analyzing the *credendo crescendo* that describes *credere in eum* in *In Jo Ev.* (p. 25)

28 Bede, *In Septem* II.19 lines 184-186, p. 198.
as that of “blessed Peter” when he recognized Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the living God, because they offer it with hatred for Christ, it is the cause of their damnation. On the other hand, those for whom the confession proceeds from \textit{dilectio} within, they have been rewarded with everlasting blessedness.

It is surprising that, for all the emphasis Bede placed on faith working through love, he did not include Augustine’s language of going into Christ and being incorporated in Christ’s members.

No specific citation from Augustine’s oeuvre appears in \textit{In Septem} for the formula, the way it does for his quotation of Augustine’s epistle to Jerome in the commentary on the previous verses. Nevertheless, a dominant source of Latin homilies in Bede’s day would have been Augustine’s \textit{In Jo Ev}, so the likelihood is high that he drew the formula in part from it.

It might be possible to gain a more comprehensive view of how Bede understood the uniqueness of believing \textit{into} if he had completed and been able to disseminate his translation of

\begin{footnotes}
\item[29] Bede, \textit{In Septem} II.19 lines 186-189, p. 198.
\item[30] Bede, \textit{In Septem} II.19 lines 190-191, p. 198.
\item[31] Ward, 52. There is no reason to suggest a fear of the corporeal in Bede, as his earlier commentary on the epistles of John included language of touching and members between John and Jesus, to emphasize that John’s works (among which he included the gospel and Revelation) reflected the authorial style of one who had most intimate knowledge of Jesus as human. Ward translates the relevant portion of Bede’s commentary on 1 John 1:1 thus: “The apostles could not doubt that this was a true body, inasmuch as they proved its genuineness not only by seeing but by touching it, particularly John himself who being accustomed to recline on his lap at supper touched his members more freely as he was nearer.” Ward observes that Bede did praise chastity elsewhere in \textit{In Septem} but not in such a way as to introduce dualism or rejection of the flesh. \textquote{The apostles could not doubt that this was a true body, inasmuch as they proved its genuineness not only by seeing but by touching it, particularly John himself who being accustomed to recline on his lap at supper touched his members more freely as he was nearer.}
\end{footnotes}
John’s gospel into English, rather than having died translating verse 9 of John 6. Remarkably, Bede retained Augustine’s emphasis on the relational sense even without the sermonic imagery of the believer going into Christ and Christ coming into and being somehow united with the believer.

As Bede was the first to translate the Apostles Creed into English, albeit into English’s earliest form, knowing how he chose, in doing so, to express the awkward nature of *Credo/Credimus in Deum* and to convey its distinct difference from *Credo/Credimus Deum* and *Credo/Credimus Deo* would be immensely helpful to the present project. However, as the only way we have of knowing that he carried out this translation is that he declared as much in his final work, *Letter to Egbert*, it is impossible to access and analyze his translation choices. In that he was merely making available a tool for memorization by the clergy, whom he deemed too lazy to learn Latin, it is no surprise that no manuscripts of the newly-written language of English were preserved as were those of his Latin works.

This matter certainly indicates one strike against the retention of the formula over time, that only one of his works is readily available in anything other than Latin today. It is not this one containing the formula, nor any other commentary, but the *Ecclesiastical History of the English Speaking Peoples*. Part of the reason his systematization of *credere* isn’t better known

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33 Ward, 15.

34 Having searched databases of libraries the world over for evidence of manuscripts, I at last received an authoritative answer from Joshua Westgard, co-compiler with George Hardin Brown of the “Census of Bede Manuscripts” viewable online at [http://www.bedemanuscripts.net/](http://www.bedemanuscripts.net/). Dr. Westgard assured me via email on March 18, 2017 that “…as far as we know, no trace of these translations of the creed or prayers has survived.”
today is that his commentaries have generally been considered less accessible than the *History*, regardless of language.\textsuperscript{35}

Nevertheless, his influence as an exegete-theologian in the immediate wake of his death and for several centuries thereafter is indisputable. During Bede’s lifetime, respect for his work grew and requests for copies of his manuscripts came constantly. Abbots at Wearmouth and Jarrow had trouble keeping up with the demand, coming repeatedly from such figures as Boniface for his mission at Frisia, accounting for Bede’s influence on Germanic/Dutch Christian traditions.\textsuperscript{36} At the end of the eighth century, in his school at Charlemagne’s Court, Alcuin of York was heavily influenced by and admiring of Bede, whose Scriptural commentaries he placed first in a list of famous scholars’ work in his *The Bishops, Kings, and Saints of York*.\textsuperscript{37} Alcuin used Bede's works as manuals, arguably giving Bede “strong claim to be regarded as the formative influence on the West in the early Middle Ages.”\textsuperscript{38} In fact, it is considered a crucial

\textsuperscript{35} This matter is lamented by Scott DeGregorio in “Bede and the Old Testament” in *The Cambridge Companion to Bede*, edited by Scott DeGregorio. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 127–141. “It is common to contrast Bede’s fame as historian, which began in the twelfth century… with his renown as exegete, which began in his own lifetime and continued for centuries thereafter. But equally germane is the contrast between the accessibility of the *Ecclesiastical History*, long available in translation and easy enough to comprehend, and the inaccessibility of the biblical commentaries, which hide in costly Latin editions, and whose theological content presents real interpretive challenges. Compared to the Ecclesiastical History, with its array of colourful (sic) personages and engaging narrative pace, the commentaries are bound to appear esoteric and isolated from the social world of their author” (127). DeGregorio’s assessment seems harsh, though not unhelpful.

\textsuperscript{36} Ward 136-7.

\textsuperscript{37} Ibid., 138.

\textsuperscript{38} Ibid., 139.
key to the dissemination of Bede throughout Europe that “Alcuin was the associate of Paul the Deacon, who produced for Charlemagne the ‘official’ homiliary for the Empire.”

His influence continued through the turn of the first Christian millennium, as his commentaries became part of the *Glossa Ordinaria* of 12th century. This massive compilation of biblical texts with thorough interlinear and marginal commentary and explanations gleaned from patristic texts was more widely circulated throughout the twelfth and thirteenth centuries than was the bible alone. Bede is a source of commentary on several of the books of the Old and New Testaments, but it is significant to the present project that “the Gloss on the Canonical Epistles is drawn from Bede’s commentary on these letters, quoting, as he does, Augustine and Jerome.” Thus was his systematization of Augustine’s formula as it appears in the commentary on James 2:19 widely disseminated throughout Europe.

With exposure to this *Glossa*, if to none of Bede’s other works directly, Amalarius of Metz in the twelfth century quoted Bede as an “indisputable authority,” as does Thomas Aquinas in the thirteenth century in the Prima Pars of his *Summa Theologiae*, with particular approval of Bede’s views on matters of cosmology. Most notably for the present project, the Bishop of Paris from 1159, Peter Lombard, is believed to be one of the great teachers responsible for

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39 Cross, 21.


41 L. Smith, 53. Smith’s footnote specifically refers to the pages from *In Septem* quoted above throughout the present section.

42 Ward, 143.
developing the *Glossa Ordinaria* into its final popular form around 1140,\(^\text{43}\) which would have put him in very close contact, indeed, with the work of Bede as it pertained to Augustine’s formula.

### 2.2 Lombard

Peter Lombard was as careful as Bede, if not more so, to cite his sources.\(^\text{44}\) Thus it is that references to the *Glossa* and also to Bede and Augustine appear surrounding his presentation of the *credere* formula that he included in the discussion of *fides* (faith) in Book III of his *Sententiae In IV Libris Distinctae* (Sentences in Four Distinct Books), distinction 23, chapter 4. Here, he addressed the issue of *Quid sit credere Deum vel Deo vel in Deum* (What it might be to believe in God or God or into God).\(^\text{45}\) He began by summarizing Bede’s presentation for the first two, in slightly different order and with minor adjustments of vocabulary (for example, using *Deum/Deo/in Deum*, God, as the object of *credere*).

> *Aliud est enim credere in Deum, aliud credere Deo, aliud credere Deum. Credere Deo, est credere vera esse quae loquitur: quod et mali faciunt; et nos credimus homini, sed non in hominem. Credere Deum, est credere quod ipse sit Deus: quod etiam mali faciunt.* (lines 13-16)

In fact it is one thing to believe into God, another to believe God, another to believe in God. To believe him, is to believe to be true that which he says: which also the evil ones do; and we believe men, but not into men. To believe in God is to believe that he is God himself:\(^\text{46}\) this also the evil ones do.

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\(^{43}\) L. Smith, 194.

\(^{44}\) Ibid., 44.


\(^{46}\) It is worth noting here that the choice to use God as proper name opens up potential to emphasize a nuance of translation for this definition: “to believe that God himself exists.” Whereas the previous use of pronouns held out the possibility of referring to Jesus as being God himself (such as in Augustine’s *Sermo CXLIV*), here the existence of God is clearly more plausible as the proposition in play for the believer.
His summary then quoted Augustine in *In Jo Ev* with surgical precision, using the *credendo* crescendo and incorporation in Christ’s members. He also grafted a descriptive phrase from elsewhere in the Augustinian corpus. *Credere in Deum, est credendo amare, credendo in eum ire, credendo ei adhaerere et eius membris incorporari:* To believe into God, is by believing to love, by believing to go into him, by **believing to cling to him** and to be incorporated in his members (lines 16-18).

Note that he inserted into Augustine’s original explanation of *credere in eum* from *In Jo Ev* one more level to the *credendo* crescendo, *credendo adhaerere* – by believing to cling (to God). He inserted this phrase, borrowed from a different Psalm’s *Exposition* than the one to which he is about to refer for his next section (from the *Enarratio* on Psalm 77:8, not the *Enarratio* on Psalm 67:32-33 that he would cite for his next sentence), between the “by believing to go into him” and Augustine’s concluding phrase from *In Jo Ev,* “and to be incorporated in his members.” “Cling” is appropriate, Augustinian language to join to the *In Jo Ev* version of the formula here. It is unsurprising that Lombard chose to bring the *Enarrationes in Psalmos* reference into his systematization of the formula, since he is known to have worked closely with Augustine’s material on the Psalms as it appeared in the *Glossa Ordinaria.* “This is typical of the main body of the Lombard’s Psalter commentary, re-working the Gloss into a continuous text. Since here (as is usual), the Gloss is drawn from Augustine and Cassiodorus, Peter’s exegesis is a re-working of a re-working.”

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47 L. Smith, 201.
He appears to be reworking but also refining the formula into a neat system that can be easily marked, read, and inwardly digested. He presents a straightforward understanding of the distinctive relational sense of this Christian believing, by which one boldly loves God, goes into God, clings to God, and is incorporated into God’s members. Even in this briefer space than that which Bede occupied with his systematization of the formula, Lombard has still included what is missing in Bede, that language of incorporation and members.

Why delete, however, the *credendo diligere* of *In Jo Ev*? Did he find it redundant with *amare*? Did he merely need to make room for *adhaerere*, without making the memorable *credendo* crescendo unwieldy in length? Perhaps both; however, it soon becomes clear that he had not eliminated, but rather transplanted, the concept of *diligere*:

> Per hanc fidem iustificatur impius, ut deinde ipsa fides incipiatur per dilectionem operari. Ea enim sola bona opera dicenda sunt, quae fiunt per dilectionem Dei. Ipsa etiam dilectio opus fidei dicitur. (lines 18-20, 1-2)\(^{48}\)

By this faith is the wicked one justified, as then faith itself may begin to work through love. For by it alone are works called good, which are done through the (cherishing) love of God. Indeed, love itself is called a work of faith.

Now only present in its noun form, *dilectio*, the concept of *diligere* is no less active than when Augustine and Bede had used both it and its verb form. Rather, Peter Lombard used it to give a synopsis of all that Augustine (whose tenth *Tractatus* on 1 John he cited for the final sentence) had said to conclude that *credere in* + accusative is the “faith working through love” of which the Apostle had written.\(^{49}\)

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\(^{48}\) Peter Lombard, 143-144.

\(^{49}\) Ibid., 144.
To get a sense of how the systematization of the formula was being disseminated at the
time, it is helpful to consider how Lombard was using these materials in theological discourse,
primarily through teaching. “We know that Peter lectured on the Psalms and the Pauline Epistles
at the Notre Dame cathedral school, and we know that he used Anselm’s Glossed texts as the
basis for these lectures. He lectured regularly from the Glossed text, rather than from a plain
Bible.”

Lest the interpreter of Scripture accuse the Lombard of thus crafting doctrine that is too
far removed from Scripture, it is important to note that Peter was, in his presentation of *credere
in + accusative*, very faithful to the words of Augustine, who lifted the phrase directly from
multiple passages of Scripture. Lombard differed from the Bishop of Hippo only in the divine
object, using not simply “him” (which Augustine usually meant to refer to Christ) but “God.”

The only inconsistency with which Lombard might be charged is the order of his
phrasing within his own presentation of *credere + accusative, credere + dative, credere in +
accusative*. It is already clear that his presentation, like Bede’s before him, underscores how
unimportant the order itself is to the establishing of the fact that *credere in eum/Illum/Deum is,
of the three possible understandings of *credere*, the true Christian faith that works through love.
As the Sentences were themselves broadly disseminated throughout Europe, Augustine’s and
Lombard’s insistence on this loving, relational faith as constitutive of Christianity went with it.

### 2.3 Aquinas

When Thomas Aquinas contributed to the myriad medieval commentaries on Lombard’s
Sentences in his *Scriptum Super Sententiis*, he attended to the phrase *credere in Deum* no fewer

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50 L. Smith, 200.
than five times. 51 His approach to the formula, however, is rather distinct from that of his predecessors, even from the one on whose Sentences he was commenting in this work. Thomas did not simply quote verbatim each of Lombard’s sentences and then comment. He did not simply systematize the Augustinian formula and affirm it. Nor did he yet in this work offer the type of straightforward, three-step presentation of and commentary on the formula as he would in the Summa Theologiae. Instead, with Aristotelian precision of logic, in a structure that presages that Summa, he posed and then responded to a series of questions opponents might have raised about each of the subsets of Lombard’s distinctions, which he had gathered and introduced under his own summary headings. In each section, the first several quaestiunculae, little questions, represented the position against which Aquinas planned to argue in the ensuing responses marked in correspondence to the number of the initial quaestiunculae. This method, similar to that of his contemporary, Bonaventure, allowed the Angelic Doctor a great deal more room than would other styles for his original thoughts and additions to Lombard’s work. 52

His treatment of the formula is found in the questions and responses gathered under a heading of Utrum credere sit cum assensu cogitare, “Whether to believe may be to think with

51 Thomas Aquinas, Scriptum super Sententiis, liber III a distinctione XXIII ad distinctionem XXV. Corpus Thomisticum, Opera omnia S. Thomae, Lib 3, d.23 q.1 pr., d.23 q.2 a.2 qe.2, d.23 q.3 a. 1 qe. 3 arg. 3, d. 25 q. 1 a. 2 args. 4-5, accessed July 15, 2015. http://www.corpusthomisticum.org/snp3023.html. Henceforth abbreviated Scriptum.

assent." It was in the second *quaestioniuncula* posed by the imaginary objector that Thomas laid the groundwork for a commentary on *credere Deum, Deo, and in Deum* to come in his response:

   On the other side: It seems that to believe is multiplied unsuitably, according as it is the act of faith. For one habit is one act, from which the habit is discerned through the act. But faith is one habit. Therefore it should be assigned only one act.

2. *Praeterea, de eo quod demonstratur, non est fides, sed scientia:* quia quod demonstratur, non est non apparens. Sed Deum esse, demonstrative probatur etiam a philosophis. Ergo actus fidei non est credere Deum esse.
   In addition, from this it is proven that it is not faith, but knowledge: because that which is proven is not imperceptible. But that God exists already has been demonstratively proven by the philosophers. Therefore it is not an act of faith to believe that God exists.

3. *Praeterea, in actu fidei discernitur fidelis ab infidelis. Sed nullus est ita infidelis quin credat quod Deus non loquitur nisi verum. Ergo credere vera esse quae Deus loquitur, non est actus fidei; sed magis credere vera esse quae nuntius Dei loquitur: et sic credere homini magis est actus fidei quam credere Deo.*
   In addition, in the act of faith, the faithful is discerned from the unfaithful. But no one is so unfaithful that they do not believe that God does not speak unless it’s the truth. Therefore to believe to be true that which God says is not an act of faith; but greater to believe to be true that which a messenger of God says: and thus to believe humans is a greater act of faith than to believe God.

   In addition, faith and love are distinct virtues. But to love God is an act of charity. Therefore by believing to love is not an act of faith.

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53 Thomas Aquinas, *Scriptum*, lib. 3 d. 23 q. 2 a. 2.
5. Praeterea, per hoc quod homo Deum amat, in eum tendit et adhaeret ei, et membris ejus incorporatur. Ergo videtur quod superflue ponatur ista verborum inculcatio.
In addition, through this according to which the human loves God, he stretches into him and clings to him, and is incorporated in his members. Therefore it seems that this forcing of words is placed superfluously. 54

The opposing viewpoints that Thomas raised for his readers primarily objected to dividing the single act of faith into three possible aspects. Clearly the relational aspect of belief is under attack here, insisting that the distinctions between theological virtues do not allow for love to be bound up in faith and completely neglecting the phrase credere in Deum. Thus there is no attention to the uniqueness of the grammatical distinction of credere in + accusative. Whether these objections represent extant resistance to the formula among his contemporaries is not clear.

Thomas’s responses to these five objections begin with a general statement about the act of faith, in which he did identify the three parts of the formula together.

Ad secundam quaestionem dicendum, quod sicut ex praedictis patet, actus credentis ex tribus dependet, scilicet ex intellectu, qui terminatur ad unum; ex voluntate, quae determinat intellectum per suum imperium; et ex ratione, quae inclinat voluntatem: et secundum hoc tres actus assignantur fidei. Ex hoc enim quod intellectus terminatur ad unum, actus fidei est credere Deum, quia objectum fidei est Deus secundum quod in se consideratur, vel aliquid circa ipsum, vel ab ipso. Ex hoc vero quod intellectus determinatur a voluntate, secundum hoc actus fidei est credere in Deum, idest amando in eum tendere: est enim voluntatis amare. Secundum autem quod ratio voluntatem inclinat ad actus fidei, est credere Deo: ratio enim qua voluntas inclinatur ad assentiendum his quae non videt, est quia Deus ea dicit: sicut homo in his quae non videt, credit testimonio alicujus boni viri qui videt ea quae ipse non videt.
Speaking to the second question, what is clear from what was said before is that the act of believing proceeds from three things, namely, from the intellect, which is restricted to the one; from the will, which determines

54 Thomas Aquinas, Scriptum. lib. 3 d. 23 q. 2 a. 2 qc. 2 args. 1-5 (Translation mine)
the intellect by its power; and from reason, which bends the will: and according to this the three are assigned to the act of faith. For from this, by which the intellect is restricted to one, the act of faith is to believe in a God, because the object of faith is God, according to which he is considered in himself, or anything around himself, or from himself. From this truly the intellect is determined by the will, according to which the act of faith is to believe into God, that is by loving to stretch into him: for to love is of the will. However, when reason inclines the will towards an act of faith, it is to believe God: for reason is that by which the will is inclined toward assenting to the things which it does not see, it is because God says so: just as a man does not see something here, yet believes by the testimony of any good man who sees that which he himself does not see.

1. *Ad primum ergo dicendum, quod per omnia praedicta non nominatur nisi unus completus actus fidei; sed ex diversis quae in fide inveniuntur diversimode nominatur: illo enim actu quo credit in Deum, credit Deo, et credit Deum.*

Speaking to the first (objection) therefore, that the one complete act of faith is not called by all the preceding; but from the diverse ways in which faith is discovered, by diverse ways is it named: for by that act anyone believes into God, believes God, and believes in a God.

2. *Ad secundum dicendum, quod quamvis Deum esse, simpliciter possit demonstrari; tamen Deum esse trinum et unum, et alia hujusmodi, quae fides in Deo credit, non possunt demonstrari; secundum quae est actus fidei credere Deum.*

Speaking to the second, that whomever you please may be able to prove God to exist; nevertheless that God is three and one, and other things of this sort, which faith believes about (literally "in") God, they cannot demonstrate; according to which it is an act of faith to believe in a God.

3. *Ad tertium dicendum, quod fidelis credit homini non inquantum homo, sed inquantum Deus in eo loquitur, quod ex certis experimentis colligere potest: infidelis autem non credit Deo in homine loquenti.*

Speaking to the third, that the faithful believes a man not in as much as man, but in as much as God speaks in him, that from reliable experience he can deduce: but the unfaithful does not believe God speaking in a man.

4. *Ad quartum dicendum, quod amare simpliciter est actus caritatis: sed amando credere est actus fidei per caritatem motae ad actum suum.*

Speaking to the fourth, that to love simply is an act of charity: but to believe by loving is an act of faith moved to its act through charity.
5. *Ad quintum dicendum, quod illa quatuor pertinent ad fidem secundum ordinem ad voluntatem, ut dictum est; voluntas autem est finis; et ideo ista quatuor distinguuntur secundum ea quae exiguntur ad consecutionem finis. Praeexit enim primo affectio ad finem; et ad hoc pertinet credendo amare. Ex amore autem et desiderio finis aliquis in finem incipit moveri; et ad hoc pertinet credendo in eum ire. Motus autem ad finem perducit ad hoc quod aliquis fini conjungatur; et ad hoc pertinet credendo ei adhaerere. Ex conjunctione autem ad finem aliquis in participationem perfectionum finis perducitur; et ad hoc pertinet credendo membris ejus incorporari.*

Speaking to the fifth, that those four pertain to faith according to an order to the will, as has been said; but the will is an end; and for that reason those four are distinguished according to that which is driven toward the effect of an end; for it is driven out ahead by the highest affection toward an end; and to this pertains by believing to love. Moreover, out of love and desire of an end does anyone begin to move into an end; and to this pertains by believing to go into him. Also movement leads to an end in order that anyone may be united to an end; and to this pertains by believing to cling to him. Also from the union to an end anyone is led into participation of perfection in the end; and to this pertains by believing to be incorporated in his members.

What is interesting in these responses is that Thomas did not privilege *credere in* + accusative as particularly constitutive of the Christian faith, nor is this presentation an admonishment against the dead faith without works that his predecessors had decried. *Diligere* also has disappeared, with only forms of the standard *amare* used for references to love. Nevertheless, there remained language of movement into God, even as it introduced notions of movement and restriction of the intellect, will, and reason. It retained mention of members, and it employed relational terms of affection (seated in the will) and love that cause the believer to stretch (or direct one’s steps, and by association oneself) into God.

He addressed the full formula with fresh thoughts in *Summa Theologiae* IIA Iae q2a2, “Whether the act of faith is suitably distinguished as believing God, believing in a god, and
believing in(to) God.” Here *credere in Deum* was treated as the will’s movement of the intellect toward having an end, eliminating the bodily imagery of Augustine’s language of incorporation, which Lombard had retained and which Thomas had retained in the *In Scriptum*.

For the formula he indicated that he was appealing to the authority of Augustine (though citing a now-lost collection the authenticity of which several scholars have called into question, but also with abbreviated reference to *In Jo Ev*). He started his explanation in the *Respondeo* with consideration of belief in God’s existence, *credere Deum*: “If it be considered on the part of the intellect, then two things can be observed in the object of faith, as stated above” (by which he meant Question 1, Article 1). He Continued, “One of these is the material object of faith, and in this way an act of faith is ‘to believe in a God;’ because, as stated above, nothing is proposed to our belief, except in as much as it is referred to God.” This much is fairly straightforward.

He moved from belief in God’s existence to believing God: “The other is the formal aspect of the object, for it is the medium on account of which we assent to such and such a point of faith; and thus an act of faith is ‘to believe God.’” Note that the verb “assent” has entered in, as it had for *credere Deo* previously in the *Scriptum* (as well as in IIaIIae q2a1). In the *Scriptum* it had been paired with *ratio*, reason. He elaborated on the reasoning here: “since…the formal object of faith is the First Truth, to Which man (sic) gives his (sic) adhesion, so as to assent to its

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56 Ibid., *Respondeo*. The Fathers’ translation of *Si quidem ex parte intellectus, sic in objecto fidei duo possunt considerari, sicut supra dictum est. Quorum unus est materiale obiectum fidei. Et sic ponitur actus fidei credere Deum quia, sicut supra dictum est, nihil proponitur nobis ad credendum nisi secundum quod ad Deum pertinet.*
sake to whatever he believes.” The presence of clinging/adherence at this point is somewhat confusing, as it had been associated previously not with credere Deo but with credere in Deum, specifically with the credendo cresendo for his predecessors and with the equivalent thereof in the Scriptum.

At long last, and yet in brief, Aquinas came to credere in Deum. “Thirdly, if the object of faith be considered in so far as the intellect is moved by the will, an act of faith is ‘to believe in(to) God.’ For the First Truth is referred to the will, through having the aspect of an end.” This presentation is dry, to say the least. Gone is the relational language of cherishing, of movement of the believer into Christ, of clinging to Christ in this unique way, of being incorporated in Christ’s members. Gone is the faith working through love.

The curious issue here is not that Thomas departed from Augustine. On the contrary, the language of intellect and will and a bond between them is thoroughly Augustinian – it is just that it is the language of Augustine in De Trinitate, without that of Augustine in In Jo Ev. It is Augustine’s treatment of the relationship of the Persons of the Trinity ad intra that Thomas hearkens to, not the relationship between humans and God in Christ through the operation of credere in eum. Therefore, while Thomas is indeed faithful to Augustine’s coherent word, he is mixing metaphors or at best patterning the relationship of the human ad Deum after the Trinity

57 Ibid. The Fathers’ translation of Aliud autem est formalis ratio obiecti, quod est sicut medium propter quod tali credibili assentitur. Et sic ponitur actus fidei credere Deo, quia... formale obiectum fidei est veritas prima, cui inhaeret homo ut propter eam creditis assentiat.

58 Ibid. The Fathers’ translation of Si vero consideretur tertio modo obiectum fidei, secundum quod intellectus est motus a voluntate, sic ponitur actus fidei credere in Deum, veritas enim prima ad voluntatem refertur secundum quod habet rationem finis.

ad intra, by having abandoned the language of incorporation in Christ’s members and the movement of bold surrender, that credere in eum engenders.

His minor treatment of the formula’s components in the Scriptum and his outright sanitization of the formula from any entanglement with the body in the Summa signify a shift in emphasis. It is too facile to attribute the shift to the rise of Scholasticism with an attendant dualism that reviles the flesh. Rather, one possible explanation for this shift is exposure to influences and sources in interpreting Augustine other than just Bede and Lombard. Thomas Camelot in the 20th century would be critical of the primary source for Augustine (a compilation) and together with Christine Mohrmann questioned whether the influence of Thomas’s mentor, Albertus Magnus, and the exposure of both to competing language from the apocryphal Faustus of Riez had served to weaken the Angelic Doctor’s understanding of the credere formula. 

Nevertheless, rather than negate the formula’s usefulness in the hands of Thomas as a theological lens, these issues may simply explain the ease with which Thomas sanitizes and arguably diminishes its usefulness.

Eleanor Stump finds it noteworthy that much of what Aquinas and his contemporaries considered theology is what would today fall more within the purview of philosophy. This distinction is not to take away from the theological merits of Aquinas in any way, but it does point to the emphasis on the rational soul and on God as being at the heart of Thomas’s work.

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60 Camelot, 153. Also Mohrmann, 285.


rather than the emphases specifically on Christ, incorporation, and members uplifted by 
Augustine and restored by Lombard.

2.4 Late Medieval England

Sarah J. Wood looks past Aquinas back to Lombard and Bede as she contends that the formula in a tradition of commentary on the Creeds was responsible for passing credere into the mouth of character “Conscience” in the 14th century Middle English pilgrimage poem of William Langland, *The Vision of Piers Plowman.* In the poem, Conscience amends the creedal phrase (which appears in the poem in Latin amid the surrounding Middle English), “*Credo in Ecclesiam*” (literally “I believe into the Church”). In the mouth of Conscience addressing the King, the phrase appears instead with the ablative object, *credere in Ecclesia* (which would mean I believe [standing or located] in the church). Wood notes the possibility that Langland placed these amended words into the speech of Conscience deliberately, in due deference to the fact that *credere in* + accusative had come to be considered the “proper” way to speak only about belief regarding God, not regarding God’s institution the Church (important as that institution remained). Moreover, Conscience’s entire speech uses grammar and the need for words’ cases to relate properly to the things they describe to parallel the need of humans (problematically and

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63 Sarah Wood, *Conscience and the Composition of Piers Plowman.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 120-1. What Wood (a scholar of English and Comparative Literature) dubs a tradition of commentary “on the Creeds” turns out in fact to be the commentary on Scripture by Augustine, Bede, and Lombard with which the present dissertation is occupied. It is unclear why she refers to these items as “on the Creeds.”

64 Ibid., 121.
specifically men) to live the faith that the holy Church teaches in order to be in right relationship with God.  

During this time in which grammatical nuance remained as popular a tool of preachers as it had been in the days of Augustine the great Rhetor of Milan turned Bishop of Hippo, the theme of *credere in Deum* as describing the “faith working through love” constitutive of Christianity also persisted. This theme is clear in at least one famous sermon delivered by Langland’s contemporary, Thomas Brinton, Bishop of Rochester in 1376. Brinton delivered a homily in Latin to a convocation of clergy during the Good Parliament of 1376, in which he insisted that the formula provides evidence of the need for his hearers to take action on behalf of the people. With the kingdom in disarray, Brinton turned to a theme from James 1:25 against being merely hearers and not doers, *Factor operis hic beatus*, “A doer of the work, blessed.” To any who would object (based on their assent to the articles of the Creed and reliance on Jesus’ words in Mark 16:16) that salvation depends only on baptism and confession, Brinton responded with a reminder of the formula:

*Respondeo aliud est credere Deo, aliud credere Deum esse, aliud credere in Deum. Credere Deum est credere Deum esse sicut credunt demones et etiam infideles. Credere Deo est credere quod quicumque nobis promisit in nos adimplebit. Sed in Deum credimus quando in eo speramus et vere diligimus et fidem nostram opere adimplemus.*

I respond that it is one thing to believe God, another to believe God to exist, another to believe into God. To believe in God is to believe God to exist, just as the demons and infidels also do. To believe God is to believe that whatever he has

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65 Ibid., 121-122.

66 Wood, 123. Translation mine. Wood in the body of her text quotes Brinton in her own English translation and provides the original Latin in a footnote from *Sermons of Thomas Brinton*. We make different translation choices due to the different emphases of our fields: she chooses “believe God,” “believe God to exist,” and “believe in God” for her translation of the *credere* formula, for example.
promised he will fulfill in us. But we believe into God when we hope in him and truly cherish-love him and fulfill our faith in works.

The survival of the formula in this preacher’s flourishing prose and in so specific and political a context is remarkable. The embellishments remain faithful to the original sermons and commentaries that established and systematized the formula, regardless of the way in which Brinton inherited it. The slight variations of adding the verb “fulfill” and the verb “hope” (also translatable as “trusting” and not foreign to Augustine, who alluded to all three theological virtues in *Sermo CLXIV*) remain in the relational realm.

The widespread nature of the formula’s reach in Medieval England is evidenced in its consideration and use by both the Bishop of Rochester and his opponents, the Lollards. In the two decades after Brinton’s sermon to the Good Parliament, these followers of the Morningstar of the Reformation, John Wyclif, compiled a preaching manual containing numerous extracts from his writings.67 This *Floretum* contained an entry for *credere* that quoted Peter Lombard’s presentation of the formula, suggesting that Lollard preachers were encouraged to use the formula with emphasis upon the distinctiveness of *credere in Deum* in their preaching.68 It is in this homiletical discourse that Jan Huss was immersed and which perhaps he bore with him to Bohemia and arguably influenced Martin Luther, whose understanding of the relational sense of belief will receive brief attention in the next chapter of this dissertation (3.1.2, below).


68 Wood, 123.
2.5 Lutheran Scholastics

Among the many branches of sixteenth to eighteenth century Protestant Scholasticism, the Lutheran Scholastics stand out for their systematizing the work of an unsystematic theologian. ⁶⁹ All Protestant Scholastics viewed faith as “having three different aspects: knowledge (notitia), assent (assensus) and trust (fiducia).” ⁷⁰ However, it was specifically the Lutheran Scholastic theologians, in the wake of Luther’s sixteenth century systematizers Phillip Melanchthon and Martin Chemnitz, who picked up on the credere formula once more to support this threefold understanding.

Both Melanchthon in his Loci Communes and Chemnitz in his commentary thereon, Loci Theologici, had underscored the value to justifying faith of not only intellectual understanding of and assent to the truth of the gospel, but also of the heart’s trust in the gospel’s saving promise. ⁷¹ What had changed, as it had with Thomas’s Scholasticism 300 years earlier, was that Augustine’s, Bede’s, and Lombard’s acknowledgement that the first two types of credere even the demons are able to do had disappeared. All three aspects had been framed in purely positive terms by Melanchthon and Chemnitz: By knowledge one comes to understand the Gospel. By

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⁶⁹ Francesca Aran Murphy, Balázs M. Mezei, and Kenneth Oakes. Illuminating Faith: An Invitation to Theology. (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2015), 45. In this regard Murphy et al indirectly identify in Luther and his followers, such as Melanchthon, Chemnitz, a parallel with unsystematic Augustine and his formula-systematizing inheritors such as Bede and Lombard…though when later referring on p. 47 to the “venerable triad” of credere, Murphy et al simply acknowledge it as “found in Augustine, Peter Lombard and Thomas Aquinas.”

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid., 46.
assent one agrees that the Gospel is true. By trust one believes that one is included in the Gospel promises.72

The credere formula entered into the equation in the next century. David Hollaz and Johannes Quenstadt upheld this threefold understanding of faith and also saw in it echoes of the threefold formula gleaned from Augustine. Hollaz hearkened to a more Thomistic gloss of faith’s being “in the intellect with respect to knowledge; and assent, in the will with respect to confidence.”73 In this summary, Hollaz appears to have conflated the aspects of assent and trust in a way that obscures the credere formula, but it may be that he took for granted the clearer elucidation of the elder Quenstadt. Credere Deum Quenstadt explained as believing “that God exists,” credere Deo, as believing “that what God says is true,” and credere in Deum, as to “love and cling to God.”74

2.6 Translations of credere in Deum into English

Research indicates that at this point the trail of the threefold formula goes cold, though the difficulties of translation of the Latin into English soon become apparent. In the 19th century, Oxford scholars translating In Jo Ev into English for the first time strangely chose the phrase “believe on Him” for credere in eum, perhaps in an effort to indicate the distinction of credere in + accusative.75 In this matter they at least seem to have made an effort to emphasize the

72 Ibid.

73 Ibid., 46-47.

74 Ibid., 47.

distinctiveness for which Augustine had striven, as they did not automatically fall in line with the only precedent they could possibly have drawn upon, the King James translation of the passage to which Augustine referred, John 6:29. From the Vulgate’s *Hoc est opus Dei ut credatis in eum quem misit ille* the King James version had translated, “This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he hath sent.” John Gibb and James Innes instead translated that portion, “This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He has sent.” Perhaps if they had been hearkening to a Greek construction using *epi*, this translation would make sense, but that construction does not apply to this passage of John’s gospel.

More recently, Edmund Hill simply chooses the vernacular “believe in Him” or “believe in Christ” in translating *credere in* + accusative phrases from *In Jo Ev* and *Sermon 144*, 76 just as his colleague Maria Boulding uses “believe in God” in her translations of the *Enarrationes.*77 The Fathers of the English Dominican Province make the same choice for *credere in Deum* in the *Summa Theologiae*, “believe in God.”78 Sarah J. Wood does not translate the phrase *credere in Deum* at all when providing translation of Lombard in her footnotes, just what it entails,

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78 Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* q2a2.
though she curiously elides “incorporated in his members” to “incorporated into his body (of believers).”

2.7 20\textsuperscript{th}-21\textsuperscript{st} Centuries

In the past 100 years of Christian theology, there have been a few glimmers of attention to the difference that \textit{creedere in Christum} makes. These glimmers, however, are usually relegated to outlines and footnotes.

One instance of the latter appeared in Edward H. Sugden’s 1921 edition of \textit{The Standard Sermons of John Wesley}. What is noteworthy about Sugden’s note is that he grasped and translated the phrase, but he did so from the Greek, not the Latin! In noting that John Wesley’s conception of faith was still, at the time of his preaching the 1745 sermon in question, “so much concerned with justification, that he hardly realizes (faith’s) equal importance as the means of entering into vital fellowship with Christ,” Sugden continued:

In the N.T. the verb \textit{pisteusin} in the sense of saving faith has two constructions: St. John always speaks of saving faith as \textit{pisteusin eis Xriston}, \textbf{believing into Christ}, i.e. believing so as to be united vitally with Christ; St. Paul, when he is thinking of justification, says \textit{pisteuein epi Xristo} or \textit{epi Xriston} – i.e. believing upon Christ; but he also uses St. John’s construction both in his Epistles and in his sermons reported in the Acts of the Apostles; and his favourite (sic) phrase ‘in Christ’ implies this. Justifying faith rests upon Christ; sanctifying faith enters into union with Him (sic). Consequently, when here Paul speaks of ‘them which are in Christ Jesus,’ he does not mean primarily those who are justified by faith, but those who are made one with Christ. (Quoting J.H Moulton) ‘To repose one’s trust upon God or Christ was well expressed by \textit{pisteuein epi}, the dative suggesting more of the state, and the accusative more of the initial act of faith; while \textit{eis} recalls at once the bringing of the soul \textit{into} that mystical union which Paul loved to express by \textit{en Xristo}.

\footnote{Wood, 120-121 fn. 38.}

\footnote{Sugden, 162-163, fn. Recall reference to this passage in fn 4 of this dissertation, from which Sugden’s description of union with Christ is borrowed for defining “relational” in the present work.}
The curious attention to “upon” here may reflect continued trends from the 19th century scholars charged with translation, such as was seen in the initial efforts to translate *In Jo Ev*. The predominance of relational language, of movement, and of incorporation (albeit in the form of the soul’s union) are enough to make one wish it had more prominence than mere footnote.

An instance of the glimmers’ appearance in outline form is in Karl Barth’s *Dogmatics in Outline*, compiled from his lectures on Systematic Theology in war-decimated Germany in 1946. Barth provided a mere hint at the difference that *credere in Deum* makes, with no formal presentation of the phrase itself, nor contrast to *credere Deo* and *Credere Deum*. Focusing in on the beginning of the Apostles Creed in a chapter entitled in English “Faith as Trust,” Barth considered the importance of “in.” Barth wrote, “In Christian faith we are concerned quite decisively with a meeting. ‘I believe in’ – so the Confession says; and everything depends on this ‘in,’ this object of faith, this *eis*, this *in* (Latin).”81 Barth never went further than to describe the phrase as *Credo in*, and for all his emphasis on the object of faith, with whom we meet and through whom we are “never alone,” he never attended to the way in which the case of the object governs the preposition’s meaning and conjures a sense movement into relationship and into Godself.82

Barth gave no credit to Augustine, but that does not necessarily mean that those who recently have did any better in terms of specificity. In the World Council of Churches Faith and

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82 Ibid., 16. Important to note that the original German might attend to this issue better, but even if it does and gets lost in translation, Thomson chooses to leave in Latin what Barth originally had in Latin, and it is not the full phrase *credo in Deum* at any point.
Order Commission 1991 document, *Confessing the One Faith: An Ecumenical Explication of the Apostolic Faith As It Is Confessed in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed (381)*, an early note appears that is intended as commentary on the phrase “We believe in one God….” It makes mention of the threefold *credere* formula with the reference cited no more specifically (even in a revised 2010 edition) than “In the West, Augustine pointed to three aspects of the act of believing…” The tiny paragraph barely merits notice, and certainly makes no mention of the way in which that “pointing to” occurred in preaching and commentary across multiple works by Augustine, then was systematized by numerous theologians, and finally was essentially lost in translation. An opportunity for a compelling catechetical moment is lost, to which more attention will be given in Chapter 4 of the present work.

In the 21st century, the only major reference to *credere in Deum*, by Pope Francis in his first apostolic exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium*, leaves the phrase untranslated in the Vatican’s English translation. There he refers to the Aparecida document on Latin American popular piety as a proclamation of the gospel that prefers symbols and action to “discursive reasoning.” Citing Thomas Aquinas’s presentation of the formula in the *Summa*, the Pope observes that in

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84 Ibid., 16.

85 Pope Francis. *Evangelii Gaudium.* [http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html) accessed August 8, 2015, 3.1.124. Referring to the Aparecida document on Latin American popular piety as a proclamation of the gospel that prefers symbols and action to “discursive reasoning,” he claims that in this piety, “the act of faith is more a matter of *credere in Deum* than *credere Deum*.” He refers to *ST IIa IIae* as his source.

Latin America, “the act of faith is more a matter of *credere in Deum* than *credere Deum*.” What can be done in theology with this curious phrase, this *credere in Deum* that literally is “believing into God,” when the Vatican leaves it untranslated from Latin, and when those who have translated it into English render it indistinguishable from “belief in God” as “believing that God exists?” Theology has not done much with it, but by comparing and contrasting it with common locutions of belief, which have most robustly arisen in analytic philosophy of the mid-20th through early 21st centuries, it is possible to lay groundwork for a constructive theological proposal.
CHAPTER 3

Contrast with Propositional Locutions of Belief

3.1 Questions and Theoretical Approach

The last chapter left us with the question, “What can be done in theology with this curious phrase, this *credere in Deum* that literally is ‘believing into God,’ when the Vatican leaves it untranslated from Latin, and when those who have translated it into English render it indistinguishable from ‘belief in God’ as ‘believing that God exists?’” In addressing that question, it is helpful first to ask, “What has been lost in theological translation as belief in Christ and in the Trinity is translated in the same manner as “belief in” any other deity?” and “If deliberate, why might such interpretative choices have been made over centuries of tradition?”

The discussion of the first question considers the treatment of creeds within the church as mere knowledge-by-description lists of tenets to be memorized by rote with little impact on one’s living. This approach strips Christianity of its central experiential content and moral effects, and their correlative significant evidence for Christian doctrines.

For the second question, though the original texts in which the formula is established by Augustine are aurally-focused sermons, reception theory is helpful in examining reader response over time. This theoretical approach allows for a brief consideration of choices made by editors and translators and power concerns that might have motivated them, such as worries that appearances of concupiscence or incoherence might threaten a respectable place for Christianity
in the public square. Amid such concerns, terminology about “going into” Christ, “adhering to” him, and being “incorporated in his members” would be considered better off buried in Augustine, Bede, and Lombard than exposed to public scrutiny.

3.1.1 What is lost in theological translation

As was suggested in the abstract of this dissertation (above), what is lost generally speaking is the relational sense of belief, in exchange for a purely propositional sense. The relational sense of “believing into” involves entering into a relationship with a Personal deity, which produces simultaneously both assurance and humility in the one incorporated in that deity’s (Christ’s) members. This assurance and humility results in the human partner in the relationship’s willing exercise of agency on behalf of the O/other.

Among the specific losses related to this overall loss of the relational sense, there is its usefulness for combating heresy, introduced briefly above (in Chapter 1.4). We recall that the section of In Jo Ev immediately following the one in which Augustine parses out credere in eum addresses the Sabellian heresy, which indicates the usefulness of this uniquely Christian structure in describing possibly the most uniquely Christian doctrine, that of the Trinity.¹ He charges the Sabellians with saying that Jesus and the Father are the same Person with two names. The way in which Jesus has indicated that the work of God is to believe into him whom that One has sent, together with the way in which Jesus refers to his own teachings, falsifies the Sabellians’ contention. Incorporation into the members of the One whom Jesus’ hearers can see, i.e. Jesus, does not in this case automatically denote incorporation into the members of that One (the

¹ In Jo Ev XXIX, 7. All quotations in this paragraph come from this section of Augustine’s sermon.
Father) whom they cannot see, as that One is in Heaven, from whence Jesus has been sent.

Understanding that “my teaching is not mine” is only logical if there are two “mines” referring to two Persons. This understanding comes through the belief by worshippers of the Trinity (as well as the Unity) into Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, which the Sabellians apparently lack.

Though he does not extensively parse it out in De Trinitate, Augustine deliberately uses the construction of credere in + accusative in at least two books. Writing On the Trinity, seemingly less concerned about the Sabellians here, Augustine quotes Jesus as using the construction to direct belief into himself beyond himself into the Father as well. Later he uses the construction in a way that is subtle but rich in its uniquely Trinitarian depiction, referring to the promise of Jesus that the Holy Spirit will flow forth from the bellies of those who believe into Christ. As Augustine is not concerned to parse out the unique grammatical structure of credere in + accusative for sermonic listeners, the relational aspect is not pronounced, but that fact does not make these passages less effective examples of the results of the relational understanding of belief.

The impact of the loss of “believing into” on the content of the Christian faith is not so much to change its propositions in any way as it is to change the purpose of those propositions. To borrow language from Analytic Philosophy in general and H.H. Price, in particular (whose

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Non in me credit sed in eum qui me misit, non utique se a patre, id est ab illo qui eum misit, uoluit separari, sed ut sic in eum crederetur quomodo in patrem cui aequalis est. Quod aperte alio loco dicit: Credite in deum et in me credite; id est sicut creditis in deum, sic et in me quia ego et pater unus deus.

work is considered among others in section 3.2 below), the “knowledge by description” of the three Persons is purely for the purpose of an introduction of each human person to the Persons who dwell in unity, in order that the person may pursue “knowledge by acquaintance” through belief into Christ. “Belief in” that can be easily confused with “assent to the existence of” does not offer as rich an understanding as “belief into,” with which one can imagine placing one’s hand into the hand of the Father, of the Son, of the Holy Spirit, in greeting and fellowship. The invitation to fellowship implicit in an introduction to the Trinity that begins with such a greeting ignites an interest in entering into further relationship with such a God and with the body of believers who offer the locus for such entry through baptism and opportunity for maintenance of this fellowship through the eucharist, which will occupy our attention in greater depth in the next chapter.

It is true that the practice of full immersion baptism of the naked baptizand in the early church\(^4\) does not take place frequently in the contemporary Western church. Nevertheless, the surrender of self that the practice symbolized – the frank manner of stripping off the old nature by renouncing sin and confessing faith, of returning to the original innocence of Adam and Eve, and of identifying with the incarnation of Christ who entered the world naked\(^5\) – might be approximated, if not replicated, by approaching catechumenal formation and the sacraments with translations of the creeds using “belief into God.” Then an understanding of the propositions of any major creed as lines of an ode to a living, loving God whom baptizands and believers-into cherish with all their heart, mind, soul, and strength replaces rote memorization and recitation of


\(^5\) Ibid., 107-108.
facts to which a dutiful individual renders assent in order to join and remain in an organization. It seems a bit much to ask a grammatical structure to balance off, for example, the preponderance of attention accorded to the Son in comparison to the Holy Spirit and especially to the Father in the Apostles Creed. Perhaps “belief into” at least encourages greater pause at the onset than confession of the Father currently receives.

Rarely in contemporary popular discourse is faith discussed in such first-person “I believe” statements; however, this discourse has been affected negatively by the loss in translation of the humility and conspicuous sanctity that the relational sense of “belief into” contributes to Christian witness. Throughout the formation of the Christian canonical heritage, many Christian saints suffered and surrendered their lives as the penalty of adhering to Christ in confession and action. They did so predominantly without arrogance or seeking to harm others, even their persecutors and executioners. Incorporation into the members of Christ who humbly had submitted to suffering and death resulted in their surrendering in a similarly humble and bold manner, speaking truth to power with both courage and grace.6 At the dawn of the 21st century, however, while persecution continues to be a reality worldwide, the likelihood that persons identifying as Christian by assent to propositions also believe into Christ as “faith working through love” – through regular Christian practices, let alone through any bold surrender of their lives in witness – is surprisingly low.7

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6 Granted, depending on which gospel narrative one chooses, Jesus speaks or remains silent before h

7 Recent Pew Research reveals that Christians are the single largest religious group worldwide and, partly as a result, are most likely to live in a nation where they may face harassment (even in majority Christian nations, where division along the lines of different traditions of Christianity may result in persecution). Nevertheless, even in nations where Christianity is reported as being on the rise, the number of Christians reporting regular practice of Christian faith through worship attendance, sacraments, prayer, fasting, acts of charity, testimony, etc. is far lower
The translation of “I believe in God,” as if it is the same as belief in (the existence of) any other deity has impact as well. It permits Christianity to be perceived as merely one of many options for obtaining generic benefits of religious faith (to borrow terminology from Pojman, considered in 3.2.3 below). This approach masks the unique opportunity to come to the Father through the Son (John 14:6 NRSV) or to the Son drawn by the Father (John 6:44 NRSV) and to receive “the Spirit of truth” (John 14:17) who gives “power from on high” (Luke 24:49).

This observation about uniqueness is not intended to support hostility toward adherents of other religions. On the contrary, the one who “believes into” Christ is in such constant relationship with the Trinity that disagreements and even adjustments to one’s understanding of propositions about God, including from other Christians or even the questions and objections of believers in other gods or practitioners of other ways, is not perceived as threat. Instead of panicking about challenges to propositions about the Trinity, the believer into Christ and thus into the Trinity calmly can take the challenge into consideration and into holy conversation with the One into whom s/he believes. When defense of a proposition about God is necessary, the

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believer-into, having boldly surrendered concern for self and reputation, can depend upon the Holy Spirit to provide the defense and speak it with grace (Luke 12:11-12). Sometimes the most effective defenses, however, are the actions engendered by the believer’s bold surrender, moving in the direction that the hands and feet of Christ have always moved, to the neighbor, the sick, the poor, the least. Martin Luther characterized faith in(to) God in “The Freedom of the Christian” as just this sort of movement: “By faith (one) is caught up beyond himself into God. By love he descends beneath himself into his neighbor.”

3.1.2 Why such interpretative choices might have been made

To imagine responses to this question requires imagining how Christian literature was received by original hearers and readers, and their impact on it as it was handed down through centuries. Much of Chapter 2 represented an attempt to reconstruct and responsibly imagine the reception history of the texts related to the formula and responses to these texts in their original context and over time. We now consider that reception history and responses in relation to their effect on the translation and tradition of credere in +accusative. It is an effort employing something akin to the contested concept of Rezeption introduced by Hans Robert Juss to literary criticism in the late 1960s and Wolfgang Iser’s tensely-related Wirkung theory, which “refers to

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active involvement of readers, in response to the sentences of a text, in the construction of the illusion which is a literary work of art.”

More recently, theorists of ecumenical ecclesiology have concerned themselves with reception of and reader response to Christian texts and teachings. Commenting on the response by local councils of the early church to decisions made by representatives of the entire church, William G. Rusch notes, “In all these ante-Nicene synods, the role of formal juridical acts seems relatively minor. Seen as a whole, reception is conceived as a spiritual and theological process of confirmation and completion.” Reception and re-reception occurred in local congregations as they reviewed and responded to conciliar decisions, sometimes with documents of their own. This idea is supported by Yves Congar’s identification of “an array of actual receptions’ among the historical ‘facts’ of the life of the Church.” Also occurring outside of councils, reception in the patristic church even after Nicaea frequently happened through liturgy, often emerging on the local level and then shared. Rusch offers as an example reception of the epiclesis, invoking the

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10 Gaither, Linda L. *To Receive a Text: Literary Reception Theory as a Key to Ecumenical Reception*. (New York: P. Lang, 1997), 14. There is some irony in even briefly mentioning this school of criticism and in particular this theory, as critics who contend that Iser has been misread point to the losses in translation of his theoretical terminology, including *Wirkung*, to English from the original German (16).


12 Gaither, 9. She refers to Congar’s “Reception as an Ecclesiological Reality,” trans. John Griffiths, in G. Alberigio and A. Weiler, eds., *Election and Consensus in the Church* (New York: Herder & Herder, 1972), 57-58, in which Congar identifies as examples “non-reception (the *filioque* clause in the Eastern Church)…delayed reception (Chalcedon)…re-reception (a new reading finds fresh application for an historical document)…and even reversals (doctrines or practices received for a fairly long time cease to be applied).”

Holy Spirit in the Eucharistic liturgy of the East in the 4th century.\textsuperscript{14} It is possible to consider as another example the preaching of Augustine in the church at Hippo and the transmission of his sermons, in which the original hearers of Augustine function as the original “receivers” and sharers passing around and along the concepts of \textit{credere in eum} that are later received by the systematizers (and eventually by the sanitizers).

Rusch identifies a transition in emphasis from a shared to an increasingly hierarchical process and meaning of reception in the transition from the patristic period to the Middle Ages.\textsuperscript{15} He perceives reception in the patristic period to be something that “the Church simply lived out,” with the handing on of decisions, texts, and traditions from across generations and locations considered the job of all members of the church as a community of local bodies in fellowship, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.\textsuperscript{16} That reality changed, as a “sharp distinction” arose between the active, teaching part of the Church and the passive, learning part of the Church in the Middle Ages.\textsuperscript{17} The inspiration of the Holy Spirit was relegated to the consensus reached by “appropriate representatives,” and reception by local church members merely consisted of accepting the decision.\textsuperscript{18} This shifting perception of \textit{reception} as part of “constitutional law” in such documents foundational to canon law as the 12th century \textit{Decretum Gratiani} would “claim

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{14} Ibid.
\bibitem{15} Ibid., 22.
\bibitem{16} Ibid.
\bibitem{17} Ibid., 23.
\bibitem{18} Ibid. Rusch colorfully describes the difference as the Church in the Middle Ages, having become “a universal corporation in which clergy and laity expressed their opinions on important issues,” rendering the organically “lived out” reception of the Church as a fellowship of local communities a thing of the past.
\end{thebibliography}
support” from Augustine’s writings.\textsuperscript{19} Changing the purposes for which Augustine’s writings were used could certainly change the emphases with which they were transmitted and received.\textsuperscript{20} Before we consider reception further, however, it is important to recall that some of the difficulties with the reception of his preaching and commentary on \textit{credere in eum} might reach back even farther than Augustine himself, to etymology.

As was stated in Chapter 1, “A predictor of the difficulties and loss in translation that will be the later focus of this dissertation arises here, as the word supplanting the Koine Greek’s \(\pi\sigma\tau\omega\) is the non-cognate \textit{credo}, “I believe.”\textsuperscript{21} Etymological complications arose from the separation of what had been one root for both verb and noun, \(\pi\sigma\tau(\delta\omega)\) and \(\pi\sigma\tau(\kappa)\), before any of the complicating factors mentioned in Chapter 1 relating to prepositions even made their potential impact. No longer sharing the idea of “faithing” into Christ, \textit{fides} carried the noun form, while \textit{credo}, -\textit{ere} bore the weight of the verb.\textsuperscript{22}

\textsuperscript{19} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{20} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{21} Wilfred Cantwell Smith made an argument in favor of the etymology of \textit{credo} as rooted in \(\textit{sr\ddot{a}dha}\), a Sanskrit word related to things done in faith that, together with what he considers to be \textit{credo}’s Latin cognate \textit{cor}, heart, which he claimed calls for translation of \textit{credere} as “to set one’s heart on.” Given its possible support for the relational sense of belief, this etymology is attractive for the present project; however, even in Smith’s time, etymologists had begun to challenge this “received” etymology and translation, which he acknowledged with apparent disdain. See Smith, \textit{Faith and Belief}. (Princeton: Princeton, NJ, 1979), 76, and endnotes 25-26 on p. 254. It is further challenged by usage, both outside Christian literature and even in Augustine’s own designation of its cognitive denotations in \textit{credere eum} and \textit{credere eo}.

\textsuperscript{22} Latin does have a related, semi-deponent verb form that appears to be related to \textit{fides}, namely \textit{fido}, \textit{fidere}, \textit{fisus sum} that means trust (in), have confidence (in), but when it is used, it is not with accusative nouns, only with dative or ablative. It does not appear in the Vulgate, and of the eight times that its cognate \textit{confido} appears, only once is this similarly defined word applied to trust in God, in Philippians 2:24 \textit{Confido autem in Domino quoniam et ipse veniam ad vos cito} (And I trust in the Lord that I will also come soon to you). \textit{Credere} is by far the commonest verb expression that the Vulgate uses for believing and the exercise of faith.
Perhaps the use of *credere in* + accusative in the earliest Latin translations of the Bible was intended in part to capture the intimacy that the shared root of noun and verb in Greek had communicated automatically. It is impossible to know now, however, just how strange, and for how long, the uniqueness of this Latin grammatical construction *credere in eum/illum/Christum/Deum* would have seemed on the ear of Latin-speaking hearers of Scripture thus expounded by Augustine. Centuries later, the two words in English (faith and belief) often, though not always, seem interchangeable. The rift between faith and belief did receive direct attention from Robert Audi (3.2.2 below), could be said to have made possible part of the problematic parsing out of belief-as-hope rather than belief-as-faith that Pojman (3.2.3 below) proposed, but did not hinder Mitchell’s proposals (3.2.4 below) in any way. In due time, modern epistemologists studying classical Greek philosophy, focusing on readings in classical Greek, would be less than likely to encounter even the Koine origins of the unique *credere in eum* grammatical construction in Latin.23

The reasons for avoiding the admittedly awkward “belief into” throughout centuries of Christian tradition and translation could include a perceived need to secure a less vulnerable, more clearly rational and respectable place for the Christian faith in the public square. Terminology of loving, cherishing, and going into a Christ who comes into believers, who also cling to him, would address this need possibly less than that of thinking with assent. While such a need for rational respectability could certainly be said to have sprung up during the

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23 It is important to recall from Chapter 1 that classical Greek only uses *pisteuo* with *hoti*, propositionally, which might explain why the analytic philosophers, who’d care little for Koine, let alone for the Vulgate, use it that way. For that matter, if Koine used both *eis* and *epi* + accusative after *pisteuo*, that explains why sometimes the Augustinian translators of In Jo Ev 29 used “believe on him.”
Enlightenment (in climates such as the Berlin for which Schleiermacher wrote his *Speeches on Religion to Its Cultured Despisers*), it was also a perceived need for the early church as it faced challenges from Gnosticism in its many forms and concerns about Christianity as a rogue entity negatively impacting the Roman Empire.24 The demand for coherence might have made it difficult to reconcile this later, bodily language (even if serving a figurative purpose) with Augustine’s nearly opposite treatment of the body in his earlier, more ethereal works, so influenced by Platonism.25 Even in *City of God*, where the pilgrimage of the church to the heavenly city is not depicted as bodily escape, there is nevertheless language equating evil with the carnal and good with the spiritual, perhaps sufficient to raise this concern for coherence.26 Yet the *credere deum*...*credere in Deum* formula persisted through the medieval period and even into the Lutheran scholastics. Of course, by then it was already scrubbed of relational, and especially bodily, imagery.27

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24 William G. Rusch, *The Trinitarian Controversy*. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), 16. “The Apologists, Clement, and Origen desired to explain Christianity to their pagan neighbors to prove that it was intellectually respectable and not injurious to the Roman Empire.” Rusch notes additionally the pure curiosity of such figures that caused them “to probe the implications of their own faith and to articulate it in as cogent a manner as possible.” Augustine would of course have to address similar concerns about impacts on the Roman Empire after the invasion of the Visigoths in *City of God*.

25 This is not to suggest that Augustine ever endorses lust or concupiscence in his use of imagery pertaining to the body, even when using it to conjure the all-consuming nature of *cupiditas* in order to direct his hearers to aspire to a form of *caritas* of that same degree of intensity. His two books *On Marriage and Concupiscence* in the years 419 and 420 make that clear.

26 For example, Babcock, *The City of God*, 139: XV.1. This is just one of many examples that give rise to charges of dualistic opposition of flesh and spirit in Augustine’s works, whether fairly or not: “...and that is why each one of us, since he comes from a condemned stock, is of necessity first evil and carnal due to Adam, but, if he advances by being reborn in Christ, will afterwards be good and spiritual.”

27 One problem with the Lutheran Scholastics’ having emphasized “trust” is that “trust in” is not enough. It still can conjure transactional, rather than relational, meaning, as goods held in trust can be withdrawn. Lacking the connotation that *credere in* + accusative offers of incorporation of our very selves, it brings us no closer to Christ than *credere* + dative and is not unique to Christianity, let alone constitutive of it. It still permits a “wait and see”
As old as the formula itself is the possibility that the bodily imagery and attendant notion of relational belief that involves the whole person would run up against the fear of concupiscence and (resistance to gnostic rejection of the body notwithstanding) the Church’s resulting devaluing of the body. Resistance to the bodily language of Augustine’s descriptions is built into their original milieu. While Augustine was arriving at his mature understanding of the body, there remained numerous contemporary voices that sharply disagreed. “His gradual acceptance of the originally created goodness of the human body and its sexual nature” in his mature thought, which coincides with all of the writings that feature believing into Christ, sets him apart from the “most vocal contemporary voices,” such as Jerome and Gregory of Nyssa. Already his language goes against the grain of what is expected going forward. Perhaps these voices already influenced interpretative choices Bede made, even before he was trying to translate the Creed into English. Considering this context, it is more surprising that Lombard retained (or recovered) the bodily language at all.

It is important to note that, at the time of Aquinas, “the will” that he made more central did also function as the seat of the affections. However, a shift of the location of the affections theologically from faith to love is evident in Aquinas’s commentary on Epistle to the Romans, IV. Lec. 1, which describes believing into God as a movement not so much of faith as of attitude to validate whether trust was in fact warranted. It also potentially contributes to the misunderstanding that will be evident in the treatment of Pojman below.

The more the division of affection and intellect becomes an etymological reality, the more one may be tempted to ask: Does emphasizing the relational mean we are abandoning the intellectual/propositional? By no means— it simply ceases to be treated as the constitutive element and instead becomes a means to the end of the relational sense of belief that is constitutive.

3.2 Analytic Philosophers

In light of the previous considerations, it is little wonder that, outside of the church by the 20th century, epistemological examinations of belief treat it as a propositional attitude and assume that theism is justified/rational or not solely based on whether or not God can be proven to exist. None of the prominent analytic philosophers who take up the subject describes acquaintance with the credere formula from Augustine or any other source.

3.2.1 H. H. Price

While it did treat Latin grammar as a useful tool in examining the subject, H.H. Price’s work distinguishing between two approaches, modern dispositional belief (his preference) and traditional occurrence belief, did not address the Augustinian formula and relational aspect of living and active human flourishing. Nevertheless, in the volume compiled from his Gifford Lectures, Belief, Price did address belief-in vs. belief-that in a way that makes him an excellent interlocutor on the credere formula. His introduction of “degrees” of belief is also worth noting.

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considering in light of the three steps of the credere formula, though none of the “degrees” he suggests quite maps onto the relational sense of credere in + accusative. It is necessary here first to explicate the traditional occurrence and modern dispositional senses of belief – complete with attention to the varieties of knowledge and the relationship between knowledge and belief, as well as between belief-that and belief-in – before comparing them with my proposed relational sense of belief. The notion of degrees is offered to demonstrate how close Price came to the formula about which he appears to have been unaware, without yet reaching the relational sense.

As indicated above, Price displayed preference for a dispositional, rather than occurrence, analysis of belief, but after addressing both thoroughly, he ultimately came to endorse a compromise between the two, and fleshed out several corollaries with implications for belief in God. Prior to completing the research that occupies the first chapter of this dissertation, I theorized that a primarily dispositional analysis that incorporates the occurrence element of assent – by degrees – would provide the most fitting paradigm for Christian belief in God, but I have since reached the conclusion that dispositional analysis alone is not sufficient to capture the relational aspects of credere in + accusative.31

Price began his work by defining the terms of his central topic. Simply put, the traditional or occurrence analysis treats belief as an introspectible mental occurrence.32 The other, modern analysis treats such an occurrence as a “mythical entity” and instead insists that belief is not an

31 It is possible that something like interpretationism or functionalism, added to Price’s liberal dispositionalism, might capture it more closely, but I have yet to encounter a model of functionalist dispositionalism or interpretationist dispositionalism.

32 Price, 19.
event but a disposition, which does show itself in various occurrences (mental, psycho-physical, etc.) but which is not itself an occurrence – though its acquisition or loss may be.\textsuperscript{33} That he would be making a case for the dispositional analysis is evident from his discussion of the nature of belief – including belief on little or no evidence:

Belief is a state in which we are throughout our waking lives, and often too when we are dreaming. And this applies to the belief which does not amount to knowledge as well as to the belief which does. Belief on evidence which is less than conclusive is a very familiar condition. …We must not suppose that there are only two alternatives, knowledge on the one side and helpless agnosticism on the other. We may still have good reasons for believing when we do not have conclusive ones. …Very often conclusive evidence is not available to us, or not available as yet, at the time when practical decisions have to be taken, or theoretical inferences drawn, or difficult emotional adjustments made. Then we must make the best use we can of such evidence as we have. Sometimes, too, though less frequently, perhaps, than is supposed, we believe without any evidence at all, or on evidence so flimsy that it hardly deserves the name.\textsuperscript{34}

One cannot call “a state of being” an occurrence, and language omitted from the above excerpt repeatedly emphasized the ongoing, inevitable, reasonable aspect of this belief state. Far from the domain solely of theologians and philosophers of religion, Price had insisted, belief as disposition is something without which human beings could not live.\textsuperscript{35} Price insisted that attempting to live without such belief would be irrational with regard to a wide variety of subjects – Price was not (yet) discussing belief in God specifically. In this one section Price

\textsuperscript{33} Ibid., 20. He referred to the disposition analysis as modern, despite its much earlier hints that appear in Hume, due to its being introduced, however simply, by Alexander Bain in the mid-19th century (22). From that time proponents of occurrence analysis have dismissed it in less aggressive terms than the modernists’ use of “mythical entities,” as simply secondary to and derivative from occurrence (21).

\textsuperscript{34} Ibid., 24.

\textsuperscript{35} Ibid.
alluded to important themes surrounding belief-in and belief-that: the difference and relationship between knowledge and belief, as well as belief on little or no evidence.

In preparation to focus on these themes, Price briefly addressed *credo*, the first-person statement of belief and specifically, “The ‘Performatory Aspect of First-person Belief-Sentences.’” It was important to note the distinction between first-person and third-person belief sentences. Price observed, “When someone says in the first person and present tense ‘I believe that p’ (still more if he says ‘I believe in X’) he is not usually giving us a piece of autobiographical information....He is expressing an attitude rather than telling us that he has it.”

This observation about attitude laid groundwork well for the dispositional analysis to come. There is also occasionally an “event” sense of first-person belief statements, as well: If someone proclaims the statement from a soapbox over and against opponents, he or she makes “a public act of self-commitment.” This commitment need not, contra theologians, be irreversible, as evidence may not be conclusive, Price contended. Nevertheless, more often such a statement as “I believe that p” bears “what J.L. Austin calls a performatory character…much more commonly we are inviting our hearers to accept what we believe and are assuming that they will….giving them to understand that they will *be justified* in accepting it.”

Thus, according to Price, privately held beliefs and beliefs in third-person or in past and future tense are not performatory,

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36 Ibid., 29.
37 Ibid.
38 Ibid. 29-30.
39 Ibid., 30.
because they do not constitute a piece of social intercourse and are not guaranteeing the hearer anything.\textsuperscript{40} When our hearers accept what we guarantee in the first-person belief statement, in other words, I read Austin’s idea via Price as suggesting that we have performed a service – our hearers have acquired a piece of knowledge.

Nevertheless, Price would clarify, there is the crucial distinction between acts and dispositions – we have acquired dispositions all the time, but they are not constantly actualized.\textsuperscript{41} His description of “knowing as act” might just as easily be dubbed “learning.” As he would later show, some very important things about belief cannot be said in occurrence terms, which appears to have been the point in raising this distinction.\textsuperscript{42}

Seemingly preparing the way for “belief in,” he then approached knowledge by acquaintance by observing that, such as in cases of “Knowing ‘Who,’ ‘What,’ ‘Where,’ Etc.,” the verb “to know” doesn’t have to govern a ”that” clause at all.\textsuperscript{43} Furthermore, it is sometimes not followed by any clause at all, but by a simple accusative noun or noun-phrase.\textsuperscript{44} In cases of knowledge by acquaintance, what is known is not fact or truth, but an entity or group of entities – literal “things,” which are material entities, and what I choose to call “material plus” entities, like persons. Unlike “knowledge that,” knowledge by acquaintance is not a propositional attitude.\textsuperscript{45} It

\textsuperscript{40} Ibid., 35.
\textsuperscript{41} Ibid., 43.
\textsuperscript{42} Ibid., 46.
\textsuperscript{43} Ibid., 49.
\textsuperscript{44} Ibid., 50.
\textsuperscript{45} Ibid., 51.
is impossible to have knowledge by acquaintance unless the haver is actually acquainted with or has encountered whatever or whomever is known.

After analyzing aspects of knowledge by acquaintance, ranging from objects and sense-data to introspective and self-knowledge, Price moved on to consider “knowledge by description.” He is critically praised for having drawn the distinction between some languages’ two different verbs for knowledge by acquaintance and knowledge by description. I would add that the verb for the latter usually applies also to any “knowledge that” or (a topic Price will briefly discuss) “knowledge ‘how-to.’” Though Price claimed that Jane Austen beat Bertrand Russell to making the distinction by 100 years in her *Sense and Sensibility* by having a character express a sense of being instantly acquainted with another character upon meeting due to previously having received such thorough description, it is the latter author whom Price credited with establishing the criterion of knowledge by description. Russell's criterion of knowledge by description of an object is that it be the only object having that property. Price indicated that he wanted to consider cases where the only knowledge we have of an object is knowledge by description, as it is the “most relevant to the distinction between knowledge and belief.”

46 Antony Flew, review of Belief, by H.H. Price, MIND 79, no. 315 (July 1970): 454-60, accessed November 10, 2014, [http://www.jstor.org/stable/2252837](http://www.jstor.org/stable/2252837), 454. “Those who need to teach, as we all do, the difference between knowledge by acquaintance and knowledge by description would do well to learn from Price to follow the traditional mention of *cognoscere* and *scire* in Latin, *connaitre* and *savoir* in French, *kennen* and *wissen* in German. *Spanish*’s *saber* and *conocer* could also be added to the list.

47 Price, 63.

48 Ibid.

49 Ibid., 64.
indication of this preference might lead the reader to wonder if he was going to emphasize heavily belief in deity as knowledge by description only, and never by acquaintance, contra mystic visions, but he didn’t take it quite that far. Conditions of knowledge that is by description (in Russell’s sense), according to Price, are that the knower:

1. conceive of some characteristic or set thereof
2. know that it does characterize something in fact (existential)
3. know that the characteristic (or set thereof) characterizes only one thing.\(^50\)

The first two conditions alone would describe a sense of knowledge by description, but not Russell’s “knowledge by exclusive or identifying descriptions.”\(^51\)

After carefully distinguishing them, Price then carefully pointed out the resemblances between knowledge by description and knowledge by acquaintance, namely that both take the accusative, and as they do, both entail knowledge of a singular object. The differences are more important, though. Knowledge by description lacks the “first-hand encounter” of knowledge by acquaintance, as it is by definition acquired second-hand, by testimony, picture, map, inference, for example.\(^52\) The result is that knowledge by description has an abstract character, rendering it thinner and more superficial. On the other hand, knowledge by acquaintance has a narrower range than wide-range knowledge by description.\(^53\) It is not as if we could function without knowledge by description and would prefer only knowledge by acquaintance – after all, almost

\(^50\) Ibid.

\(^51\) Ibid., 65.

\(^52\) Ibid., 66.

\(^53\) Ibid., 66-67.
all geographical and historical knowledge is knowledge by description.\textsuperscript{54} Price noted that one piece of knowledge by description may depend upon another, so much so that a fallacy threatens the epistemologist:\textsuperscript{55} knowledge by description seems like a network or chain of dependent links of knowledge hanging in air and describable only by yet another, especially when A is described in terms of B and B in terms of A (Paris is the capital of France, France is the country whose capital is Paris).\textsuperscript{56} Only by one link’s connection to a piece of knowledge by acquaintance can the whole network come down out of the air.

Before entering the discussion of whether to define knowledge by means of belief could begin, Price briefly treated “knowing how to.” All the varieties before this point had been knowledge in the cognitive sense, but here entered the practical sense of expertness, skill, proficiency.\textsuperscript{57} About this know-how, Price stated that “From the epistemological point of view the important cases are those in which knowledge in the ‘how to’ sense is liable to be confused with knowledge in one of its cognitive senses or those in which (how to and one of the cognitive senses are combined).”\textsuperscript{58} After all, humans are not merely doers, but thinkers. “Obviously it is useful to know how to do things but also it is just nice to know how to do them even though we seldom or never have occasion to do them in fact. Even ‘know how’ may be valued for its own

\textsuperscript{54} Ibid., 67.

\textsuperscript{55} This fallacy he calls \textit{ciculus in describendo}, literally “describing in circle(s).”

\textsuperscript{56} Price, 68.

\textsuperscript{57} Ibid., 69.

\textsuperscript{58} Ibid., 71.
sake and not mainly for what we can get out of it. For example, if in the background as you are reading these words, a classical radio station is playing, and if you are a clarinetist and recognize that Mozart’s “Quintet For 2 Violins, 2 Violas & Cello No. 2 In C Minor” has changed to Joseph Beer’s “Clarinet concerto No. 6 in E flat major,” you may be distracted from reading by the sheer joy of knowing that you “know” that piece, meaning that you know how to join with the rest of an orchestra to produce the music. As Price concluded, “Aristotle was surely right when he said, ‘All men by nature desire to know,’ and this applies to all the different sorts of knowledge which we have distinguished.”

All of the foregoing grounds Price’s effort to “show that there is another sort of knowledge – immediate or direct knowledge – which is quite different from (the definition of knowledge as having a firm belief on sufficient evidence) and cannot be defined by belief at all.” While one might admit a comparison between belief and certain cognitive senses of knowledge, as for example past philosophers have thought the two to be merely two states of mind, one infallible (knowledge) and the other fallible (belief), the comparison quickly breaks down. Such an idea suggests that belief is a second-best to our real aim, knowledge, or in comparison to first-best, knowledge by acquaintance, and second-best, knowledge by description, belief is third-best! Price suggested, however, that the two are not really

59 Ibid.
60 Ibid.
61 Price, 90.
62 Ibid., 83.
63 Ibid., 72-73.
comparable/contrastable, as there's no “belief how to,” just perhaps belief that the way to do is.64

The case is still worse when considering belief “in.” There is no “knowing in” to compare to “belief in.”65 “Belief in” someone or something carries a valuational aspect as “residue” beyond simple “belief that.”66 This aspect would prove crucial as Price’s means of distinguishing religious belief from other types of belief. At first he simply noted that it is important to belief in God and makes it hard neatly to contrast between belief in a person and knowledge of her by acquaintance; moreover, it proves that belief is not merely an inferior substitute for knowledge by acquaintance or knowledge by description and other forms of "knowledge that."67

After all, the disposition vs. occurrence distinction applies to belief as well as to knowledge, and omitting that distinction for a moment left Price’s readers with three senses of each:68

1. Knowledge by acquaintance 1. Believing a person
2. Knowledge "that" 2. Belief "that"

Clearly the first and third pairs do not directly compare. What of the philosophers whose definition of knowledge as the highest degree of belief – does the second pair compare by mere

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64 Ibid., 75.
65 Ibid., 76.
66 Ibid., 76-77.
67 Ibid., 77.
68 Ibid., 78.
matter of degrees, then? Surely there are degrees of belief, from mere surmising to complete conviction. Why isn’t knowledge simply the highest degree of belief in the face of the most completely verifiable evidence, as “past philosophers” have suggested? There is at least one sense, according to Price, in which “knowledge that” is not mediate, hence not a degree of belief based on evidence. “If one knows \( p \), one must have sufficient evidence to establish/certify proposition \( p \), but I can know something by sight, memory, etc., which isn't evidence.”

In fact, Price held that there must be some immediate knowledge in order for inferential knowledge to be possible, saying, “This direct empirical verification is a kind of knowledge which cannot be defined in terms of belief.” As mediate knowledge does require more and stronger evidence than when one “merely believe(s) without knowing,” Price compiled two lectures on evidence.

The fairly standard and well-worn considerations of reasonable belief based on the evidence of perception, memory, and self-consciousness he reviewed all in one lecture. The theretofore neglected consideration in epistemology of belief based on evidence of testimony, however, received a full lecture’s attention. In the first of the two lectures on evidence, Price called for agreement that “a person can only believe reasonably when he has evidence for the propositions believed,” that “Belief admits of degrees,” and that “if we are to believe reasonably,

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1 Price, 79.
2 Ibid., 81.
3 Ibid., 87.
4 Ibid., 88.
5 Ibid., 89.
the degree of our belief must be no greater than our evidence justifies.”⁶ Having reminded the listener/reader of the distinction between the modern English word “evidence,” that which provides support for or offers a degree of probability to a proposition, and its predecessor sense in Latin, French, and German, which would mean an all-or-nothing evidentness,⁷ he indicated that evidence can consist of facts or other beliefs or propositions.⁸ Any such type of evidence, as long as the believer actually has it, enables one to say the belief is reasonable.⁹ Of course, if the evidence is other than factual, one stands in danger of an infinite regress of evidence, as one belief depends on another and another.¹⁰ Price’s “commonsensical” approach used four types of evidence he had presented to discover the base that is known facts.¹¹ Adequately addressing the potential defects of each, he made it clear that 1) perception stops the regress by means of an experience – for example, of touching, or seeing, or hearing,¹² 2) self-consciousness stops it with things we notice about ourselves,¹³ 3) memory does so by recalling past experience,¹⁴ and 4)
testimony does so by our choice to accept another’s word as the source of much of our knowledge.\textsuperscript{15}

He moved on to state the traditional Occurrence Analysis, not wishing to reject it entirely. Rather than the artificial, technical terminology of “belief-occurrences” or “acts of believing,” Price chose “assent” (we may note not alien to Augustine and Aquinas), as it had by now emerged in his treatments of Locke, Newman, and Hume, and “the verb ‘to reject’ as its opposite.”\textsuperscript{16} He identified “entertaining” propositions as a fundamental element of assent, one that is very difficult to describe without slipping into dispositional language, though it is a momentary occurrence, a mental act.\textsuperscript{17} He then made it clear that most exponents of the Occurrence Analysis (not Newman) accept that assent admits of degrees.\textsuperscript{18} Assent may display “different degrees of tenacity or stability over a period of time, as well as different degrees of intensity at any given moment.”\textsuperscript{19} He summarized the account of assent as taking up towards an entertained proposition an attitude that features “Preference” – assent always involves dissent – and “Confidence,” which may vary in degree.\textsuperscript{20}

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., 112. See also 118.

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., 189.

\textsuperscript{17} Ibid., 195-199.

\textsuperscript{18} Ibid., 204.

\textsuperscript{19} Ibid., 205.

\textsuperscript{20} Ibid., 207.
The Dispositional Analysis, which he examined at great length, holds that “the word ‘believe’ …has only a dispositional use.” 21 He did not intend to say that there is nothing in common between occurrence and disposition – temporal predicates, for example, apply to both dispositions and occurrences – just nothing in common with regard to belief. 22 Beliefs may in fact change and last different durations. Price even addressed the ways in which other temporary dispositions may overwrite or inhibit belief, as in cases of “losing one’s head.” 23 While the “acting as if” version of this analysis is useful for the scientific method, Price admitted that it turns out to be too simple, especially for purely theoretical beliefs and because of its unduly narrow view of human nature. 24 In his second lecture on Dispositional Analysis, he attended to the relation between belief and emotions such as hope, fear, surprise, doubt, and – to a more careful extent – confidence. 25 The first emotion, hope, involved aspects Price had covered in previous lectures, including degrees of belief and the valuational aspect of “belief in.” 26

After covering the mechanics of inference and the notion of belief as a “multi-form disposition” that “takes place in the ‘inner life’ of the believer,” Price offered compromise between the two analyses in his position:

Hitherto I have been emphasizing the differences between the traditional Occurrence Analysis and the modern Dispositional Analysis, as if we had to

21 Ibid., 245, emphasis original.

22 Ibid., 246.

23 Ibid., 261.

24 Ibid., 263-267.


26 Ibid., 268-9.
choose between the two. The situation is not quite so bad as that. The differences are there and if we do have to choose, we must prefer the Dispositional Analysis. But still up to a point we may have it both ways. Much of what is said in the traditional Occurrence Analysis can be incorporated into the Dispositional Analysis. Mental events which can quite properly be described as ‘assents’ or ‘assentings’ really do occur; and they certainly are relevant to the analysis of the complex and multiform disposition which we call belief, whether we are considering the initiation of such a disposition, or the occurrent manifestations of it when it has been acquired. For once in a way, let us rejoice in complexity.27

This identification of his position enabled him to lecture further about corollaries such as half-belief, self-verifying beliefs, and moral beliefs. Of the options on offer from Price, the closest-to-fitting paradigm for Christian belief according to the credere formula seems to be a primarily dispositional analysis that incorporates the occurrence element of assent by degrees, but even this approach still lacks both the relational aspect of credere in eum and the element of bold surrender. It functions to account for dispositions toward credere Deum and Credere Deo as degrees of assent leading toward credere in eum, but it is unclear where incorporation in Christ’s members and the resulting bold surrender to the other would fit. It is possible to see the closest parallels in his system, however.

The notion of “degrees” of belief is one to which Price returned numerous times in his lectures. One especially helpful elucidation of this notion arose in his examination of Newman’s reading of Locke:

For we commonly think that there are degrees of belief; and when we raise these questions about a man’s right to believe something or ask whether he is justified in believing it we ask not only whether he is justified in believing such and such a proposition at all on the evidence that he has but also whether he has a right to believe it to the degree that he does—with the degree of assurance or confidence which he actually shows. We often find that others (and ourselves too) hold firm

27 Ibid., 299.
convictions on subjects about which we are only ‘entitled’ to have mild opinions. On the other hand, the term ‘reasonable,’ the appropriate term of commendation for beliefs, is applied to actions as well, and here too it is a term of commendation.  

The degrees and reasonableness of a given belief or action go hand-in-hand. Their correlation gives rise to consideration of whether or not the belief leads to action, the absence of which gives rise to something like the problem of ἀκρασία, akrasia, the weakness of will described in Aristotle’s Nicomachean Ethics Book VII, chapter 3.  

Herein emerges an excellent opportunity to highlight a distinction of the relational sense of belief, in that relational belief into God (in Christ) always leads to action. Whereas Price’s account of religious “belief in” does not involve action by virtue of incorporation into (a deity’s) members as does Augustine’s “belief into,” the two understandings do share a common element of power to compel action: that of esteem. It is in this regard that Price comes closest to the relational sense. His treatment of the differences between belief-that and belief-in bears examination in this regard.

Price began his treatment of the difference between belief-that (“an attitude toward a proposition”) and belief-in (“an attitude toward a person, whether human or divine” ostensibly, though he would soon complexify the possible objects of belief-in) with a statement of the reducibility thesis popular in philosophy. Price insisted that strong cases could be made for

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28 Price, 26-27.

29 Ibid., 27.

30 Ibid., 426. Just as I may encounter detractors who suggest I have made too much of a preposition “into,” Price perceives detractors among traditional epistemologists here: “On the face of it, this radical distinction between belief-in and belief-that seems plausible to anyone who knows from the inside what religious experience of the
both the reducibility thesis, which holds that all forms of belief-in can be reduced to some form of belief-that, and the opposite, irreducibility thesis.\footnote{Ibid., 427. Price saw a boundary transgression as the complicating factor: “The decision between them is made more difficult (though also more interesting) because belief-in, or at least some instances of it, cuts across the boundary sometimes drawn between the cognitive side of human nature, concerned with what is true or false, and the evaluative side, concerned with what is good or evil. Either the boundary vanishes altogether, or we find ourselves on both sides of it at the same time.”}

Consider an example supporting the reducibility thesis: I believe that I am required to turn in the complete, revised manuscript of this dissertation by March 29. That belief-that statement is irreducible. The proposition is laid out for me by authorities from the Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences of Southern Methodist University as the condition for my defense of the dissertation in late April and my graduation in May. My attitude toward the proposition is one of agreement. However, once I say I believe in myself as the one who will accomplish the act of turning in my dissertation on time, it is possible to view this statement as reducible. It may be reducible to my belief that I have researched well and written enough each day. It may be reducible to my belief that angels are supernaturally assisting my fingers as they fly across the keyboard. It may be reducible to my belief that the Holy Spirit is recalling to my remembrance what I have read and studied for the past several years. My belief-in may be reducible to all of those beliefs-that.
While Price avowed that most philosophers expect to be able to break down all belief-in to a belief-that, he posited a number of seemingly irreducible varieties of belief-in, ranging from belief-in a person or entity (or class of entities), to belief-in natural objects or machines, to belief in methods or policies, such as those governing banks and dentists. Finally he added one more example to his list, belief-in a theory, defined as “a logically connected set of propositions.” It is tempting to reduce this form of belief-in to one or more statements of belief-that; however, he used it to demonstrate the way the belief functions whether belief-that is present or absent. What one believes in when believing in a theory is the power that the theory confers. My belief-in a theory really means that I esteem the theory highly. Note the word “esteem,” one possible translation, alongside cherish, of diligere, the verb Augustine used to describe credere in eum in In Jo Ev.

In Price’s system, my esteem causes belief-in the theory to function in a way that gives me power…power to increase intellect, to make reliable predictions that can be tested, to make unique contributions to knowledge I might not otherwise attempt if I did not believe in the theory, to guide my actions. This belief-in obtains even if I cannot assert belief that the theory is true! He refers to Quantum Theory “in the early days of its development” and metaphysical theories such as Schopenhauer’s as examples of theories that have given power to those who held belief-in them even without the ability to believe-that they were true (at least not yet).  

32 Price, 430. “Most of us only go to our dentist when we have toothache,” says Price, “But there are some who believe in going to (the dentist) regularly once a year, whether they have toothache or not.”

33 Ibid.

34 Ibid., 431.
This finer point enabled Price to approach religious belief-in by first identifying two different senses of belief-in, the factual and the evaluative.\textsuperscript{35} The latter involves esteeming/trusting, and the former involves acceptance of a proposition – usually though not always an existential one (which, remember, is the sticking point past which we are attempting to move the epistemological conversation by emphasizing \textit{credere in Deum}). The attitude of each, Price suggested, can be combined with the other, which is to say that one may:

- believe that something exists (f+) and esteem it (e+)
- believe that something exists (f+) and not esteem it (e-)

His example of the latter turned upon the same passage from James 2 to which Augustine had appealed before him: “…a similar combination of attitudes is attributed to the devils who ‘believe and tremble.’ They believe that God exists, and we may suppose they believe it with full conviction, too. At the same time they have an attitude of distrust towards” God.\textsuperscript{36} While a reductionist might be able to reduce both the evaluative and the factual to belief-that statements, Price contended, there must be two value-concepts in order to reduce evaluative belief-in a person or a person’s abilities to belief-that: the belief-that the person is “good at” whatever ability is in question and also the belief-that it is a “good thing that” this person is good at it.\textsuperscript{37}

This last point is important to both “the prospective character of belief-in” and the consideration of “interested and disinterested belief-in” that are important to belief-in God. The

\textsuperscript{35} Price, 435-6.

\textsuperscript{36} Ibid., 437.

\textsuperscript{37} Ibid., 444.
prospective character of evaluative belief-in requires the belief-that value-concepts will continue to obtain, something akin to the theological virtue of hope.\textsuperscript{38} Meanwhile, the question of whether the value-concepts describe goodness for just the believer raises the issue of interested/disinterested belief-in. Does my belief-in someone as a friend simply mean that I esteem the things she is good at as a good thing for me and my happiness? If so, then it is merely interested evaluative belief-in. Or does my belief-in this friend entail the goodness of the friendship in itself and value her for her own sake, regardless of whether she did anything good for me? Price suggested that this disinterested belief-in eliminated the first of the two different value-concepts (the “good at” and the “good thing, too”) necessary to reduce evaluative belief-in a person to belief-that.\textsuperscript{39} This irreducibility honored the uniqueness of every individual’s “unclassifiable” aspects that “matter in interpersonal relations such as friendship.”\textsuperscript{40} He went on to emphasize that the reduction would miss the fact that “esteeming \textit{and} trusting are essential features of (evaluative belief-in).”\textsuperscript{41} Esteem may be satisfied by the “good thing that” value-concept, but trust is not. “Trusting is not a merely cognitive attitude,” and reducing it thus “leaves out the ‘warmth’ which is a characteristic feature of evaluative belief-in.”\textsuperscript{42}

Evaluative belief-in is a “pro-attitude.” One is “for” the person, thing, policy, etc. in whom or in which one believes. \textbf{There is something more than assenting or being disposed to assent to a proposition, no matter what concepts the proposition contains.} That much-neglected aspect of human nature which used

\textsuperscript{38} Ibid., 445.

\textsuperscript{39} Price, 448, cf 449, 451.

\textsuperscript{40} Ibid., 449.

\textsuperscript{41} Ibid, 451.

\textsuperscript{42} Ibid., 452.
to be called “the heart” enters into evaluative belief-in. Trusting is an affective attitude. We might even say that it is in some degree an affectionate one.

That “something more” in Augustine’s formula is the believing into in such a way as to be incorporated in Christ’s members. Price obviously stops short of such particular language and does not go so far as to insinuate a reciprocal “going into” such as Augustine’s full treatment of credere in + accusative describes (in Sermo CXLIV). Nevertheless, “The most important of all the varieties of evaluative belief-in is belief in God.” Price’s application of these principles to belief in God affirmed that the two, interested and disinterested belief-in, may coexist even here, as the believer perceives God as “giver of gifts,” but ultimately, for belief-in God, whom Price noted that mystics throughout time had referred to as “The Friend,” to be irreducible and complete, there must be this disinterested belief-in. It emerges, Price suggested, when the believer values God for God’s own sake and believes “that it is a good thing, intrinsically good, that (God) exists and is what (God) is; and not just ‘a good thing,’ but the fundamental ‘good thing’ without which there would be no others.” Though the reader may note that this statement has placed a “belief-that” back into the foreground, Price concluded that “belief in God is still evaluative and not merely factual. It cannot be reduced to the mere acceptance of an existential proposition.”

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43 Price, 452.
44 Ibid., 454.
46 Ibid., 454.
Even the briefest of thought experiments demonstrates that Price’s work is helpful to establishing that Occurrence alone is insufficient: One does not assume that the wedding day is itself the entirety of marriage. So, too, belief into is a constant movement deeper in relationship with the Beloved.

3.2.2 Robert Audi

The relational aspect of living and active human flourishing is missing from Robert Audi’s work. Where Price styled himself as a dispositionalist allowing for his opponents’ occurrence analysis when modified to allow for assent by degrees, Audi explored a “bold and quite unmystical version of experientialism” as a way between what appear in his presentation to be the Scylla and Charybdis of evidentialism ("the view that one’s belief that God exists is justifiable only if one has adequate evidence for it") and fideism ("roughly the position that faith is the appropriate ground …of belief that God exists") as views of belief and of its rationality or justifiability.47 From this experientialism his later works would branch out beyond the purely propositional and even beyond belief itself, yet he never fully embraced the relational.

In the first of two works on the subject(s) of belief and/or faith, written twenty-five years apart, Audi addressed “the proper ground for the belief that God exists, and by implication for belief in God as well.”48 Audi does not elaborate here on what he means by “belief in God,”

47 Robert Audi. “Direct Justification, Evidential Dependence, and Theistic Belief.” In Rationality, Religious Belief, and Moral Commitment, edited by William Wainwright and Robert Audi, 139–66. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986), 139-140. He does note that one version of fideism insists that, once the system identifies itself as based on faith, it requires no justification. Audi also notes that he is addressing epistemic justification, but that theism might have or need some other kind of justification, such as moral or pragmatic. He doesn’t elaborate beyond footnotes, and neither shall we, as our present thesis moves the conversation beyond justification in ways that are not the same as the claims of those fideists who reject justification.

48 Ibid., 139.
so it is difficult to know whether he is aiming at anything relational, or even fiduciary. He gave
no indicator of whether he might mean something akin to one of the two steps of Augustine’s
formula other than believing that God exists – either believing God(‘s words are true) or
believing into God.\textsuperscript{49} Instead, in this essay, he went straight to work naming evidentialism and
fideism, so that he could explain and examine experientialism as a middle way between them.
Experientialism seems to have appealed to Audi in that it shares characteristics of both
evidentialism (“affirming that theistic beliefs are rational only if they are justified”) and fideism
(“denying that their justification requires evidence”), while further contending that “human
experience… can directly justify belief that God exists.”\textsuperscript{50}

Belief that God exists was the major focus of this essay, which is dominated by
propositional language, as Audi approached experientialism primarily in dialogue with Alvin
Plantinga’s “attack on evidentialism” in “Is Belief in God Properly Basic?”\textsuperscript{51} The notion of
proper basicity in that presentation, Audi explained, involved a belief’s not being based on any
other belief one holds (“basic” being here akin to Price’s “irreducible”) and its rationality

\textsuperscript{49} To some extent, one wonders if what he means in this sentence was something akin to Price’s “belief that” and
“belief that it’s a good thing, too.”

\textsuperscript{50} Ibid., 140.

\textsuperscript{51} Ibid., 150, with reference to 140, in which he footnotes Plantinga’s essay as found in \textit{Faith and Rationality}, ed.
Alvin Plantinga and Nicholas Wolterstorff (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1983). While Plantinga,
pillar of Reformed epistemology, had already begun expressing objections to evidentialism in \textit{God and Other Minds}
(1979) and would go on to develop the notion of proper basicity further in his later works, \textit{Warrant: the Current
Debate, Warrant and Proper Function} (both 1993), and \textit{Warranted Christian Belief} (2000), what concerns us
primarily is his work in Audi’s presentation. The way in which a focus on the rational without the relational leads far
afield of faith and belief becomes clear in tracing the trajectory of Audi from 1986 to 2011.
(“properly” thereby meaning “implying some degree of epistemic justification”). Audi further described proper basicity of belief as having “psychological” and “epistemic” status. It is “psychologically direct” in that it is not inferred from another belief and “epistemically direct” in that its rationality or justifiedness “does not derive from that of another belief but from something (such as a visual experience) that, though not itself admitting of justification, can render a belief justified.” In this presentation, the “properly” seems to have been evaluated secondarily to the “basic.” Furthermore, the example of “visual experience” highlights the fact that experientialism appears to take the experience of direct access to God to be typically through the senses, rendering it noninferential but not groundless.54

The discussion of this directness at times conjures Price’s notion of knowledge by acquaintance (with which Audi did not profess familiarity), and Audi addressed the connection – or lack thereof – between properly basic belief and knowledge. He considered an assumption apparent in Plantinga, even if not with strong commitment, that “the sense in which a theistic belief can be properly basic is such that if it is both properly basic and true, then it represents knowledge.” After wrestling with whether knowledge requires justification, he read Plantinga

52 Ibid., 143.
53 Ibid.
54 Audi would identify “perception and memory” later in the essay, and one may debate whether memory is itself a sense, but the formation of impressions that become memories certainly involves the senses. He also proposes the possibility of some properly basic beliefs about God perhaps arising from “a distinctive mode of experience analogous to a sixth sense,” but not without proceeding to problematize the notion as not helpful in the case against evidentialism if such a sense cannot admit of confirmation by an ordinary sense by which others can confirm (151).
55 Ibid., 155. Audi was troubled here that “memory-based impressions” can “generate…justification” but still not imply knowledge.
as “arguing not only that…theists may be in the epistemically successful position we call knowledge but, nonevidentially, in the epistemically acceptable position we call being justified (and rationally believing).”\textsuperscript{56}

One worry about this presentation is that Audi appears to have treated knowledge, a form of truth or certainty, as a stronger action than belief, as if it were the confirmation or consummation of belief. When dealing purely in propositions, this notion of competition makes some sense. While certain aspects of Christian presentations of faith and belief seem to lean in this direction (the Apostle Paul’s “now I know in part, then I shall know fully” points in this direction but does not use the term “believe” or “faith” in 1 Corinthians 13:12), more often than not they consider belief the superior action (Jesus to Thomas, who believes after seeing, declares those who believe without seeing “Blessed” in John 20:29). Nevertheless, Audi insisted that his concern would not be with the matter of epistemically successful or acceptable positioning and knowledge vs. belief, but with the “issue of whether theistic beliefs can be directly justified.”\textsuperscript{57}

Having acknowledged that “proper basicality is relative to persons,” Audi introduced in his consideration of defeasibility the “justificatory dependence thesis” that must be discounted in order for properly basic beliefs to be maintained in the face of evidentialism.\textsuperscript{58} This thesis is a weaker view than full-blown evidentialism, because it “does not require (the believer to have)

\textsuperscript{56} Ibid., emphasis and parenthesis original.

\textsuperscript{57} Ibid. What he advances then as “important to grasp” before moving away is intriguing: “that theists could shift their emphasis from justification to knowledge, could argue that knowledge does not entail justification, and could stress that God could produce in us knowledge of (God’s) existence and nature even if beliefs in question are not justified.” This observation borders on the relational, but the idea of “production in” would need to be unpacked, which Audi does not do here.

\textsuperscript{58} Ibid., 156-7.
evidence for God’s existence.” It does, however, premise justification of even basic beliefs on the believer’s holding or having the ability to hold, “certain other, ‘self-defensive’ beliefs” that can negate defeaters. Audi offered the example of a mature theist’s being aware that religious experience could be perceived as hallucinatory, so the believer can point in the given instance to the fact that there is no good reason to think that the experience in question for a particular belief is the result of hallucination. While the possibilities of what such a thesis could require are numerous, Audi offered two versions, the first of which bears the stronger requisite:

In a strong form, this justificatory dependence thesis says that, in order to have a properly basic theistic belief, one that is both rational and not based on any evidence beliefs, (one) must meet a certain rational standard. (One) must have, or be able to construct, either an adequate argument against certain putative reasons to believe that God does not exist or at least an adequate argument for the view that there are no sufficient reasons for believing that (God) does not exist. We might call this position argumentalism. It shares with evidentialism the view that theistic beliefs are justificatorily dependent, since it takes them to depend for their justification (and rationality) on that of other beliefs; but it seems more plausible. It is, however, also quite inimical to experientialism of the kind that conceives certain theistic beliefs as justificatorily independent.

Audi then named a weaker version, one requiring beliefs that “neutralize any plausible antitheistic considerations of which (the believer) is aware…” and disallowed the notion that necessary counterarguments are implicit in the belief that God exists, arriving at a standoff of sorts.

59 Ibid., 157.
60 Ibid.
61 Ibid.
62 Ibid., 158-9.
Mired in a purely propositional framework, Audi aimed to distinguish, contra Plantinga, that basic theistic beliefs may in some sense be “well grounded” but still not be “rational.” He wrestled with what had appeared in Plantinga to be a reliance on disposition or a “natural tendency to accept beliefs” as true. Herein Audi pressed on to question why some have not come to hold theistic beliefs, if this tendency exists in all humans – why would God place the tendency in all but not expose all to divine revelation in whatever form necessary for belief to be realized in all? A very good question, indeed, and one to which he supplied customarily suggested explanations, like ignorance, skepticism, God’s choice not to bring some people to the ideal circumstances for the activation of the tendency to believe, none of which is satisfactory.

I wonder, however, whether Audi could have countenanced the possibility that the lack of activation of Plantinga’s God-placed belief-tendency in some – if not in all – is attributable to the fact that belief-into, which is specific to God in Christ (admittedly privileging Christianity now, not mere theism), is – almost as soon as it is identified – lost, whether in translation or in the shuffle of comfortable categories of epistemological discourse.

Audi’s contention, finally, was that Plantinga was allowing too much to be potentially considered properly basic. In concluding this essay, Audi expressed a great deal more sympathy with evidentialism than he does with experientialism, indicating that – while “the

63 Ibid., 161.
64 Ibid., 163.
65 Ibid.
66 Ibid., 164. He proffered as examples fantastic thought experiments rivalling even Plantinga’s Great Pumpkin (the one dismissed by Plantinga because everyone knows no such “deity” exists), including Oz and the Ozists and Diablo and the Diablists. Audi denied that Plantinga had sufficiently disallowed such impostors.
Hebraic-Christian philosophical tradition” may distinguish itself from others in numerous ways and can defend itself in numerous ways directly through natural theology or indirectly by negation of competing views or contradictory evidence – “at least a large proportion of theists” rely for the rationality for their beliefs on indirect support “by one or more beliefs expressing evidence or reasons.”67 He returned to the justificatory dependence thesis that still leaves room for multiple interpretations of justification:

Supposing that theistic beliefs are justificatorily dependent, we must remember that there are many ways in which their justification may depend on other beliefs. It may turn out that the only kind of evidentialism that can be cogently defended is so highly qualified as to be far less objectionable to the fideistic tradition than one might initially think possible. On this broad issue a great deal more remains to be said. All I shall add now is that our conclusions do not imply, nor, indeed, does foundationalism imply, that evidentialists must put “reason above faith,” if this means either that rational persons will not believe in God unless they think they have good evidence for his existence, or that they will not believe in him unless they think there are better grounds for believing he exists than for thinking that he does not, or even that a rational person must suppose that theists ought to have evidence for theistic beliefs….68

Once Audi had ruminated upon the “great deal more that remains to be said” for 25 years, he devoted an entire volume to the subject, *Rationality and Religious Commitment*.69 In it he acknowledged the shared focus of philosophers of religion (both evidentialists and their opponents) on harmonizing reason and faith by means of belief, but Audi contended that proving

67 Ibid.
68 Ibid., 165-166.
religious beliefs to be rational – while it may go a long way toward solving that issue – “is not necessary for a solution” to the problem of harmonizing faith and belief.\textsuperscript{70}

Thus this later work was not purely propositional, exploring the rationality of “other attitudes besides belief,” including acceptance and hope, that “can carry the intellectual content of at least one’s major religious commitments.”\textsuperscript{71} He also considered the conflation of belief with faith an effect of too great a reliance on evidentialism by other philosophers of religion.\textsuperscript{72} As with Audi’s earlier criticism of Plantinga for conflating grounds for beliefs with their rational justification, so here he criticized both Plantinga and William P. Alston for using belief to reconcile faith and reason.\textsuperscript{73} Echoes of his earlier treatment of belief as a cognitive attitude – one weaker than knowledge – appear here, though he criticizes the conflation of (and indeed, even the connection between) faith and belief without ever fully defining belief.\textsuperscript{74} As the very title and thesis of the present work claim believing into Christ and the relational sense of belief as constitutive of the Christian faith, the author of this dissertation appears to be at odds with Audi

\textsuperscript{70} Ibid., 52.

\textsuperscript{71} Ibid., xii.

\textsuperscript{72} Ibid., 51.

\textsuperscript{73} Ibid., 52.

\textsuperscript{74} “I present no analysis of the concept of believing here,” Audi admitted (69). He directed the reader to his two brief essays on belief and believing (“The Concept of Believing” in a 1972 issue of The Personalist and “Dispositional Beliefs and Dispositions to Believe” in a 1994 issue of Nous), but as neither of those accounts reflects the concerns for which he argues here with regard to faith, the reader is left in vague territory.
from the start. Perhaps it is the persistent absence of *credere in Deum*\textsuperscript{75} that kept Audi from perceiving the strengths of connecting belief with faith.

He deemed the faith that he considered “of great religious importance” to be “a distinct kind of attitude” that was “non-doxastic,” going beyond or even functioning without belief of propositions.\textsuperscript{76} He considered it an example of the first of seven different types of what he called “faith-locutions,” which he had drawn from “the discourse of everyday life:”\textsuperscript{77}

1) *Propositional faith* sounds like the “belief that” Occurrence analysis from Price and *credere* + accusative (such as *credere Deum*, belief that God exists), but this “faith that” involved a “positive disposition toward (a proposition) ... actually obtaining” that is stronger than hope without entailing belief.\textsuperscript{78}

2) *Attitudinal faith* is the only kind with which Audi would use the phrase “belief in,” somewhat akin to Price’s Dispositional view of belief-in a person, and it

\textsuperscript{75} This absence is not just from Audi’s considerable research but from the field of Philosophy of Religion, as it is the full range of its epistemology that Audi purports to be examining here.

\textsuperscript{76} Ibid., 52-53.

\textsuperscript{77} Ibid., 53.

\textsuperscript{78} Ibid., 54.
seems to be the closest relative to *credere* + dative (such as *credere Deo*, believing God or that Jesus).\textsuperscript{79} It is “a state of the will.”\textsuperscript{80}

3) *Creedal faith* involves commitment to central tenets of a specific religion, including an interesting criterion of “appropriateness,” as in, a given faith is constituted by “an appropriate set of propositions.”\textsuperscript{81} This distinction shows to what extent *credere in Deum* is not considered at all for – let alone considered constitutive of – the Christian faith within Audi’s system.

4) *Global faith*, the possession of which “makes one a person of faith and can qualify one as religious provided that the content of the faith is appropriate,”\textsuperscript{82} he declared the “richest,”\textsuperscript{83} without explaining what that superlative actually means with regard to faith, and initially making it difficult to distinguish from creedal faith. This “being a person of faith” did not require one to belong to any particular faith (he even mentioned the possibility of being a person of secular faith), just to

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\textsuperscript{79} Ibid., 55-6. In fact, Audi specifies that this “belief in” entails believing propositions about a person, not necessarily that they exist if it is psychological or non-relational, but existence can be a proposition believed if dealing in relational terms. Of course even when briefly considering relations between persons in this category, he still wrestled with whether existential belief was necessary, because Audi’s work approached “the rationality of a theistic worldview without presupposing its truth.” In discussing “Relations among the different kinds of faith,” he would again indicate that such relations depended on whether “faith in is psychological/non-relational or relational, implying the existence of its object” (63).

\textsuperscript{80} Ibid., 56. Emphasis original.

\textsuperscript{81} Ibid., 57. One has an “appropriate attitude” toward these propositions or one does not have this faith. Again he insisted that some ways of having this faith may entail belief, but not all of them do.

\textsuperscript{82} Ibid., 53.

\textsuperscript{83} Ibid., 57.
“lead (a) richly rewarding life” as a result of an “overall stance in matters that govern important aspects of human life.”

5) *Doxastic faith* he specified may be conceived as “one kind of propositional faith” that bore singling out from the first kind of faith-locution he had identified (and termed “propositional”), as it is “illustrated by believing something ‘on faith.’”

It definitely does entail belief, on the one hand, but it does not need to be “a response to evidence” on the other, as the amount or strength of evidence need not be the cause of the belief. Rather, it is characterized at least in part by “the positive attitude of the person toward the truth of the proposition.”

6) *Acceptant faith,* or “*accepting people in good faith,*” was fairly self-explanatory, though the difference between accepting a person, proposition, or action “on/in faith” and the previous, doxastic faith that involves believing “on faith” only becomes clear upon closer reading. The acceptance (which Audi permitted to be used synonymously with “belief”) may be behavioral rather than cognitive. He briefly addressed the example of accepting Christ as Savior, daring to suggest that the call is to accept not as a kind of faith but “to *do* what it takes to bring oneself

\[\text{\textsuperscript{84}}\text{ Ibid., 57-58.} \]
\[\text{\textsuperscript{85}}\text{ Ibid., 58.} \]
\[\text{\textsuperscript{86}}\text{ Ibid., 58-59.} \]
\[\text{\textsuperscript{87}}\text{ Ibid., 59.} \]
\[\text{\textsuperscript{88}}\text{ Ibid., 61.} \]
to become a person of faith in Christ.” This notion suited his preference of focus on conduct related to behavioral and cognitive attitudes that would support distinction of faith from belief.

7) Allegiant (or loyalty) faith, is fidelity, in which one keeps faith with someone. It was, he insisted, the kind of faith-locution that stands apart from the other six. It “is both chiefly behavioral and requires a certain kind of relationship with the person in question, such as a commitment to act for the other’s benefit.” While he declared it important to “understanding religious commitment,” there is still a transactional nature to it in Audi’s presentation.

Of these seven, he argued primarily in favor of a certain type of the first kind as most effective in the effort at closing the faith-reason divide. He rejected its entailment of belief, however, even by degrees. Nevertheless, only one – allegiant faith or fidelity – came close to credere in Deum. Even after he approached the relational in this regard, he then dismissed it as reducible to a combination of the other six, and which, in its relational sense, he deemed too practice-based. He offered no explanation why it could not be perceived as the culmination thereof, such as one might choose to read credere in Deum as the culmination of credere Deum.

89 Ibid.
80 Ibid., 62.
81 Ibid.
82 Ibid., 65. He briefly noted “an aspirational notion of faith in God” that occurs with God “somehow active in a relationship with the person of faith,” with the practice-relative notion of faith, wherein a person regularly meditates to bring God “into consciousness.” He dismissed this sense of reciprocal relationship from the common sense of faith.
and *credere Deo* in Augustine’s formula. This approach would not be entirely contrary to his system, as the “richest” kind, global faith, he argued might be understood “wholly in terms of the (first) three kinds.”

His insistence on categorical distinctions between cognitive and non-cognitive attitudes and division of faith and belief (which seems, for Christianity’s purposes, much more strongly supportable by the Latin than in the Greek) appear to prevent the relational from rising to the prominence that it enjoys in *credere in Deum*, as if the affective nature of the Christ relationship somehow causes faith to trump reason in a way that cannot be deemed “appropriate.”

3.2.3 Louis Pojman

The aspect of living and active human flourishing is missing once again from Louis Pojman’s efforts to attain the “benefits of religious faith” by equating faith with hope rather than belief. He asked why religions make “propositional beliefs a necessary, though not sufficient condition of salvation.” It seems Pojman’s motivation was an honorable intention, to protect the tender consciences of those who cannot make themselves believe that there is a God about whom the creedal propositions are true. Like many of the thinkers considered here – failing to address the formula, despite the fact that Pojman offered the first sustained philosophical analysis on faith in the works of Augustine – he came close to the uniquely relational understanding of belief found in *credere in Deum*, only to dismiss it before reaching a thorough understanding.

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93 Ibid., 62.


95 Ibid., 212.

96 Ibid., ix.
understanding of it. Perhaps one obstacle for Pojman was his understanding of Augustine as setting the stage for Aquinas, whose emphasis on the will strongly supported Pojman’s emphasis on volition in matters of faith.

An extensive survey of “Belief and Will in the History of Christian Thought” occupied the first part of Pojman’s Religious Belief and the Will and foregrounded the argument of his most widely published and popular essay that appears in the second part. A brief consideration of his treatments of Augustine and Aquinas in this survey informs the good questions Pojman later would raise concerning the purely propositional sense of belief. It also exposes his unfortunate oversights with regard to Augustine that contribute to his missing the relational sense of belief, which would have answered some of his concerns about doubt and religious faith.

Having identified in the introduction five philosophical and theological positions on the “direct relation of the will to belief acquisition” that have been held by various philosophers and theologians, Pojman sorted both Augustine and Aquinas into the third position.97 This position, that “It is logically and psychologically possible to volit sometimes,” with Pojman having defined volit for his purposes as “directly obtaining a belief by willing to have it,” had adherents across the entire history of philosophy and theology, but for the present purposes, we focus on Pojman’s treatment of it in Augustine and Aquinas.98

That gaps in his understanding of the relational sense in Augustine remained prove surprising in light of his treatment of belief and will in the Bible and early Christianity. He

97 Ibid., viii.

98 Ibid.
contended that the closest word to belief in the Hebrew Bible (*he’min*) in its primary meaning played a “special role in the relationship to God…It is to trust him (sic) utterly and obey him unquestioningly.”

He further turned to Bultmann, to underscore his identification of a specifically Christian sense of *pistis eis*, against a general background of the New Testament as relying on, giving credence to, or obeying an object, as a formula understood as “acceptance of the Christian kerygma, saving faith which recognizes and appropriates God’s work of salvation brought about by Christ.” However, he resisted the potential impact of the argument that propositional belief is absent from the New Testament, because of the sharp turn toward propositional belief he perceived in the early Church. His view of the early Church was indeed bleak, that the distinctions between orthodox and heterodox, for the sake of shoring up a fragile unity, had caused a great deal of harm. The failure to exercise freedom to believe perceived as heresy clearly came up hard against Pojman’s concern for doubters, but he did concur that “the biblical view of faith is a sort of ‘knowing,’ a recognition, wherein the believer commits himself or herself to the one encountered in deep personal experience. The relationship involves both the

99 Ibid., 3-4.

100 Ibid., 4.

101 Ibid., 10-11. The argument about the New Testament comes from Wilfred Cantwell Smith’s *Belief and History* (Charlottesville: University Press of VA, 1977). Pojman credits the Neoplatonic turn of the Fathers with the propositional — and resulting volitional — turn. Curiously, Smith rejected propositional belief even in the Apostles and Nicene Creed, to which Pojman pointed out that, even if one allowed Smith’s assessment, other creeds such as the Athanasian are clearly aimed at making propositional belief “a necessary condition for salvation.”

102 Ibid.
intellect in giving assent and the will in holding fast to the object of faith.”

Despite the fact that Pojman chose deliberately to address Plato between the Bible and Augustine, it is a mistake to infer, as Pojman seems to in large part, that Plato forms a wall between the biblical notion of belief and Augustine’s treatment thereof. Pojman was apparently unfamiliar with the *credere* formula and its tradition in either Augustine or Aquinas, let alone Bede and Lombard (with whom he understandably did not deal). Pojman instead fixed on Augustine’s “definition” in *On Predestination of credo* (sic) as “thinking with assent.” In so doing, Pojman emphasized Augustine’s interpretation of believing as “obeying authority,” by which Augustine would have meant the Church. Augustine’s own fights against heresy, presented by Pojman with little nuance or context, and his insistence on believing that God is Trinity in *On the Trinity*, earned him in Pojman’s estimation the evaluation of having been far more propositional than affective.

Pojman saw Augustine as having related love not to faith but to knowledge, which Pojman connects strongly with the will – the will to find knowledge. In Pojman’s Augustine, belief is necessary due to insufficient evidence for knowledge and due to sin’s corruption of the will (though not of the reason, intellect, or noetic faculties, which could find God still, if not for

103 Ibid., 8.
104 Ibid., 29.
105
106 Ibid., 29.
the warped will blocking it). Pojman was so intent on identifying in Augustine the synthesis of Biblical notions of belief with “Neoplatonic” thought, that he almost entirely missed Augustine’s strongest emphases on the former – understandably, as they are found in his preaching.

Pojman missed a major aspect of faith, especially as it is developed in late Augustine (whose inclusion of prevenient grace Pojman brushed off as a late development), the personal God as object of faith, rather than the authority of Church alone as faith’s object. Such a view only takes the believer as far as credere Deo. No wonder Pojman was dissatisfied. If Pojman contended that Augustine held that faith was all that is needed only because of a need to include the masses who would never get gnostis (later deciding no one could attain gnostis in this life), why ignore his theology for the masses, that is, his preaching on belief? Further, if Pojman was correct that all Augustine was concerned with was faith in the Church and its authority, later commentary (recall Conscience and Construction of Piers Plowman above in Chapter 2) that questioned the appropriateness of applying the unique sense of proper belief in(to) God to the Church would have had no grounding. Finally, Augustine was not just another philosopher, but a pastor! TeSelle has indicated that Augustine used credere in the sense of trust far more often than that of fidelity/authority/promise-kept. Most ironic is the fact that Pojman went on to begin the chapter on Aquinas by lamenting that, in the Middle Ages, “as there were often

107 Ibid., 27.
108 Ibid., 30-31.
109 Ibid., 23.
110 TeSelle, 347.
different emphases in different parts of Augustine’s works, successive theologians latched on to one emphasis rather than the other, as they saw fit.”

Pojman contended that the majority of commentators in the Middle Ages had focused primarily on affective aspects of faith in Augustine and had erred in this focus, as Pojman contended that Augustine’s predominant emphasis was on the propositional aspect, not the “affective/connative” one. Pojman did not qualify this assessment with an indication of whether this predominance was evident from quantity of mentions of each throughout the Augustinian corpus or the import of the distinct genres of works within which he had mentioned each, but he did define the affective emphasis as he saw it arising in commentaries from the Middle Ages. With reference to Hugh St. Victor’s De Fide as exemplar of this affective emphasis, he associated it with language of the mind and certainty. Opposing it to Peter Abelard’s more propositional “supposing,” Pojman perceived the affective as having won the day, until the arrival of Thomas Aquinas.

Pojman considered the work of Aquinas on faith a return to the synthesis he claimed to have identified in Augustine, between the propositional and the affective (with the former dominating on Pojman’s reading of Augustine), likely because he saw Aquinas as using Augustine’s “thinking with assent” definition. He perceived Aquinas to have been describing

111 Ibid., 32.
112 Ibid.
113 Love has no place in the discussion, on this analysis, let alone the relational. It is all thought, ranked somewhere (according to Hugh St. Victor) “greater than opinion but less than science” (Pojman quoting De Fide, 2).
114 Ibid.
115 Ibid., 33.
faith – a cognitive state between opinion and knowledge similar to Abelard’s description thereof – as a holding pattern of sorts until the beatific vision. Aquinas had reserved charity and the affective for association with knowledge, not with faith or belief.

Yet Augustine had not insisted on so sharp a dichotomy in faith or belief as described in the formula. If anything, Augustine’s contrast is between propositional and relational belief, which does not map perfectly onto Aquinas. Perhaps part of the problem is that Pojman’s summary of Aquinas on faith is based in part on his *Summa Theologiae* IIa IIae, but not on IIa IIae q2a 2, in which Aquinas had dealt directly with Augustine’s formula! As a result, Augustine was not even mentioned in Pojman’s footnote to a brief discussion of the Reformers’ use (or not) of Thomas Aquinas, with Luther having made a distinction between belief-that and belief-in “as few before him.” In that discussion, Pojman referred to Luther as having emphasized commitment, with “greater emphasis on the aspect of trust than in Aquinas or any of the medievalists,” among whom he must not have counted Bede nor Lombard.

In the chapter from *Religious Belief and the Will* that was widely published as the popular essay entitled “Faith, Doubt, and Hope,” Pojman also acknowledged commitment. Here he began by quoting Plantinga that “the mature believer, the mature theist, does not typically accept belief in God tentatively, or hypothetically, or until something better comes along…(but rather)

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116 Ibid. He also reviewed *De Veritate* Question 14, and drew definitions of virtues and relationships between the theological virtues as they had appeared in ST 1a2ae.

117 Ibid., 240 n.6.

118 Ibid, 38.
commits himself (sic) to belief in God (and) accepts belief in God as basic.”

We have already covered in Audi’s discussion of Plantinga the ways in which basicality is understood to mean foundational to one’s noetic structure, rather than being dependent on other things a believer believes. The quotation might seem a curious introduction to Pojman’s addressing of the problem for “many religious people” of “doubting various credal (sic) statements in their religions” and his consideration of the “importance of belief in religion and in life in general.”

It served, however, as the counterpoint to his thesis suggesting that “there is at least one other (religious) attitude which may be adequate for religious faith even in the absence of belief, that attitude being hope.”

He focused on the existence of God as shorthand for all doctrines, contending that his analysis “could be applied mutatis mutandis to many other important doctrines in religion (e.g., the Incarnation and the doctrine of the Trinity).” Flattening the distinctions of Incarnation and Trinity (and numerous remaining doctrines) in this way did not take into account the relationships between doctrines, let alone between God and humans, or between Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Because of this choice, Pojman never covered even so much as everything in involved in credere Deum, let alone the remaining two thirds of the formula.

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119 Ibid., 212.

120 Ibid.

121 Ibid., 212-213. He continued, “I shall develop a concept of faith as hope as an alternative to the usual notion that makes propositional belief that God exists a necessary condition for faith, as Plantinga implies in the quotation above.” Whether or not Plantinga agreed with Pojman’s assessment, in this dissertation I agree with Plantinga that we must get beyond propositional belief. However, unlike Pojman, in Plantinga’s language of commitment that can be united with the relational sense of belief to supersede the anxiety about accepting propositions.

122 Ibid., 213.
His approach to the subject of religious people’s moments of doubt was to identify these people’s plights as the result of their having studied philosophical proofs for God’s existence and found themselves unable to identify belief that God exists as properly basic.123 This in turn troubled them, he contended. He then depicted them as praying a prayer rooted in the line made famous in Bertrand Russell’s retort to the question of what he would do if he were to meet God upon his death, “Not enough evidence!” Their prayer would be, “God, if you exist, show me better evidence.”124

One problem with this presentation is that the study of philosophical proofs is not the only, nor perhaps the most common, cause of doubt in religious people, but that matter is outside the scope of the present work. A more pressing issue within the population on whom he focused, is the demand of the prayer for “better evidence!”

The possible responses to this prayer are worth pondering. While it is inappropriate to attempt divine perspective, one still might wonder who gets to set the standard of evidence? What is considered dependable data for deity? Perhaps deity’s appearance in physical form, perceptible by five human senses,125 would be an empiricist’s preference, but what would make that data reliable, particularly if deity is not of the same category of being as humanity? Setting aside messianic controversy and the argument that such an appearance already has occurred in the birth, miraculous life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus, how is One so very other to

123 Ibid.

124 Ibid.

125 See the footnote in the next chapter (4.1) on Augustine’s considering the five senses as needed but inadequate without the guidance of God-given intelligence, in his preaching on John 4 and the five husbands of the woman at the well.

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provide evidence satisfactory to the demanding other? The question of reliability of noetic faculties need not enter into the equation yet. Nor is it only the figure of biblical Job hearing from the whirlwind, “Where were you?” who must consider the magnitude of what this prayer prays, and perhaps not arrogance, but categorical error, in doing so. One wouldn’t ask a person to impersonate someone she is not (but whom one knows and considers trustworthy), in an effort to prove that she is who she is (or even that she is, but the analogy breaks down there). Such persons consider volitional means of belief unethical yet clearly seek evidence in line with their will to believe by requesting “better evidence.”

Pojman might reply to the suggestion that evidence misses the point, then, with his originally stated question, “Why have religious creeds made propositional belief a necessary condition for salvation?” Here he used the word salvation interchangeably with what he had called, “essential benefits of religion.”126 His concern is that “these people have the unwelcome prospect of being denied the benefits of religious faith altogether or, at least, of being designated ‘immature theists’, since faith with belief is generally regarded by orthodoxy as the sole manner of being a genuine believer with the benefits of salvation.”127 What is the end sought – what are these benefits? Depending on the tradition of the believer answering that question, they may mean to overcome evil, to escape eternal death, to know and enjoy God fully, or something else altogether.128

126 Pojman, 212, 214.

127 Ibid., 214.

128 The quotation that Pojman had added to Plantinga’s on the first page of the essay hints at an escape from prison, but absent the context of the original text from which it came, John Perry’s A Dialogue on Personal Identity and Immortality, it is hard to say if the prison is simply the human condition, sin, a lack of a sense of belonging, etc.
Those possibilities, however, come from faith traditions. They are theological. Pojman was a philosopher, who turned to virtues of the attitude of belief that sound like benefits of religious belief. He identified and criticized the virtues as they had appeared in C. S. Peirce’s essay “The Fixation of Belief.” These are “(1) its ability to give intellectual and emotional surcease to the pain and insecurity of doubt and (2) its action-guiding function.”

Pojman refuted the first by wrongly suggesting that belief includes “Such absolute confidence (as) certainly does offer a pleasant feeling of security, as well as a sense of rest from the further search for truth on this issue.” Here Pojman saw an advantage rather to doubt, as doubt might help one keep questioning and get deeper answers. Pojman equates security to satisfaction, with no room to consider that such confidence builds relationship with One whom Christian tradition describes as the very depth of mystery itself and who continues to invite the pursuit of new questions as well as the deeper understanding of existing ones. Knowing that part of the benefits allows for relief of pain but still plumbing the depths of truth with trust in relationship and openness either to correction or deeper insight might help the person concerned about the ethics of belief in this case. But Pojman’s view of deity does not allow such depth.

He refuted the second virtue (beliefs’ functioning as guides of action) on the basis of its suggestion that “belief is a necessary condition for action,” again problematizing propositions’ worthiness of belief and erring on the side of possibility. Even as he had suggested from the

129 Ibid., 214.
130 Ibid., 215.
131 Ibid., 215-16.
beginning of the entire work that believing has been overvalued, he now appeared to be overvaluing risk and probability in their ability to motivate and sustain action.  

He offered multiple examples (including gamblers placing bets at the racetrack and Columbus’s sailors leaving for Spain without belief that the earth was round) of possibility and cost-benefits analysis to deny that belief must guide action. As he contended instead that weak probability could, affected by factors like strong desire for a thing one believes less likely, he failed to take into consideration degrees of belief as Price had and also failed to consider the sustainability of such action over time, versus action guided by deeply-held beliefs. All of this analysis continued to be entrenched in the propositional.

Here the lack of particularity that comes with flattening all doctrines into “the existence of God” became especially problematic. Pojman sought to develop faith as hope (making hay of the theological virtues in the process) as a sufficient substitute for the commitment of which Plantinga had written in describing the mature theist. Is it coherent for the one who rejects natural and other evidence of God’s existence as insufficient for agreement to propositional belief to ask the One in whom one does not believe to accept one’s hope as not insufficient for the benefits of salvation? How can hope alone assuage the doubt of troubled believers any more effectively than belief, if they resist the existence of God? Of course, these questions are rendered moot, or are at least are complicated, if *credere in eum* is the sense of belief that constitutes Christian faith.

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132 Ibid., xi.

133 Ibid., 215-16.
Pojman proceeded to explore faith as hope (which suggests a category error in theological terms), rather than faith as belief, without allowing for hope as product of endurance as guaranteed by the Holy Spirit’s pouring of God’s love into human hearts (Romans 5:5). Clearly the existence of God as shorthand for all doctrine does not admit of the exploration of Trinity as easily as he had contended. In this presentation, he seemed to be settling for Price’s belief-in-a theory as the definition of faith and dubbing it “hope.” To begin that presentation, he set out examples of expressions of hope, ranging from Mary’s hopes for a good grade to John’s hope to overcome his desire for a cigarette. None of these beliefs involved religious faith.

“An Analysis of Hope,” thus, began with the six examples of hope that he provided, yielding “certain necessary features of the concept of hope,” the first three of which are relatively unproblematic.\(^\text{134}\) Hope:

1) “involves belief in possibility of a state of affairs obtaining” (that it is not impossible)

2) “precludes certainty” (he here quoted Romans 8:24)

3) “entails the desire for the state of affairs in question to obtain or the proposition to be true.”

The fourth feature of hope that Pojman identified, however, did not aid in defining hope as an alternative to (or alternate definition of) faith:

4) “If one hopes for \(p\), one will be disposed to do what one can to bring \(p\) about, if there is anything one can do to bring it about.”\(^\text{135}\)

\(^{134}\) Ibid., 217.

\(^{135}\) Ibid., 219.
This feature may have worked for the examples of hope for good grades, a marriage proposals’ acceptance, a bet on a race paying off or a past sports event’s outcome having been good, favorable weather, and overcoming addiction in John and Mary that he was analyzing, but it fails to obtain with regard to the major propositions of Christianity. There is nothing one can do to bring about the existence of God or any of the propositions of Christian creeds. Absent the understanding that belief that God exists, believing God, and believing into God are a unique formula of Christian belief, his hope could be perceived as having fallen short of being sufficient for Christian salvation vis a vis the “benefits of religious belief” for this particular religion.

His analysis led to consideration of the question whether hoping, though it did not need propositional belief-that (beyond the possibility-that), nevertheless needed to entail “Believing-in or trusting (which) is a relational attitude.” It is a curious question to have raised here after neglecting this attitude as irrelevant to his project, throughout both this essay and the entire work. This neglect would not have been the case, if he had attended to the credere formula! His thought experiment revealed the way in which Pojman’s lack of familiarity with the formula undermined his understanding of belief-in – one cannot rationally “trust in” someone without believing him/her trustworthy, let alone existent. His reliance on mere possibility here seems implausible and renders belief-in, or “profound, desperate hope,” unsustainable.137

136 Ibid., 222.
137 Ibid., 224
The answer appears to be a resounding “NO,” to Pojman’s question, “Can we apply this analysis of profound hope to religious faith without loss?” It is indicative of a serious problem that he proceeded to discuss religious faith with the question, “Can we have religious faith in a religion like Christianity without believing that the object of faith exists?” The faith is in Christ, not in Christianity (which is an object that exists, as religion and a system of belief). He appealed to Aaron as a model of the virtue of doubt and of “living as if” (unwise, considering the actions of deception for which Aaron is punished in the Pentateuch). Pojman defended his notion of the vast gulf between faith and belief with a dismissal of the famed verse Hebrews 11:6 as “illicit entailment” or rhetorical exaggeration, without any recourse to another source! It can’t be illicit or rhetorical exaggeration if God is a present character all throughout the Scriptures, and particularly in Hebrews! Pojman altered scripture after the fashion of Bertrand Russell (whom he imagined an archangel correcting the catechesis of Calvin and Barth, figures he mystifyingly placed on a par with Billy Graham and Jerry Falwell). Pojman allowed no entailment between the states of belief that God exists and belief in God, because he did not know the formula!!

His one agreement with William James on the “notion of theism being a live option” that entails living as if God exists without actually believing it. This “living as if” sounds dangerously close to “Lord, did we not prophesy in your name?” The response to that question in

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138 Ibid., 226.
139 Ibid., 226-7
140 Ibid., 228.
141 Ibid., 230.
142 Ibid., 228-9.
the gospel is, “Away from me, I never knew you!” (Matthew 7:21-23). One cannot be in relationship with One who does not exist. Familiarity with Augustine’s preaching on John 6-7 that doing the work of God is believing into the One whom God has sent would have brought this matter home to Pojman.

Pojman might have conducted this thought experiment: John wants to ask Mary to marry him but doesn’t believe that she exists because he doubts his senses. On the other hand, what if she gave only interim assent to his proposal, or to their marriage vows? Nonsense! No one rational says, “I do not believe that this bucket has a bottom, but I am going to pour my last gallon of water into it hoping that there is.” At the end of the day, one’s strongest commitments will not be to what one does not believe to be real.

If only Pojman had admitted of degrees of belief and acquaintance with the formula earlier in life. His equation of “creedal belief” as “rigid belief” and insistence that “too much emphasis may have been placed on creedal affirmation in the past,” demonstrates the extent to which credere in + accusative needs to be understood relationally, even with the creeds. Pojman avowed, “I think (contra Gutting) it is a rather narrow notion of ‘passionate longing’ which rules out impartial inquiry.” I agree, but inquiry must be into one who exists and wants to be inquired into! I also agree that manipulation of mind or pretending are not good, but what

143 Ibid., 232.
144 Ibid.
Pojman described as “experimental faith or hopeful commitment” seems a different version of the same problem.\footnote{Ibid., 231. A problem arises when pairing “experimental” with “faith” for anyone familiar with the 19th century Holiness movement, in which figures like Phoebe Palmer used the word “experimental” as synonymous with “experienced” or “experiential,” as in “She felt in experimental verity that it was not in vain she had believed;” Phoebe Palmer, \textit{The Way of Holiness With Notes By the Way; Being a Narrative of Religious Experience Resulting From a Determination to Be a Bible Christian}. (New York: Printed for the Author, 1854), 43. Ironically, Pojman might have identified with aspects of Palmer’s struggles when she lacked assurance of salvation (though she never reported doubt of God’s existence).}

The three-step formula is aimed at worship by a person loving God with all one’s heart, mind, soul, and strength, rather than a fragmented person hoping with most of some of the above. Surely a better way exists to present the mercy of God toward those who doubt. A gentler presentation of the doctrine of assurance might have helped Pojman, as would awareness of the formula.

\textit{3.2.4 Basil Mitchell}

Though he appears to have been no more aware than Pojman, Audi, or Price of Augustine’s formula, Basil Mitchell is the most promising interlocutor on the issue of the relational sense that is its culmination. The aspect of belief as guide to living that leads to human flourishing is clearly discernible in Mitchell’s attention to \textit{fides} and \textit{fiducia}, a potential analogue to \textit{credere in Deum}, which appeared in his signature presentations of cumulative case arguments in two major works. In the first, \textit{The Justification of Religious Belief}, he declared that it is not possible, let alone profitable, to attempt either to prove or to disprove the existence of the God of Christian theism.\footnote{Basil Mitchell. \textit{The Justification of Religious Belief. Philosophy of Religion Series}. (New York: Seabury Press, 1974), 39.} He acknowledged the paradox of conflicting arguments to the contrary,
owing in part to “the subtlety and complexity of the issues and the enormous difficulty of making explicit the grounds of deep conviction.”\textsuperscript{147} Without addressing Augustine at all, Mitchell made room to be placed in dialogue with the informal \textit{credere} formula as he “argued that conclusions in matters of religion are typically arrived at by a process of cumulative argument developed in an essentially informal way.”\textsuperscript{148} By breaking free from the inductive-deductive paradigm, this cumulative-case approach dovetails well with the formula, which itself lacks a formal \textit{ordo credentis} from \textit{credere Deum} to \textit{credere Deo to credere in Deum}, but which can be understood as involving cumulative features.

On the way to the late chapter in which Mitchell presented \textit{fides} and \textit{fiducia} in \textit{Justification and Religious Belief}, he noted that efforts to prove or disprove the existence of “the God of Christian theism” result in the sense that “It is hard not to feel that we have been through a series of intellectual exercises which are somewhat remote from the considerations which really prompt men (sic) to belief or unbelief.”\textsuperscript{149} Refusing to accept the alternative that religion cannot be rationally assessed, Mitchell proceeded to argue for a cumulative case that “is rational, but does not take the form of a strict proof or argument from probability.”\textsuperscript{150} It is in this way that he assessed the rationality of Christian theism. Abandoning the narrow enterprise of the truth or

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{147} Ibid., 21.
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\textsuperscript{149} Mitchell, \textit{Justification}, 34.
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\textsuperscript{150} Ibid., 39.
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falsehood of God’s existence (which addresses nothing more than *credere Deum* in the formula’s terms) enabled him instead to embark upon a project in which “what is being supported rationally is a whole cluster of beliefs which hang together and which need to be evaluated not just in isolation but as a whole.”\(^{151}\)

This notion of belief clusters hanging together compares to the way in which *credere Deo* works in the formula, by an accumulation, for example, of witness to the ways in which God’s promises are borne out in the life, death, and resurrection of Christ. These hang together to support as a whole the rationality of identifying Jesus as the Son of God. Mitchell made it clear that the basic framework and usefulness of cumulative case argument is unique neither to Christian theism nor to philosophy by proffering examples from literary and historical criticism, as well as physical science, also noting its availability to both the atheist and the agnostic.\(^{152}\) While he argued that commitment is not an alien concept to any of these other fields or perspectives, he distinguished, in moral, political, and religious systems, greater involvement than in the sciences of “the entire personalities of their adherents, since it is among their chief functions to teach men (sic) how to live.”\(^{153}\) Within that distinction he further distinguished the *unconditional* nature of belief that Christian faith entails.


\(^{152}\) Mitchell, *Justification*, 1-2 (45-57, 75-95) and Abraham, 19.

Mitchell’s exposition here of the “sense of ‘faith’ as ‘trusting reliance upon God’ (‘fides’ in the sense of ‘fiducia’)” comes close to my relational emphasis.\textsuperscript{154}

There is a sense in which Christian faith is unconditional. The only way out of the impasse\textsuperscript{155} is to conclude that the sense in which faith is unconditional is a different one, which is indeed peculiar to a theistic religion. This is the sense of ‘faith’ as ‘trusting reliance upon God’ (‘fides’ in the sense of ‘fiducia’). The theist is bound to maintain his trust in God’s goodness and mercy, no matter what dangers and difficulties confront him. So Job can say, ‘Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.’ He is lacking in faith if he extends his trust only so far as the course of events seems to justify it. Faith, in this sense, is analogous to faith in a person, which is a necessary condition of any stable and profound personal relationship, and must go beyond the evidence that is ordinarily available to justify it. Like faith in another person, it presupposes the existence of its object.\textsuperscript{156}

“Trusting reliance upon God” is an appropriate distinction for this Latin word, as “reliance” is one of the few, specific nuances of meaning assigned to fiducia, which comes from the same root as the much more broadly definable word fides.\textsuperscript{157} It is different than mere assent, loyalty, and even obedience.

As with the contrast that Augustine has drawn between the demons’ believing Jesus (credere ei) and their not believing into Jesus (credere in eum), or between the way hearers believe the testimony of the Apostles and yet do not believe into them, Mitchell drew a contrast between faith in general and unconditional faith “as trusting reliance upon God.” Unlike the expectations with faith in general, this unconditional faith unique to theism generates adherence

\textsuperscript{154} Ibid., 139.

\textsuperscript{155} That is, between “faith” that operates in both secular and religious contexts and unconditional “faith”

\textsuperscript{156} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{157} In Notre Dame’s online Latin-English dictionary of “William Whitaker’s Words” mentioned here in Chapter 1, for example, fides is listed as having a wide range of meanings (“faith, loyalty; honesty; credit; confidence, trust, belief; good faith”), whereas fiducia is listed as having a shorter, more conceptually limited range of meaning (“trust, confidence; faith, reliance; courage”).
even in the face of adversity, the illustration of contra-appearances “trust in him” coming from the Hebrew Bible’s Job. For all the usefulness of cumulative case arguments, this trusting in (or believing into) defies evidence that does not justify it…relying on present evidence, however it may seem to mount, represents a lack of *fiducia*. Then Mitchell made the move that best points to parallel with *credere in Deum*: its analogy to “faith in a person, which is a necessary condition of any stable and profound personal relationship, and must go beyond the evidence that is ordinarily available to justify it.” Of course the relationship described by Augustine as believing into Christ, to love, to cherish, and to go into him, and be incorporated in his members, is profound and at the same time goes beyond evidence (the believer does not suddenly physically resemble Jesus, for example). It also presupposes, at least in *In Jo Ev*, the existence of Christ. Not until *Sermo CLXIV* will Augustine have drawn the *credere in eum* contrast with *credere eum*.

But what about challenging circumstances that might make the believer suspect the lack of God’s existence and be tempted to give up faith?

The temptation to apostasy is really a temptation, and the fact that the believer’s relation to God is a personal one gives it a somewhat different character from the kind of temptation that a man may experience to give up a purely secular faith. Just as it is sometimes a duty to believe in a man when appearances are against him, it is a duty to believe in God when the appearances are against him; and the human situation is such that the appearances are often against his existing at all. A faith which could not cope with this predicament would be of little value.\footnote{Mitchell, *Justification*, 140.}

“Temptation” is itself a word intrinsic to relationship, and especially relationship as described in the Bible. Once again Mitchell was right to note the difference between the general and the
specific, in this case between temptation in general and temptation with respect to unconditional faith. His mention of “duty” must be placed in the context not of a deontological argument, but of a personal relationship. The question is not merely moral, nor is this pursuit that of Aristotelian *eudaemonium*, per se.

Without falling into the trap of describing a God so radically other as to be undetectable (which would lead to the difficulty of being also incapable of relationship, potentially), Mitchell here acknowledges the unique nature of the personal relationship with God and the unconditional faith that believing-into constitutes. The coping mechanism may not have been directly addressed here by Mitchell, but it may be useful for us to recall that Augustine has addressed believing in order to understand at the introduction of the discussion of *credere in eum* in *In Jo Ev* (see Chapter 14). Again, when distinguishing *credere in eum* from *credere eum* in *Sermo CXLIV*, Augustine is equally unimpressed by one who believes in the existence or true identity of Christ as do the demons. This sermon also contains the suggestion of Christ’s reciprocal “coming into” the believer who unites hope and love to faith in order to believe into him. Unconditional Christian faith, then, is constituted by this believing that Augustine unites with hope and love.

For Mitchell, though unconditional faith is distinct from faith in general,

…it is not possible to treat these two senses of ‘faith’ quite separately. It must affect a man’s [*sic*] faith in Christianity’s world-view that failure to maintain it can be one way of failing in trusting reliance on God; and the believer cannot but recognize that his faith in God is bound up with his belief in Christianity. Nevertheless, when due allowance has been made for this, it is an error to assimilate faith in Christianity to faith in God and to credit the former with the unconditional character that belongs only to the latter. To do this is to remove the rational constraints which maintain the essential connection between the system of Christian belief and the many and various considerations upon which it rests.
The argument of theologians are then left without rational support and beyond reach of rational criticism.\textsuperscript{159}

Mitchell acknowledged appropriately that content – the propositions – and the unconditional faith that is rooted in personal relationship are closely related. The cluster of beliefs taken together as a whole in traditional Christian theism are important means, though arguably not the exclusive means,\textsuperscript{160} by which the believer comes to know and continues to relate to the Christ into whom she or he believes.

Mitchell noted, however, that accounting for this connection does not mean rendering the two univocal. Put in terms of the formula, believing in Christianity is not the same as believing into Christ. The difference is what leads to the unconditional character of this faith, or rather who – the One upon whom the trusting reliance rests. Many embrace the tenets and propositions, the content of the faith as if they are rules and are the full extent of faith. Assent to them is all that matters. Trusting reliance upon them, however, without relationship with and reliance upon the One whom they describe, is at best a reliance only on oneself to complete a transaction one may perceive to be described therein and is far from unconditional trust. Its rationality is indefensible.

While Mitchell did not define or elaborate upon the “considerations” from which such an approach disconnects “the Christian system of belief,” by associating the considerations logically with unconditional faith in(to) God, he associated them with Godself. When the faith is

\textsuperscript{159} Mitchell, \textit{Justification}, 141.

\textsuperscript{160} I have in mind here religious experience, of course, such as assurance by the Holy Spirit in the heart of the believer of one’s salvation by Christ or of the presence of God, as well as means of grace through which the Spirit works, including sacraments. One may argue that the believer becomes able to articulate such experience primarily through the clusters of beliefs to which s/he is exposed in Scripture and tradition, and that the sacraments do not occur apart from the naming of beliefs in the creeds, but that is a matter for another dissertation.
disassociated from God, theologians’ arguments about the faith are rendered irrational and cannot be criticized.

The fact that faith, even unconditional faith, must admit of criticism is something Mitchell made clear in his later work, *Faith and Criticism*. There he again treated *fides* in the sense of *fiducia*, as follows:

Faith is a word with a number of related meanings, and when this question (of whether the theoretical possibility that a believer may be wrong entails that “our faith, although whole-hearted, cannot be unconditional”) is raised, I think that two of them have become confused. I have been talking throughout these chapters about faith in the sense of ‘believing that.’ To have faith in God, that he [sic] created us and loves us, and so on. But there is another sense of ‘faith’ in which it means ‘trusting reliance upon God,’ and it is in that sense that faith is indeed unconditional. As Christians, we are bound to maintain our trust in God’s goodness and mercy no matter what dangers and difficulties confront us. Our obedience is absolute. But faith, so understood, is inextricably bound up with the whole system of Christian belief; and the fact that, within that system, faith is rightly seen as unconditional does not imply that faith in the other sense, faith in the system itself, i.e. belief that there is a God, etc., must also be unconditional. As Austin Farrer once put it, ‘God cannot be trusted to exist.’

Here the distinction that Mitchell drew between the two types of faith served a different purpose, that of indicating how the Christian faith practiced by what the formula enables us to call believers into Christ can be held unconditionally but remain open to criticism. This passage from Mitchell differs little from the treatment of *fides* in the sense of *fiducia* in *The Justification of Religious Belief*, except that he elaborated on the propositional content, giving examples of the predicates of “believing that.” Such propositional beliefs, he made clear once more, do not constitute the entirety of Christian faith. That which is “inextricably bound up with” it, the

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unconditional faith, does not exclude the possibility of questioning and criticizing the system itself. Nor need the commitment to trusting and obeying perceive threat from criticism.

In a way that addresses well Pojman’s concerns about the inadmissibility of questioning by believers, Mitchell demonstrated that criticism does not contradict or threaten conviction.

Nevertheless, the unconditional nature of our trust in God, of our faith in him in that sense, does have a bearing on the nature of our belief in him, in the sense of ‘belief that…,’ and our willingness to expose it to criticism. For it assumes that all truth is God’s truth and that, if we are honest in our search for truth and at the same time loyal to the signs we have been given, we shall not ultimately be misled. We shall find the signs God has given us to be truthful, and that the truth, as we explore it, will increasingly illustrate and illuminate those signs. Those of us who are, in the sense I have given the word, liberals in theology are, I think, entitled to ask which attitude shows the greater trust in God, that which refuses to submit our traditional formulations of belief to criticism, or that which is confident that, if we put them to the test of reason and experience, we shall be led in the end to a fuller understanding of them and a firmer conviction of their truth.  

Once again, as he had in defending the rationality of belief within traditional Christian theism, Mitchell applied to religious faith what he first showed to be true of convictions in general. It is fitting, as Mitchell was maintaining the same aim as in that work – of presenting an argument true to the way in which believers really do think. He rejected the notion that openness to criticism diminishes commitment or that deep conviction does not admit of careful consideration of questions and pursuit of problems. Considered alongside credere in Deum/Christum/eum,

\[^{162}\text{Ibid., 66.}\] Abraham further observed, in the time between Mitchell’s publication of Justification and his publication of Criticism, that “In fact, the testing of the tradition is something that takes place over time, and is not therefore something to be decided in an instant. The community nurtures within itself a band of scholars and critics who explore the depths and horizons of the faith and report back on their findings…. Again and again, the prevailing expression of the tradition has to be adjusted in the light of new knowledge and fresh testing.” (Abraham, 36).

\[^{163}\text{Mitchell, Criticism, 46.}\]

\[^{164}\text{Mitchell, Justification, 2-3, and Criticism, 11.}\]
these observations advance the notion of how it is that the relational sense of belief allows for both confidence in the One into whom the believer believes and bold surrender to the other.

Without the unconditional faith, in fact, there may be a shallowness or quick-adherence to propositions that makes believers nervous that going too carefully over another position will convert them to it. Thus the bold surrender of credere in Deum to the Person of Jesus Christ and entry into the relationship that is the Trinity grants a peace with this practice of going carefully over another's position out of love for that other and out of freedom from fear that correction to one's current position automatically obviates everything one believes.

Mitchell perceived a development of character that enhances the ability to apprehend that which is believed, so the one whose character grows thus more Christlike will in fact be both more confident in relationship with God and more humble in encountering the questions posed to him or her by fellow humans. As practitioners “persevere in some particular approach to the subject” in the face of large questions, they are “maintaining a tradition and subscribing to a recognizable ‘school of thought’” which overlaps with philosophies and world-views that bear “moral as well as other practical implications.” Mitchell continued:

The latter offer the individual a ‘faith to live by’ and in living by them he or she develops a distinctive character. Convictions are not the sort of things we just happen to have and which we could shed at a moment’s notice; we are the people we are largely because of the convictions which we have made our own and which in turn have shaped us. They affect the way we see the world, how we view other people and how we respond to them. In our relations with others, especially those we know and love, we have no alternative but to trust them, and that implies

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165 Mitchell, Justification, 131. Mitchell considers whether it may be necessary to acquire “a suitable sort of character” in order to apprehend certain truths. There is a great deal to be said for the acquisition of such character resulting from the greater pursuit of the problems and questions of the One into whom one believes.

166 Mitchell, Criticism, 47.
also trusting the convictions that we have about what people in general are like. Of course we do not, when we are trying to help someone in distress, theorize consciously about the causes and effects of suffering or the nature and degrees of moral responsibility, but we draw upon all our resources of understanding in such a situation.  

Again Mitchell deftly identified the way that a believer’s thinking really does work, in the context of the unconditional faith relationship and informed by the propositions, even if not consciously lining out each one for careful analysis in the moment of faith-in-action.

Thus it is that Mitchell depicted Christian revelation not as invitation to abandonment of intellect, but rather as fully engaging both it and imagination:

> I suggested in the last chapter that ‘if we start with the Christian revelation itself and what we are committed to by accepting it, there is no bar to the full exertion of our intellectual energies.’ Trust in a person, and even more so, trust in God, engages the emotions, the imagination, and the will, because it engages the whole person and, by that same token, engages the intellect as well.  

“Engagement of the whole person” sounds like a key component of the human flourishing made possible by credere in Deum. The balance of epistemic humility and hearty adherence depicted by Mitchell is struck by the relational sense as essential to and constitutive of the Christian faith.

### 3.3 Closing Thoughts on Analytic Philosophers and Belief-into

To be clear, only Mitchell, out of all of these philosophers, set out with a focus on Christian theism, the rest considering nothing more specific than theism. So to some extent a question underlying this comparison has been whether and what the relational sense of “belief into,” so specific to Christ, can contribute beyond its own peculiarity. To this challenge, it is not out of bounds to answer that there need not be a contribution beyond Christianity of something

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167 Ibid.

168 Mitchell, Criticism, 86.
so peculiar to it. Nevertheless, it contributes an example of something other than despairing of a lack of assent and offers corrections to Christianity as mere credere Deum that might be welcome relief to those so despairing.

It is tempting to make the friendly amendment that if Price, Audi, Pojman and even Mitchell were to have incorporated the relational sense into their use of “belief in,” I would perhaps lighten my pressure for the awkward translation of “belief into.” However, I wonder how they would so succinctly make the distinction that “belief into” automatically carries, if even major theologians, who have not chosen to make the relational sense central to their works, let alone constitutive of the Christian faith, have nevertheless needed paragraphs to describe it.

Schleiermacher, in his description of the doctrine of Regeneration, addressed “faith” as going hand in hand with repentance and describing “the appropriation of the perfection and blessedness of Christ.” He argued that it involves turning towards the Redeemer with a change of heart, and is the “translation of the word by which the original language of Scripture defines the inward condition of one who feels content and strong in fellowship with Christ.” None of this language directly maps onto the formula sufficiently to fit our understanding of the relational sense of belief into Christ, however.

Excerpts from Karl Rahner come closer to mapping onto the formula. In works as varied as Theological Investigations Volume IX, Foundations of the Christian Faith, and The Love of Christ and the Love of Neighbor, he did briefly describe faith in Christ in ways that gesture

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170 Ibid., 483. Note that in this passage, Schleiermacher appeals to Augustine, but to the Confessions, not to any of the attention Augustine gives to credere.
toward the relational sense. In *Theological Investigations*, he first addressed faith as “recognizing Jesus as the Christ,” which signifies occurrence, similar to *credere Christum* (arguably involving *credere Christo*, if recognition is perceived to be as a result of witnessing Jesus’s miracles, for example, as proofs of his Messiahship). He added to that definition “an absolute trust” that entails a “radical self-committal of the whole person to Jesus Christ.” It depends on Jesus’ own self-surrender to God and union of humanity and God. Later, in *Foundations of the Christian Faith*, while discussing the hypostatic union, he identified a result of God’s self-giving in Christ: “self-transcendence of the spirit of all (human) spiritual subjects into God.” Again, it is not an exact match to the formula but does have echoes of “belief into.” Finally, in *The Love of Jesus and The Love of Neighbor*, Rahner called for new, more exact expressions of response to God’s coming near to and loving us in Christ and union with Christ, of “what it is we seize on as his reality when we believe in Jesus himself.” He went on to describe “a love of total surrender,” which must be “this radical, unconditional, self-assured love…” that a human being has only if enjoying “absolute and definitive union with God.” He went so far as to affirm that a “seemingly innocuous relationship of unconditional trust in Jesus can be charged with the

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172 Ibid., 166.

173 Ibid., 167.


176 Ibid., 41-42.
whole of classical Christology,” and that this relationship can be expected of ordinary
Christians.¹⁷⁷ Neither Schleiermacher nor Rahner fully utilized nor otherwise addressed bodily
imagery and its implications, though Rahner more than hints at the element of bold surrender of
the whole self to Christ and uses language of “union.”

The complexity of both Schleiermacher’s and Rahner’s works raises a further concern. It
lies in the fact that both theologians’ works require an advanced level of reading and
comprehension and are not accessible to all who will encounter the creeds and sacraments. One
would be hard-pressed to designate their arguments as conforming to Mitchell’s requirement of
his own work, that it conform to the way that believers (in general) really do think. I propose an
effort to translate and pronounce in creeds and liturgy the phrases now rendered “I believe in
God” that originated as credere in Deum to be read instead “I believe into God…” I suggest
teaching the formula in catechumenal formation as a way to be unafraid of the offense of the
gospel and to transform the merely propositional into means of reaching the relational at last.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., 60-61.
CHAPTER 4

Restoring the Relational Sense as Constitutive of the Christian Faith

While it stops short of insisting on a formal *ordo credentis*,¹ this chapter describes the way that *credere Deum* and *credere Deo* work and relate to *credere in Deum*, both building on and departing from Augustine in describing these operations. It makes use of Bernard Lonergan’s transcendental method, as well as Augustine’s own transcending of the Platonist inward turn, to begin describing the operation of *credere in Deum* in generating bold surrender of self in favor of the turn toward God and neighbor.² It next addresses connections between the bodily imagery of the formula and bodily participation in the sacraments, which defines the body of Christ, binding the members to the Head. It calls for a change in translation of related creeds (Apostles’ and Nicene³) to start “I believe into God…” in order to restore the relational understanding of belief into Christ as constitutive of the Christian faith. This suggestion includes instruction in the formula itself that then becomes a lens for viewing the propositional content of the creeds and the doctrines that have developed from them. Approaching the sacraments and

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¹ Both Augustine (in *In Jo Ev* XXIX) and Lonergan make observations that require me to consider timing other than the obvious 1) belief that God exists, 2) believe God’s promises are true, and 3) believe into God. See Bernard Lonergan, *Methodology in Theology*. (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972), 116.


³ “Nicene” is here used as shorthand for the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed.
creeds as affirming the loving placement of all one’s life into God’s hands, in order to be incorporated in Christ’s members, allows believers to see themselves as integrated into those hands that always stretch with love in the direction of all humanity and creation, oneself included. Human and natural flourishing is brought to the fore without supplanting the centrality of the Trinity.

4.1 Operation of the credere formula

This section is brief not so much of necessity as of an abundance of caution, lest this project be perceived as attempting to canonize a theory of knowledge, which William J. Abraham in Crossing the Threshold of Divine Revelation insists the early church did not set out to do and the church ever since considers at its peril.4 That Augustine himself left it up to later receivers of his sermons in which the formula was established informally to systematize it underscores Abraham’s observation that, “Even in the case of figures… (including Augustine), who were intellectuals of the first rank, the epistemological work is often incomplete and operates more as an assumption than a required commitment. Their first commitment was to the faith of the church.”5 Committed as we also are to what is constitutive of the Christian faith, we concern ourselves not so much with how its contents are revealed as with what the believer does with them once received, lest we tumble into a carefully codified epistemology.

4 William J. Abraham, Crossing the Threshold of Divine Revelation. (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2006) 16. In describing Christianity’s canonical heritage as “a network of materials, practices, and persons brought into being by God within the church and intended to heal our wounded and rebellious selves,” Abraham emphasizes his point that this “rich set of theological claims” operates without a single, formal epistemology. “If it had so desired, the church could well have canonized a particular theory of knowledge,” but it did not.

5 Ibid., fn. 24.
“Epistemology,” as Abraham explains, “…is a serious and complex subdiscipline within philosophy. It requires its own expertise and training, yet surely not the kind of expertise or training vouchsafed in baptism or ordination.” By this definition, is what we are after with the formula, especially with *credere in Deum*, epistemological? It may assist the epistemologist in apologetic work, surely, but is it not rather a manner of describing entry into relationship with God on our part, rather than a manner of pinning down revelation on God’s part? This dissertation, as stated at the onset, aims to “restore the relational sense of ‘believing into God’ as constitutive of Christian theology, catechesis, and public discourse, and to connect Christian belief with action to undergird a compelling Christian epistemology and more graceful interfaith dialogue,” regardless of the reader’s preferred epistemological theory. We therefore dare not dwell too much in the minutiae of metaphysical participation in Christ as it operates in the formula, lest we seem to favor some epistemological theories and exclude others. It is for this very reason that methods focusing primarily on interiority, while attractive and somewhat useful, are incomplete and fail to capture the balance between the visible and invisible work of God that Augustine struck in his mature theology.

Take for example the “transcendental method” that Bernard Lonergan discerned in “the procedures of the human mind,” which is “a basic pattern of operations employed in every cognitional enterprise.”6 Lonergan proposed four such operations, “experiencing, understanding,
judging, and deciding”7 operating on multiple levels of “consciousness and intentionality,” levels he identified as “empirical, intellectual, rational, and responsible.”8 Initially this method, which underscores the human spirit’s “capacity for self-transcendence,”9 appears to have sufficient tools to understand the operation of the *credere* formula. Lonergan described “being in love with God” in ways that sound very much like “believing into God.”10 As he went on to define “faith” as “the knowledge born of religious love,” specifically of “God’s love flooding our hearts,” he placed questions of God’s existence and nature as secondary to the decision to love God (or not).11 Here *credere in Deum* supplants *credere Deum* and *credere Deo*, with “the experienced fulfilment of our unrestricted thrust to self-transcendence, in our actuated orientation towards the mystery of love and awe.”12 A new orientation toward the Other is a fitting way to describe believing into God, at least in part.

Limitations in Lonergan’s method for our purposes emerge, however, as it results in a bifurcation of faith and belief, as well as a suggested method for resolving epistemological

7 Ibid., 14. There are also realms, such as common sense, theory, interiority, and transcendence, the last of which is the locus of the “source and core” of religious expression. Other aspects of religious expression belong in the other realms: its method in interiority, preaching and teaching in common sense, and technical unfolding in theory (114).

8 Ibid., 9. The levels unsurprisingly correspond to the operations, as the empirical deals with matters of experience involving (among other things) the senses, the intellectual with understanding and expressing, the rational with reflection that leads to judgment of such things as veracity or probability of a statement, and the responsible with deliberating and deciding on courses of action.

9 Ibid., 105.

10 Ibid.

11 Ibid., 115-116. This reference to Romans 5:5 (cf p. 105) also dovetails well with Augustine’s *credere in eum* and John Wesley’s chief concern, holiness of heart and life made possible by the love of God shed abroad in believers’ hearts, an example of believing into Christ that will emerge here and occupy the next chapter.

12 Ibid.
questions (“to the theologians we must leave them”) of “revelation and inspiration, scripture and tradition, development and authority, schisms and heresies.” It is somewhat helpful that he assigns the operation of “Being in love with God,” which he characterizes as “being in love in an unrestricted fashion” to the highest level of intentionality and consciousness, the responsible. It generates “self-surrender…without limits or qualifications or conditions or reservations” in a way that is “ready to deliberate and judge and decide and act with the easy freedom of those that do all good because they are in love.” This description seems fitting for the element of bold-surrender that believing into God also generates.

Yet while the *ordo credentis*, insofar as there is one, is nicely flexible in subordinating the questions of God’s existence or nature to the question of choosing to love God in response to God’s love, this idea of the faithful doing all good because they are in love raises the question of what end motivates this operation of being in love with God. Lonergan suggested that all the good done reverses the decline of the world, which God has created for humans’ sake, not for God’s sake. The potential implication that believers in love with God do good ultimately for

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13 Ibid., 119. Other limitations include Lonergan’s “broad lines” with which he describes “earlier stages and diverse developments” of religion. He tersely identifies emphasis on religious experience in “Eastern religion” and on prophetic monotheism in “Semitic religion,” while stating in far greater detail that “Western religion cultivated the realm of transcendence through its churches and liturgies, its celibate clergy, its religious orders, congregations, confraternities” (114).

14 Ibid. 107.

15 Ibid.

16 Ibid., 116-117. “To say that God created the world for his glory is to say that he created it not for his sake but for ours” is Lonergan’s gloss of “…Deus suam gloriam non quaerit propter se sed propter nos” from Summa Theologiae Ia IIae, q132 a1 ad im., which I translate as “God does not seek his glory for himself but for us” without the same conclusion about creation or cosmology.
their own and for other humans’ sakes would likely find friction with Augustine, who encouraged the helping of others in order to help them “to love God together with us.”

God’s being loved is the chief end for Augustine, with human flourishing its happy by-product.

The interiority of the transcendental method has caused it to be viewed as part of a “turn toward the subject” in theology, but such a turn might misdirect the believer’s attention to the wrong object. The language of “turn” might bring us perilously close to the Platonist notion, which the mature Augustine had come to reject, that “the way to God is by an inward turn, a kind of solitary contemplation that enables the ascent to a vision of truth.” Plotinus had advanced the unmediated “flight of the alone to the Alone,” an inward turn to escape the world of flesh and attain a solitary vision of truth that influenced Augustine’s early works. Yet Augustine’s later works show that he found it insufficient to heal the sin-sick soul’s turn to self. This turn he perceived as having a precedent even before Genesis, in the turning of evil angels away from God toward themselves. By contrast, “…the truest cause of the happiness of the good angels is

17 Hill, Teaching Christianity, 119: I.29.30.

18 Gaither, 245 fn. 4.

19 James K. Lee. Augustine and the Mystery of the Church. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2017), xxii. Lee repeatedly identifies evidence of Augustine’s maturing beyond this view, in favor of the notion that the turn toward truth cannot be accomplished by humans alone by means of philosophy and the liberal arts. The alternative Augustine chooses, “by participation in a communal body celebrating the sacraments” (xviii) occupies much of the remainder of the present chapter of this dissertation.

20 Ibid., 31.

21 Babcock, City of God, 41: XII.6. “And when we ask about the cause of the misery of the evil angels, what rightly comes to mind is that they turned away from him who supremely is and turned to themselves.” The Latin shows the compound forms of the words turned away from (aversi) and turned to (conversi), thought he action is arguably one and the same. De Civitate Dei XII.6 Cum vero causa miseriae malorum angelorum quaeritur, ea merito occurrit, quod ab illo qui summe est aversi, ad se ipsos conversi sunt, qui non summe sunt.
that they cling to him who supremely is.” The belief of demons and the language of “clinging” used to elucidate the credere formula is recognizable here, prompting us to consider the kind of turns in operation in the formula. Then it is possible to explore the ways in which the alternative understanding that Augustine reached of coming to God in community both bears out the workings of the formula and is enriched by credere in eum.

The notion that the turn toward self is a turn away from God captures how dangerously incomplete the absence of credere in eum renders belief. Credere eum and credere ei by themselves allow the believer to turn inward still and to contemplate the believer’s own assent to God’s existence and to Christ’s identity as Son of God. One may congratulate oneself on having recognized the veracity of the words Christ has spoken and that are spoken about him. The believer having salvation squared away, as it were, there may be nothing more to the Christian faith and life than to keep thinking about these good things and looking forward to attaining the heavenly vision they promise. It may be little more than what Bede decried, a confession of faith arising solely out of fear of punishment, which can be made while still hating Christ. The believer needs only express assent and agree that it is “good thing that” Christ died for sins in order for those who declare it to be true to obtain the benefits of religion for themselves, primarily eternal life and a heavenly home. At best it might be identified as what we recall from the previous chapter Price dubbed “interested belief-in,” easily reducible. Whatever attention is turned to Christ quickly turns right back to the believer’s self.

22 Ibid.

23 Bede, In Septem II.19 lines 184-186, p. 198.
The Biblical imagery recalled is that of the hastily kneeling man, the lawyer, and Peter, who ask Jesus, respectively, “Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life,” (after a similar question) “And who is my neighbor,” and “Look, we have left everything and followed you. What then will we have?” The human believer’s activity is paradoxically both minimal and central, the only activity of God that is emphasized is in the past, and loving relationship seems unnecessary. Means of grace, including the sacraments, are of diminished importance except as certifiers of assent given and reminders of the individual’s propositional beliefs. This life is appropriate to the philosophy by which Augustine initially aspired to reach God, on a retreat he hoped to make permanent with his mother and friends at Cassiciacum, but it does not constitute Christian faith. What is to prevent the believer from remaining turned inward while merely believing in God and believing God?

_Credere in eum_, on the other hand, unfurls the believer to turn toward and cling to God by incorporation in Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit, whom Augustine described as the bond, bend, or curvature of love between Father and Son. Love (elsewhere charity, wherever Augustine uses _caritas_) is what prevents faith from being just one more opportunity to

24 Mark 10:17 (NRSV), cf “a certain ruler” in Luke 18:18

25 Luke 10:29 (NRSV)

26 Matthew 19:27 (NRSV)

27 Eugene TeSelle characterizes the “thinking with assent” of _credere Deum_ as a “voluntary act” (348, with reference to _praed. sanct._ 2.5 PL 44:966 among others). He proceeded to offer as an example of _credere Deo_ that “we believe a narrative by a participant about events in the past” (348, with reference to _civ. Dei_ 11.3 among others). TeSelle notes that Augustine considered _credere Deo_ the “first fruits” that God has given the human spirit (with reference to _de fide et symbol_ 10.23).

28 Meconi, 148-9. Meconi presents this notion as Augustine’s effort to overcome the unfortunate tendencies of his predecessors to neglect the Spirit’s equality with the other two persons of the Trinity. The translation as “curvature” he credits to Olivier Du Roy.
turn inward. Love is what distinguishes the operation of *credere in eum* from *credere eum* and *credere eo*. It is helpful here to recall the summary of all that *credere in eum* involves in Augustine’s works, from our Chapter 1:

“The believing into Christ” entails “By believing to love, by believing to hold dear, by believing to go into him, and to be incorporated in his members.” Furthermore, by believing into Christ, “Christ comes into you (the believer-into), and you are in some way made one with him (literally “united into him”), and made a member in his body.” It also involves the theological virtues, as “this cannot be, unless both hope and charity are added.” And finally, as the believer’s spirit entrusts itself to the Holy Spirit, the believer-into is able “to cling by faith to God, who effects good works in such a way that we collaborate well with God, for we are told, without me you can do nothing.”

The believer-into certainly still may feel free to contemplate God’s existence and God’s truthful promises but does so in an awe-inspired commitment to relationship, which turns the believer ever outward, toward God and toward neighbors, as cherishing-love *dilectio* dictates. To keep the believer-into from devolving into an inward turn, the Holy Spirit also serves as the glue ensuring that the believer’s God-ward bond to the body of Christ holds.29

But how does it all work – what does movement into, incorporation in members, Christ coming into and being united with the believer, hope and love/charity being added, clinging and collaboration, look like in the life of a believer? Fortunately, all of this figurative language has very tangible referents, as the next section on sacraments will show. As contemplative Augustine among his select circle at Cassiciacum became Priest

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29 Hill, *Teaching Christianity*, 123: I.34.38. “For when you reach (Christ), you also reach the Father, because it is through his equality that the one to whom he is equal can be recognized, with the Holy Spirit binding and so to say gluing us in there, so that we may abide for ever in that supreme and unchangeable good.” I am indebted to Meconi’s mentioning Augustine’s treatment of the Holy Spirit as glue and directing attention to this passage.
and then Bishop Augustine of the large congregation at Hippo, he left the environment that had made the inward turn to solitary vision of God appealing and entered the real world of life in ministry that offered “outward participation in a visible community.”

There he delved deeply into and even imagined himself in the Scriptures of both Testaments in the midst of and for the sake of people bound together in sacramental life.

The Scriptural texts containing the distinctive credere in + accusative are far more numerous than those that have been considered thus far in this project. A few brief examples may help us consider the operations of credere for ourselves before we proceed to the tangible operations of credere in eum through the sacraments and creeds. Augustine’s sermons and commentary thus far have led us to consider Psalms 77 and 130, John 6:29, and John 16:9, and Bede’s work adds James 2. Three more are helpful in considering credere here.

The important though incipient nature of credere + dative is evident as Jesus pronounces it regarding the good news after his own baptism and temptation:

30 Lee, xxii.

31 While outside the scope of the present project, the ways that Augustine experimented with transposing himself and his own voice into the texts of Scripture with a view to helping his hearers do so are detailed in Michael Cameron’s Christ Meets Me Everywhere: Augustine’s Early Figurative Exegesis. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

32 While a large-scale “exercise in the theological interpretation of Scripture,” such as R. Kendall Soulen is carrying out with regard to the “appropriate ways of naming the persons of the Trinity” in his trilogy in his multi-volume The Divine Name(s) and the Holy Trinity, is far beyond the scope of the present project, embarking on such a work with regard to believing into God/Christ as it appears throughout the Vulgate bears consideration as a future research project, particularly if it can springboard from the catechetical or even liturgical efforts called for in 4.2.3. See R. Kendall Soulen, The Divine Name(s) and the Holy Trinity, Volume One: Distinguishing the Voices. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011), 127ff.

“Impletum est tempus, et appropinquavit regnum Dei; paenitemini et credite evangelio.”

The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has drawn near; repent and believe the good news.

Clearly this is but the beginning of Jesus’s message and ministry, yet here is statement of belief-that about the timing and proximity of the kingdom of God and an invitation to turn away from self in repentance (a turn more literally evoked in the Greek metanoia than in this Latin word) and believe it. There is not yet the relational invitation to “follow me” attached.

Jesus has words of warning against impeding humble believers of the good news who do follow and with childlike faith believe into him, in Matthew 18:6:

*Qui autem scandalizaverit unum de pusillis istis, qui in me credunt, expedit ei, ut suspendatur mola asinaria in collo eius et demergatur in profundum maris.*

But if anyone causes to stumble (tempts to evil, offends, scandalizes) one of these little ones, who believe into me, it would be better for that one, if a millstone were hung up on their neck and they were plunged into the depth of the sea.

This statement’s final metaphor, which may be intended to describe punishment of the offender or the lack of efficacy of such efforts and the degree to which they would be thwarted (i.e., the offender would be stopped dead), allows for the possibility of understanding believing into Christ as the strongest relationship to him. It elicits punishment for any who attempt to break its bond (in the first interpretation), or it exposes them as failures who succeed only in curving themselves away from God, figuratively to the farthest depths.

Water features prominently in one more credere-containing pericope for us to consider, though it is much too long for consideration in full here and will resurface later in this chapter. After her interaction with Jesus at the well, the Samaritan woman described in John 4 demonstrates a shift from innate belief-that to believing-into that the text does not explicitly name but that features prominently in the credere in eum of her neighbors. She returns from the
well to her city after the disciples’ return has interrupted the dialogue between her and Jesus, in which he has identified himself to her as the Messiah about whose coming she had expressed certainty (4:25-28a). Though his statement prior to overt self-revelation began with “Believe me,” her report to “the people” mixes humility into the apparent certainty with which she had spoken to him. She adjures them to come and see him, identifying him as having told her all that ever she has done, and asking rather than proclaiming, “He cannot be the Messiah, can he?”

After a narrative shift to Jesus and the disciples, the gospel-writer returns attention to the woman and the people:

Ex civitate autem illa multi crediderunt in eum Samaritanorum propter verbum mulieris testimoniun perhibentis: “Dixit mihi omnia, quaecumque feci!”. Cum venisset ergo ad illum Samaritani, rogaverunt eum, ut apud ipsos maneret; et mansit ibi duos dies. Et multo plures crediderunt propter sermonem eius; et mulieri dicebant: “Iam non propter tuam loquelam credimus; ipsi enim audivimus et scimus quia hic est vere Salvator mundi!”

And many of the Samaritans from that city believed into him because of the woman’s given testimony, ‘He told me all that ever I have done!’ So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay among them; and he stayed there two days.

And many more believed because of his word. They said to the woman, ‘It is no longer because of your speech that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the Saviour of the world’

Both the narrator and the neighbors credit her testimony with causing them to believe into him. By context the remaining two occurrences of the verb credere may be understood as implying but eliding the in eum. One aspect of credere in eum that becomes clear here is that the ordo credentis is not set in stone. In the woman’s case, the modicum of belief in God’s existence with which she came to the conversation (confused as it was, according to Augustine, because it
was not yet guided by the “husband” of intelligence)\textsuperscript{34} changed to believing him and then to believing into him sufficiently to want to go and bring others to him. For their part, the people first believed into him upon hearing her testimony and only then sought him out and eventually believed him and believed—that he was who she said he was.

Augustine also sees in the two days during which Christ stayed among them a figure for the two loves of God and neighbor.\textsuperscript{35} Then hearing his word (sermonem) gives the people strong belief—that – to the point of knowledge—that – he is “truly the Savior of the world!” This passage, in which a woman is the first evangelist to guide an entire city to credere in Christum, also points us toward another aspect of credere in eum that is important in our next section: its personal nature is inextricably communal. The Christian faith is not about individuals apart from their reality as incorporated members of Christ’s body.

Further, it becomes apparent that the body is not restricted only to the already sinless, nor is credere in eum restricted by the imperfections of its leaders as they guide others into it.\textsuperscript{36} Contrary to Augustine’s Donatist opponents, who perceive the breathing of the Spirit by Christ upon the apostles in John 20:22-23 as a historical happening intended to be preserved by the set-

\textsuperscript{34} Hill, Homilies on the Gospel of John 15.8-9, 284-286. Augustine refers to Ambrose’s interpretation of the five husbands as the five Books of Moses and offers another interpretation, the five senses, which everyone always has had but which need to be governed by a new husband, “intelligence.” Taken up with adulterous “error” at present, the woman lacks but begins to “call” intelligence as the dialogue progresses. Augustine also transposes Jesus into the husband role as well, as “the soul’s husband.” Thus is she able to obey his “Believe me” command, and thus does his identifying himself to her as Messiah reveal him as her “true husband” (15.28, 292).

\textsuperscript{35} Ibid. 15.33, 296. “he stays with them two days, that is, he gives them the two commandments of charity…”

\textsuperscript{36} Regardless of whether we take the woman’s five husbands and present partner as a metaphor along Augustine’s lines or at face-value, there is no point at which the woman’s situation affects her receiving and sharing the news.
apart church, Augustine sees incorporation as producing a “mixed body” (*corpus permixtum*) that is purified by the Spirit as it sojourns in unity. Gone is the solitary ascent to God via the inward turn of the already purified. After Augustine’s own deep engagement with Scripture, “The way to God is by incorporation into the body of Christ as mediated by the sacraments, and by participation in a community of charity on journey toward the heavenly homeland.”

Credere *in eum*, then, is entrance into and incorporation in a moving body on the Way, not rote entrance to and exit from a lecture hall to learn proper answers. The good news of Jesus Christ is hardly “lectures on epistemology,” but rather, “The Christian faith is first and foremost a message of healing from spiritual sickness, despair, and evil.”

4.2 Bodily Imagery, Bodily Actions: The Sacraments

What better way to be healed than through the washing and nourishing of the body? Keys to this paradoxical reality of not-turning-inward-but-going-into lie in practices of the Christian faith, specifically the sacraments and their attendant creeds, a fuller understanding of which requires continuing the present project’s attempt to balance the speculative and the practical, the philosophical and the theological. This balance has been difficult to strike for as long as people have striven to understand Augustine and his theology.

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38 Lee, xxiv, with reference for the *corpus permixtum* to *De Civitate Dei* XVIII.49.

39 Ibid., 36.

“In particular,” notes James Lee in his effort to recover the visible church in Augustine’s ecclesiology, “the church has been reduced to a purely spiritual, invisible reality over against the visible community celebrating the sacraments. This view has taken hold due in large part to the work of scholars who interpret Augustine primarily in philosophical terms.”

Lee’s identification of this predicament informs our present approach, alongside the recent effort to recover Augustine’s theology of deification by David Meconi. Meconi observes, “As Augustine grew as a pastor and theologian, he came to see how the sacraments were the necessary agents of unity…Augustine emphasized that it was the Son’s corporeality which drew believers into God.”

This body-based drawing-into undergirds the mutual indwelling imagery in the sermonic passages on *credere in eum* that continued the development in the mature Augustine of a revaluing of the body in Christianity for the sake of the body of Christ.

Lee draws together passages from Augustine’s “exegetical works on Scripture such as *Enarrationes in Psalmos* and *In epistulam Johannis ad Parthos tractatus*” to summarize the bodily language of his ecclesiology:

41 Lee, xvi.

42 Meconi, 175.

43 Lee, 28. As described above in 4.1, this mature period refers to the time after his entry into parish life and deep engagement with the Scriptures, in Lee’s assessment, “following the biblical, incarnational shift in his thought in the 390s.” Then the Pauline language of the “body of Christ” became one of his dominant metaphors for the church, eventually woven in occasionally with the imagery of the Bride of Christ.

44 Margaret Miles, *Augustine on the Body.* (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1979), 129. Miles is careful not to deny that “the period of greatest conscious affirmation of the body – Augustine’s old age – coincides exactly with the time of his strongest negative focus on sexuality.” She enlists Freudian theory to ascribe this contradiction to emphatic denial as the initial response to conscious attention to repressed or denied longings, even as she distinguishes his struggle from the hatred and mortification of the flesh exhibited by desert fathers.
As the body of Christ, the church is visible and invisible after the pattern of the incarnation…. By the mystery of the incarnation, the eternal Word assumed human nature with a union “consummated in the Virgin’s womb.” “The church is joined to that flesh, and Christ becomes the whole, head and body.” The church is drawn from the human nature Christ assumed, for the union among head and members is made possible only by virtue of shared humanity. The head remains distinct as the eternal Word and the source of all grace mediated to the body, while the members of the church form the body. The incarnation makes possible the church’s identity as the body of the whole Christ.45

Considering this imagery of the visible and invisible body of Christ as it participates in the sacraments of baptism and eucharist with their creedal professions of faith, alongside related contributions from the Venerable Bede and John Wesley, we shall contribute some innovations of our own to gain insight into credere in eum as believers-into are incorporated in, united with, and cling to Christ.

4.2.1 Baptism

We recall from the summary gleaned from Augustine, that “Believing into Christ” entails “By believing to love, by believing to hold dear, by believing to go into him, and to be incorporated in his members.” Baptism addresses this credendo crescendo, as well as the being “…made a member in his body,”” and the involvement of “the theological virtues, as ‘this cannot be, unless both hope and charity are added.'”

Believing as loving and cherishing requires opening up to the activity of the Holy Spirit. How is the one who wishes to do the work of God by believing into him whom that One has sent able to love or to cherish? While any encounter with the Trinity is an encounter with the one whose very name is Love, Augustine applied that name not only to the whole Trinity and each of

45 Lee, 42. The excerpts are from Enarrationes in Psalmos 44.3 & In epistulam Johannis ad Parthos tractatus. 1.2.
the Persons, but especially to the Holy Spirit. Augustine claimed to have arrived, in his 15th and final book of *The Trinity*, at his own best understanding of the Trinity when he saw the “triad” as Lover, What is Loved, and Love. As humans, not being God, for whom Love is God’s absolute substance, it is not our nature to desire to die and to be buried with Christ, even if we intellectually believe that we do so in order to rise again with him to newness of life. So it is the Holy Spirit – elsewhere, recall from above, named the Bond and the Glue – who enables the one believing into God in baptism to experience this trinitarian reality of being loved and loving/cherishing in return. Still there is more.

For this aspect of entering into the divine life, is the invisible reality of *credere in eum* in baptism. The visible reality, I posit, is that the Glue in-corpor-ates the believer-into in Christ’s members, literally adhering the believers’ bodies into Christ’s limbs, so that the believers-into – body and soul – are transformed visibly into the members of the body of Christ. Augustine gives us the way to see it with the language that starts with focus on his members, “by believing…to be incorporated in his members” (*In Jo Ev*) and that then declares believers-into, once glued in Christ’s limbs, to be themselves his members, “made a member in his body” (*Sermo CXLIV*). The transformation is visible as these limbs now follow the Way of Christ and move in the same healing directions in which his limbs have always gone, performing the works of mercy that his hands and words have always done.

Who applies this Glue in baptism? Christ himself does, though it may be a priestly or episcopal stand-in who physically administers or ushers believers into the water and lays hands

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46 Soulen, 70-71. With reference to *Trinity* 15.5.29.

47 Ibid., 71.
on them. Augustine’s insistence to the same congregation (albeit much earlier in the In Jo Ev series, Tractati V and VI) that it is Christ who does the baptizing and giving of the Spirit both makes this action clear and thwarts the Donatists.48 Today, when frequent efforts by bishops and baptizands to procure and mix into the font’s or baptistry’s contents a bit of water from the Jordan River suggest that the water itself conveys the Glue, we need again the force of Augustine’s argument that neither the water itself, nor the bishop or priest handling it, does the baptizing. Augustine preached two consecutive sermons on a single verse, John 1:33 (lifted from a pericope on which he had already preached the week before), in an effort to dismantle Cyprian’s proposal that the church’s task – safeguarded by the ministers’ own purity preserved in apostolic succession – was stewarding the Spirit breathed on the believers by Christ in John 20:20-33.49

In this pair of sermons Augustine appears to have been in a holy conspiracy with his congregation against what “bothers (him) a lot” from the Donatists’ efforts to “cloud the minds of simple people and spread out their nets to catch flying birds.”50 Inviting them into the text to ask John the Baptist what he knew and did not know about Jesus leads to a lesson in who it is that really does the baptizing.51 When the dove descends on the Beloved in the baptism of Jesus, it signifies to John – who already knows that Jesus is Lord,52 hence saying he should rather be

48 Ployd, 152.
49 Ployd, 149-151.
50 Hill, Homilies 4.16, 99-100.
51 Hill, Homilies 5.1, 102.
52 It is helpful to note that Augustine’s understanding of the title “Lord” as it applied to Jesus lacks the uniqueness that arises from its having been “employed as a surrogate from the unspoken Tetragrammaton,” of which Soulen
baptized by him – that Jesus was the One promised who would baptize in the Holy Spirit.\textsuperscript{53} It is not the minister nor the water itself that does the baptizing, but Christ. The believer-into is not believing into the minister, nor into the local congregation, but into Christ himself.

Not only is the Glue too strong for its bond to be broken by any brokenness of the hands of whoever handled the water in baptism, but the bond of Christ’s body to the head is maintained by a circulatory system that causes not only faith but also hope and charity to flow through the members. Across Augustine’s works are hints at precisely how “both hope and charity are added” to the faith of them who believe into Christ (\textit{Sermo CXLIV}), such that incorporation into Christ’s body does not occur apart from all three theological virtues. In response to Augustine’s comments in the \textit{Enarrationes} (Pss. 37:6, 142:3, and 30:3) about “the body’s linkage with its Head through the bond of charity, so close a link that Head and body speak as one,” and that “Your fear is your own, your hope is God’s gift in you…for divine mercy does not desert us in our fear,” Lee reflects:

By the bond of charity, the head and members can speak as one, and Christ is mysteriously present in his members on earth. This is why Christ declares to Saul in Acts 9:4, “Why are you persecuting me?”

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The church is the mysterious presence of Christ on earth. The head remains distinct and does not suffer in his human nature in heaven, yet there is a real identity between Christ and the members of his body, such that head and members can speak in “one voice” (\textit{una vox}). In the act of crying out, the members of the body are transfigured in hope.\textsuperscript{54}

\textsuperscript{53} Hill, \textit{Homily 5.9, 109.}

\textsuperscript{54} Lee, 54, with reference to \textit{En. Ps.} 37:6, 142:3, and 30:3. He also cites Michael Fiedrowicz, \textit{Psalmus vox totius Christi: Studien zu Augustins “Enarrationes in Psalmodi”} (Freiburg: Herder, 1997), 298-375 for the sentence ending “(una vox).”
Faith, hope, and charity together not only ensure that “divine mercy does not desert us in our fear,” but also make possible the works of divine mercy carried out by the members. While the congregation itself is not the object of faith (contrary to the confusing suggestion in the third clause of the Nicene Creed, to be addressed in 4.2.3 below), the resulting relationship there is vital. There the Glue holds together the body’s members and empowers them to practice mercy toward one another and to move together in works of mercy in the world. Baptism, far more than going through the motions of initiation into a club, initiates what “springs from true faith” that John Wesley sought to help members of Christ’s body nurture in one another – “holiness of heart and life” – more than a millennium later.\(^55\) His example, rooted in his desire for a return to the “primitive Christianity” of the early church, recalls a feature of antiquity that cannot be assumed in contemporary Christianity, that of individual faith as inseparable from communal faith. Yet it remains the contemporary objective, according to the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches in its 1982 document, *Baptism, Eucharist, Ministry*:

Administered in obedience to our Lord, baptism is a sign and seal of our common discipleship. Through baptism, Christians are brought into union with Christ, with each other and with the Church of every time and place. Our common baptism,\(^55\)

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which unites us to Christ in faith, is thus a basic bond of unity. We are one people and are called to confess and serve one Lord in each place and in all the world. The union with Christ which we share through baptism has important implications for Christian unity. “There is... one baptism, one God and Father of us all ...” (Eph. 4:4-6).56

This passage from the explication of baptism as “Incorporation into the Body of Christ” describes well the communal nature of saving faith that returns our attention to Augustine’s sermon on infant baptism (294) discussed in Chapter 1. The working of parents’ faith to translate their infant’s cries as renunciation of sin and profession of faith seems less odd in light of this interconnectedness of the body of Christ, by which the crying infant’s voice and parents’ voices join the “one voice” of Christ the Head and the body. If in fact “Christ assumed flesh in order to forgive sins and to incorporate new members into his body,”57 then it stands to reason that the newest living persons born to members of his body are also to be incorporated into the body. To delay doing so would be to delay the infant’s growth of holiness of heart and life (in Wesley’s words). With baptism as the source that adds hope and charity to faith, the child would be denied reception of and growth in these theological virtues, one of which is itself twofold. In DDC Augustine also has claimed that those who came to “the holy bath of baptism…conceived by the Holy Spirit and gave birth to the twin fruit of charity, that is to love God and neighbor,” which greatest commandment member parents will want their child to bear and tend, nurtured by the

57 Lee, 28.
Baptism is related not only to momentary experience, but to life-long growth into Christ....In this new relationship, the baptized live for the sake of Christ, of his Church and of the world which he loves, while they wait in hope for the manifestation of God’s new creation and for the time when God will be all in all (Rom. 8:18-24; I Cor. 15:22-28, 49-57).  

Emphasizing that “life-long” aspect, the Commission argues that even the youngest members of Christ’s body from also participating in eucharist, for “baptism, as incorporation into the body of Christ, points by its very nature to the eucharistic sharing of Christ’s body and blood.”

4.2.2 Eucharist

This sacrament cares for the reciprocal going-into that we have mentioned throughout this project since first encountering it in Chapter 1.4 from Augustine’s Sermo CXLIV. So it is the eucharist that illuminates the operation of the part of the credere in eum summary in which by believing into Christ, “Christ comes into you (the believer-into), and you are in some way made one with him (literally “united into him”),….who effects good works in such a way that we collaborate well with God, for we are told, without me you can do nothing.” The eucharist offers an obvious action of ingesting Christ, as it were, and it also comes with the commission to go into the world as Christ’s body. The greatest care to remain relational and avoid commodification and transactional language in describing the operations of credere in eum is

58 Hill, Teaching Christianity, 131: II.6.7.
59 WCC, BEM, 3.
60 Ibid., 4.
necessary now. In the words of Augustine’s sermon in which he first considers (much more briefly) the text of doing the work of God as believing into him whom that One has sent, *In Jo Ev* XXV, “Rarely does anyone seek Jesus for the sake of Jesus.”

Believers eat of the bread, therefore, and drink of the cup not in order to satisfy bodily hunger, but in order to be united to the body of his humility. As Jesus Glued the believers into his members through baptism in order to make them members of his body, now through the Eucharist, he goes into the believers-into, though again it is not about the elemental signs but about “the one signified by them.” To a great extent, believing is eating and drinking, but the signs themselves still matter. So, is actual eating and drinking also believing?

We reach back to the *Confessions* to recall the way in which the sign works to make believing into a reciprocal going into. “The ‘cup of our ransom’ (*poculum pretii nostri*) is the Eucharist,” Lee explains, “which mediates the mercy of the one mediator who entered history in order to redeem a people and a city. The sacrament mediates the mercy of God and forms a communal body united in charity.” Just as Christ entered history through the incarnation, he enters the believers-into who share his humanity and have gone into the baptismal waters as “the entire congregation welcome(s) the new Christians to the Table of the Lord.”

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62 Ibid. XXV.17, 447. Those who come to him and drink of the inner fountain from which he drinks are humble and do his will, not their own.

63 Ibid., XXV.13, 441.

64 Lee, 42. Reference is to Boulding’s translation of the *Confessions*, 182: 7.21.27.

65 Stookey, Baptism, 104. With reference to *The Apostolic Tradition* attributed to Hippolytus.
As Christ applied the Glue of baptism to keep believers from curving back inward on themselves, so Christ sends the Spirit to fill those who take in bread and wine with the full height of Christ, who does not curve inward but who does stoop in humility. Christ, in the anamnesis (memorial) of the eucharist (thanksgiving – particularly to the Father, “that One” who sent him) heals human affections in order that believers-into may take on the same stooping posture of humble love.

The Eucharist mediates the merciful love of God and enables one to cling to God as the unchanging good. Christ provides the strength needed in order to enjoy God through the Eucharist as the “food of the mature.” The humility of the mediator has healing effects, for the Eucharist “heals the swollen pride” of the wicked, and “nourishes their love, that they may not wander even further away through self-confidence, but rather weaken as they see before their feet the Godhead grown weak by sharing our garments of skin.”

It is not self-confidence but divine assurance of God’s pardoning initiative that both adds hope and love to believers’ faith and frees them from pride. It is remarkable how easily the pride swells again when the eucharist is treated as obligation, rather than a feast by the body of Christ on the “food of the mature.” John and Charles Wesley’s descendants in faith, for example, could stand a revival of the view of eucharist as a “converting ordinance.” John Wesley made use of

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66 WCC, BEM, 9. “The eucharist is the memorial of the crucified and risen Christ, i.e. the living and effective sign of his sacrifice, accomplished once and for all on the cross and still operative on behalf of all humankind. The biblical idea of memorial as applied to the eucharist refers to this present efficacy of God’s work when it is celebrated by God’s people in a liturgy. Christ himself with all that he has accomplished for us and for all creation (in his incarnation, servant-hood, ministry, teaching, suffering, sacrifice, resurrection, ascension and sending of the Spirit) is present in this anamnesis, granting us communion with himself.”

67 Ibid. “It is the great thanksgiving to the Father for everything accomplished in creation, redemption and sanctification, for everything accomplished by God now in the Church and in the world in spite of the sins of human beings, for everything that God will accomplish in bringing the Kingdom to fulfilment.” See

68 Lee, 41. With references to Confessions, including 7.11.17; 7.18.24.
this phrase as he dealt with a Donatist-type controversy of his own in the German quietists who preferred that believers remain “quiet” by not partaking until they had received assurance from the Holy Spirit. So for Wesley in confronting this issue, “converting” denoted not conversion from no faith or religion to Christian faith, but from baptized Christian faith without full assurance to humble peace of full assurance from the Holy Spirit. In terms of Augustine’s formula, one who has been baptized, for example as an infant, and somehow or other not yet experienced faith beyond credere eum or credere eo, may by participating in the eucharist come to credere in Deum. While Methodists of the 20th and 21st centuries have forgotten the original context of “converting sacrament, so as to open the table to any and all with little explanation of the invitation made, they have conversely by and large neglected what Wesley preached, “The Duty of Constant Communion.”

The grace of God given herein confirms to us the pardon of our sins, by enabling us to leave them. As our bodies are strengthened by bread and wine, so are our souls by these tokens of the body and blood of Christ. This is the food of our souls: This gives strength to perform our duty, and leads us on to perfection.

Wesley went on to urge all Methodists to commune more than weekly if possible. Today, like many Protestants, United Methodists are fortunate to celebrate the eucharist even once monthly.


70 Ibid.


Why would those who have gone into Christ not want Christ to come into them? A little lesson in *credere in eum* operating in the eucharist – if not persuading them to seek Christ for the sake of Christ – at least might remind many Christians, Methodist as well as others, not only of the duty but the humble strength operating in the eucharist.

Along with the lack of frequency, the lack of liturgy is also a problem. The *anamnesis* has grown as inappropriately anemic in many contemporary Protestant churches, just as it has become overly bleak in some congregations of more ancient traditions (both East and West). Note also Augustine’s language of enjoying God through the eucharist. In order to be fully filled with and united to Christ, the eucharistic liturgy and eucharistic theology of believers into Christ “should seek to set forth the full range of the church’s experiences of and affirmations about Jesus Christ: humble incarnation, ministry of teaching and healing, sacrificial death, transforming resurrection, presence in the church and world, and ultimate reign of righteousness.” A sign that attention to the formula might bring about the unity that would best display this righteousness to the world is the return of the *epiclesis* long preserved by the East to many eucharistic liturgies in the West in the 20th century. In many places it includes the invocation of the Holy Spirit not only upon the elements but also on the congregation, that they “may truly be the body of Christ in the world.” The WCC Faith and Order notes how

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74 Ibid., 99.

75 Ibid., 102-103.

76 Ibid., 103. The United Methodist eucharistic liturgy contains an epiclesis that doubly emphasizes this notion after invoking the Spirit upon the congregation and then the elements: “Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here, and on these gifts of bread and wine. Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ, that we may be for the
“...confidently (the church) invokes the Spirit, in order that it may be sanctified and renewed, led into all justice, truth and unity, and empowered to fulfil its mission in the world.”

Here we hear echoes of Bede’s description of credere in illum faith working through love, which we recall from Chapter 2.1:

It is clear that just as the bare words of faith do not revive the naked or the hungry, if food and clothing is not also provided, so faith does not save the saved by word; indeed, it is dead in itself if it is not animated by works of charity that revive it. Nor is what the Lord says contrary to this thought: “Everyone who believes and is baptized will be saved;” for here it is implied that only the one who practices what he believes by working truly believes. Because both faith and love cannot be divided from one another, which Paul confirming says: But “faith working through love” (Galatians 5:6), so to fit exactly the apostle John saying such things about love as the sort of thoughts about faith James advances: “Anyone who has the wealth of the world and sees his brother to have needs but closes his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?” (1 John 3:17).

While Augustine may not have been so explicitly connecting justice with his emphasis on mercy in the sermons from which the formula originally emerged, it still is true that what Bede described here is the true and living faith of one who is a Christian, not in name only, but in life and deed.77 For Bede, cherishing-love is the very content of Christian faith. This love is not merely a fondness or any feeling, but that active dilectio that Augustine so prized and prioritized as the cornerstone of religion and society.78

world the body of Christ, redeemed by his blood. By your Spirit make us one with Christ, one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world, until Christ comes in final victory, and we feast at your heavenly banquet.”


77 Bede, In Septem II.19 lines 180-181, p. 198. A reminder: My translation of qui non solum nomine christiani sunt sed et factis et vita and paraphrase show how close Bede’s notion is to contemporary attention to the idea of consistency in “word and deed,” often colloquially expressed as “You must walk the walk if you talk the talk.”

78 Recall from Chapter 1 of the present work that dilectio involved for Augustine, on Peter Brown’s analysis, “the orientation of the entire personality, its deepest wishes and its basic capacity to love.” See above discussion of
It is important to note that these emphases on justice are to some extent innovations we read back into Augustine, as he emphasized works of mercy but mainly of members toward one another, constituting the church as a community. Always these works are done toward the primary end of persuading others to love God:

Now of all those who are able to enjoy God together with us, some we love as people we can help, some as people we can be helped by, some as ones both whose help we need, and whose needs we help meet, while there are some on whom we ourselves confer no benefits, and from whom we do not expect any either. Still, we ought to want all of them to love God together with us, and all our helping them or being helped by them is to be referred to that one single end.  

Each time the body of Christ gathers at the Table of Communion they remember the mercy of God in sending Christ, into whom baptized believers need only believe in order to experience his coming into them and being united to him “somehow” by the Holy Spirit. That same Spirit “effects good works in such a way that we collaborate well with God, for we are told, without me you can do nothing.” Far better than the nothing of the inward turn, the believer-into is unfurled, glued to and transformed into Christ’s members, filled with Christ, on a heavenward journey through this world. Lee notes that for this community of mercy, “This journey is marked by incorporation into a visible body offering works of mercy so as to be formed in charity until the supreme reward of the enjoyment of God with others in the next life.”

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dilectio in 1.4, in the second enumerated paragraph analyzing the credendo crescendo that describes credere in eum in In Jo Ev.

79 Hill, Teaching Christianity, 119: I.29.30.

80 Lee, 39.
4.2.3 Creed

And finally, as the believer-into’s “spirit entrusts itself to the Holy Spirit,” the believer-into is able “to cling by faith to God.” What can be done to convey credere in eum and clinging today with the standard creeds, both the Apostles’ Creed – originating from baptism and still used in that sacrament’s rite today – and the Nicene Creed, which is part of eucharistic liturgy and which the WCC Faith and Order carefully adopted as “the theological basis and methodological tool for the explication of the apostolic faith” in 1982.81

It may be useful to consider how the conversation sounded (for that is how the Apostles’ Creed most likely began, oral exchange in the process of administering water to the baptizand) in the ears of early believers-into, according to the record dating to the early second century and attributed to Hippolytus. Imagine that a Bishop addresses a competente, one of the “seekers” who, having pursued as much as three years of catechesis, has registered at the beginning of Lent for this Easter baptism, having “received” orally the Symbolum (Creed), to “give back” in this sacrament.82 Standing in the water, they speak…

Bishop: Do you believe into God the Father Almighty?
Competente: I believe. (The Bishop administers water.)
Bishop: Do you believe into Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who was born of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate, and died, and rose on the third day living from the dead, and ascended into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of the Father, the one coming to judge the living and the dead?


Competente: I believe. (The Bishop administers water.)
Bishop: Do you believe into the Holy Spirit and the Holy Church and the resurrection of the flesh?
Competente: I believe. (The Bishop administers water.)

It is no small difficulty for most contemporary Christians to imagine the kind of threat to the body of Christ that necessitated such secrecy as to have kept the catechumens from so much as hearing the words of the Creed (or anything other than the Scriptures and sermon, for that matter). Only once they expressed the serious intention of entering their names for baptism in 46 days would their catechists eventually hand it over to them after a brief sermon from the Bishop. It is equally difficult for contemporary Christians to imagine not seeing it, but having to “learn it thoroughly by hearing it, and not write it down either when (they) have it by heart,” as the Bishop of Hippo said in his *Sermon* (212) “At the Handing Over of the Creed.” In *Sermon* (215), “At the Giving Back of the Creed,” Augustine uses similar language about “The Symbol of the most sacred mystery,” advising those who have “received and given back” the creed they received, to “always retain (it) in mind and heart, what you should recite in bed, think about in the streets, and not forget over your meals; in which even when your bodies are asleep your hearts should be awake.” Of course, Augustine’s situation, living after the conversion of Constantine, seems safer than that of Hippolytus, and yet the Bishop of Hippo would have to

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83 Adapted from the Version of *The Apostolic Tradition* excerpt in Stookey, *Baptism*, 104.
84 Stookey, *Baptism*, 103.
85 Hill, *Sermons* 212.2 fn1, 138.
defend Christianity as fledgling official religion soon enough. It is all the more important under such circumstances for the newly baptized to understand themselves as not merely the newest bearers of the tradition – Augustine’s transactional language of business with “Symbol” notwithstanding – but as intricately knit or glued into the body of Christ by *credere in eum.*

The “Symbol of the sacred mystery” is the site of appropriate first steps toward restoring the understanding of believing into God for contemporary catechumens preparing to step into the water might be simply to teach them what this process first entailed and why. “Believing into,” emphasized as part of the approach to the creed into which these two sermons provide insight, could restore the heartfelt reverence with which the Symbol was received and given, a process more transformative of the individual in relationship to Christ and the communal body than rote memorization. Then a major advantage they may appreciate is that the contemporary way of seeing and reciting the creed is already formulated for the pronunciation of the restored awkward language by the catechumens and the whole worshiping body, not just the clergyperson (as it was according to the report in *The Apostolic Tradition* records). Thus all together in baptism and baptismal reaffirmations they proclaim:

The Apostles’ Creed
I believe **into** God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.
I believe **into** Jesus Christ, God’s only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate,

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88 Ibid., 212.1, 136. “It’s called the Symbol because of a certain similarity; the word being transferred from commercial transactions, because merchants make agreements among themselves, called symbols, which guarantee their loyalty to the terms of their association. And your association is concerned with spiritual merchandise....” If we must use transactional language, it is important to note that the difference between the businessperson and the believer-into, is that the Spirit assists the believer-into with their maintaining of the guarantee they make to God, and the sign of the cross already seals the other side of the “transaction.”

174
was crucified, died and was buried;  
he descended to the dead.  
On the third day he rose again;  
he ascended into heaven,  
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and he will come again to judge the living and the dead.  
I believe into the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting.

This small adjustment begins the restoration process, not turning the propositions out on their ear but rather tuning the believers’ ears to recognize the lyrics and tune of the song describing the one loved, cherished, gone into, incorporated in, united to, and clung to by the members. The WCC Faith and Order document Confessing the One Faith (COF) notes that the Apostles’ Creed “uses ‘credere in’ (sic) only in relation to the three persons of the Trinity and not with reference to the Church.” Yet it is this Church, formed by the Holy Spirit, that bears responsibility to help believers become believers-into by instructing them in all that has gone before with regard to Quid est ergo credere in Deum. As the WCC Faith and Order already has noted the formula’s existence (or a version thereof) in that brief commentary, perhaps a similar global ecumenical effort could carry on a more in-depth and global study of credere in Deum as believing into God than has been conducted in this project.

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89 Wilfred Cantwell Smith, 77. Recall from Chapter 3 that Smith rejected propositional belief even in the Apostles and Nicene Creed, to which Pojman pointed out that, even if one allowed Smith’s assessment, other creeds such as the Athanasian are clearly aimed at making propositional belief “a necessary condition for salvation.” Recall that our proposal is not to reject propositional belief but to view it as important knowledge by description that helps believers gain knowledge by acquaintance of the God into whom they believe.

90 WCC, COF, 16. The Nicene Creed, as we shall note momentarily, adds a separate Credimus in to the clause about the church.
Even as such a process was taking place, denominational bodies could attend to their own catechisms and faith formation curricula to include the formula and a basic understanding of how _credere in Deum_ operates in sacraments and creeds. The lens trained on Church History “facts” (in Rusch’s sense of that word) and Systematic Theology loci could be made available in academic and lay literature. Rather than wait for such studies and processes to be complete, however, local congregations – where liturgy once was the lifeblood of reception and transformation in the body of Christ – could take up and work on incorporating _credere in eum_ into prayers, songs, and sermons, especially if popularly accessible works about its meaning, reception, and operation were made available.

Their questions, responses, and insights would then contribute to the understanding and continued sharing of how those who believe into God through Christ are able “by believing to love, by believing to cherish, by believing to go into him and be incorporated in his members.” It would continue the work that the World Council of Churches has been doing for the past century, of restoring reception to its initial status as the work of the whole church.92

Scholars not disconnected from the local church could serve by guiding processes of determining how to express the uniqueness in languages other than English and in considering how best to represent occurrences of “belief into” in future translations and versions of Scripture and other early church literature. Acknowledging that “belief into” spans both the Hebrew Bible and New Testament, scholars and other leaders of the interfaith community could steer reception away from anti-semitism and other perils by joining and enhancing what the WCC Faith and

91 Rusch, 21.
92 Ibid.
Order demonstrated in COF. They balance attention to the ways in which “Jesus affirmed the faith of Israel concerning the one God….He endorsed the ‘Hear O Israel’ as the first and greatest commandment and the way to eternal life” with acknowledgement that “the New Testament also makes clear that this God is in a unique relationship with Jesus Christ…(and)...also links the Spirit – ‘who proceeds from the Father’ – with the Son.”\textsuperscript{93} It would be vital to continue emphasizing that those who are Glued into that relationship by Christ cannot then fail to make the important distinction “between the quoted Jewish voice (‘accepting the consequences of Jesus’ death for themselves and their future generations’) from that time and God’s own judgment over (God’s) chosen people.”\textsuperscript{94}

All of the above members of the body of Christ also will have less formal roles to play if this constructive proposal is to gain traction. For simply changing language – even in those areas of the body of Christ where reception doesn’t involve resistance or simple rejection – is not going to transform the functions of the body entirely on its own. Efforts at advocacy of inclusive language for God and for most appropriate ways of naming the Trinity are but a strong start to healing the body’s systemic sins problems of sexism, racism, and subordinationism. Just as those efforts must be joined with ethical decisions daily by those who take them seriously, so, too, it will be necessary for scholars, clergy, and laypeople, to model their prayers and practices on the relational aspect of belief into God. If that “relation to the divine becomes the axis of our

\textsuperscript{93} WCC, COF, 20.

\textsuperscript{94} Ibid., 61. This passage is surrounded by paragraphs of support for the Jewishness of Jesus and concrete correction to and prevention of anti-Semitism, related to the Nicene Creed’s phrase “Under Pontius Pilate.”
lives," as Volf promised, it will positively affect relationships across the body of Christ. As it pertains to communal faith, Volf’s metaphor might be adapted in such a way that the axis is a cross at the center of a great, round Communion Table. Believers-into, exhibiting the three theological virtues added in baptism by the Holy Spirit, who causes them to give birth to love of God and neighbor, could embody what they advocate by gathering together around such a table. Even now the number of Full Communion agreements and interdenominational dialogues toward that end is on the rise worldwide. Greater unity at the eucharistic table worldwide would be an excellent witness to the humility that holds together the Head and the body of Christ.

It is at that table that the most inclusive Symbol, the Nicene Creed, is most frequently confessed as an important component of the Mass (also known as Service of Word and Table, among other names). The fact that this creed’s original language is Greek does not cause quite as many difficulties (recall Chapter 1.3) as does the difference in structures between the manuscript and the standard translation. Applying a restoration of “believing into” along with one additional credimus demonstrates again the usefulness of “believing into” for combatting heresy, and also suggests ways of addressing the problematic “belief into” something other than the Trinity:

The Nicene Creed

We believe into one God,

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95 Volf, 81. Recall from Chapter 1.1 that he makes reference to Confessions 1.1.1.

96 The most current effort as of this writing is that of the The Episcopal Church-United Methodist Dialogue Committee (ECUSA and UMC). The next meeting is in April, 2018. See also “Episcopalians, United Methodists plan for approval of full communion proposal” at http://www.umd.org/news-and-media/episcopalians-united-methodists-plan-for-approval-of-full-communion-proposal Accessed online March 4, 2018.

We believe into the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.
We believe into one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.
We believe into the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets. In one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

A few brief observations indicate the ways in which reception is instantly important to the constructive proposal of the present project and explain my choices. The Greek text displays the confessional verb, \(\text{Πιστεῦωμεν} (\text{Pisteuomen})\), “we believe” only once, as the first word of the entire Creed. Thereafter each clause for the Son and the Spirit simply starts with \(\text{Καὶ εἰς} \ (\text{kai eis})\), followed by an accusative object, “And into….” While “the…Church” and its adjectives are also in accusative case, its line does not begin with “and,” so perhaps the Council expected that
lack of conjunction to subtly designate that we do not believe in the Church the same way that we believe into the Trinity. The placement of a verb in translation before that phrase is possibly more arbitrary than its placement before each person of the Trinity. Regardless, we can affirm the appropriateness of a form of *credere* + accusative being an interpretation of the confession regarding the church within the clause on the Spirit who brought it to life and continues to conceive love of God and neighbor in it.

With a minor adjustment, the “believe into” that Augustine has claimed combats Sabellian heresy also thwarts subordinationism. Since the beginning, the “one God” was not alone, so applying the only occurrence of the verb to one God but not equally to each of the three persons in this context disproportionately connects the Father to the unity and runs the risk of leaving *competentes* thinking that the One God into whom Christians believe is the Father, and the others – the Son and the Spirit – are less than divine or are lesser deities into whom we also believe. Offsetting the “One God” as a single, primary line, then applying the verb equally to each of the three Persons, encourages a greater understanding of the equality of the three Persons. It paves the way better for this ecumenical creed to do its work of helping *competentes*, as I stated in Chapter 1, be “clear on what believing into God is,” so that they “will be able to understand the Trinity, because they can know God intimately.” Seeing that the curvature or bond of love between the Father and Son is the Glue that Christ applies to incorporate believers into in his members “enables believers to recognize the Father and the Son in right relationship to each other’s distinct persons, because they are in right relationship with the Father and the Son
themselves.” They are in constant communion with the Holy Spirit as well, we now add, as the Spirit is the Glue that transforms them into members of the body of Christ.

The potential of such images in this Creed to combat the unnamed heresy of disunity returns us to the goal of the axis as a cross at the center of a round Communion Table. Hundreds of years before the World Methodist Council and the Roman Catholic Church met for official dialogue in 1967, it was in the form of a commentary on the Nicene Creed that John Wesley wrote an open Letter to a Roman Catholic, to lay bare his understanding of the common faith that Protestants and Roman Catholics share and quell division. The development of Wesley’s own faith along the lines of the credere formula (to be treated in greater detail in the next chapter) – despite Wesley’s apparent lack of awareness of it – is evident throughout this expansion upon the Creed. In the letter, Wesley bravely laid out Protestant Christianity, “plainly declaring what our belief and what our practice is; that you may see we are not altogether such monsters as perhaps you imagined us to be.”

In the body of the letter, he posited mostly “believe that” clauses, beginning with a version of credere Deum in the form of “…I am assured that there is an infinite and independent Being,” and coming as far as credere Deo multiple

98 In Jo Ev XXIX, 7.
99 Wainright, 37-38.
101 Ibid., §6, Works/J, X:81. The rest of this belief clause tends toward subordinationism, and not merely because he falls for the problematic structuring discussed above: “and that it is impossible there should be more than one; so I believe that this one God is the Father of all things, especially of angels and men; that He is in a peculiar manner the Father of those whom He regenerates by His Spirit, whom He adopts in His Son as co-heirs with Him, and crowns with an eternal inheritance; but in a still higher sense the Father of His only Son, whom He hath begotten from eternity.”
times. He even exemplified Price’s belief-in a theory, stating each clause of the Creed with which he expected Roman Catholics to agree, before saying, “But you think we ought to believe more.”¹⁰² Then at last he moved toward “belief in” in a way that reflected *credere in Deum*:

A true Protestant believes in God, has a full confidence in his mercy, fears him (sic) with a filial fear, and loves him with all his soul. He (sic) worships God in spirit and in truth, in everything gives him thanks; calls upon him with his heart as well as his lips at all times and in all places; honours his holy name and his Word, and serves him truly all the days of his life. Now, do not you yourself approve of this? Is there any one point you can condemn? Do not you practise (sic) as well as approve of it? Can you ever be happy, if you do not? Can you ever expect true peace in this or glory in the world to come, if you do not believe in God through Christ, if you do not thus fear and love God?¹⁰³

What Wesley described would be well synopsized by simple “belief into God” and explicated precisely by the descriptions thereof that we have uncovered throughout this project. Were he to exchange the word “fear” for “hope,” the parallels would be even closer. The fear that he seemed to have for the Roman Catholic faith, as he perceives it, is “extra” beliefs—that. But the questions he asks could easily go the other way, to the “Almost Christian” (the title of an early sermon) who believes propositions but lacks the “fear and love,” the “worship in spirit and truth,” the “thanks,” the “honour,” and the “calling upon (God) with heart as well as lips.” Wesley went on at length, after challenging any Roman Catholic reader to search conscience and not condemn over differences, with four concrete resolutions toward “collaborat(ing) well with God together,” preceded by the now famous line, “Then, if we cannot as yet think alike in all things, at least we


may love alike.”

Echoes of Augustine’s desire for members of the body of Christ to help and be helped by one another toward the end of loving God together. Wesley’s conclusion was a succinct statement encompassing the nuances of his doctrinal development concerning the twin doctrines of justification and sanctification in the “religion of love:”

O let you and I (whatever others do) press on to the prize of our high calling! that, being justified by faith, we may have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; that we may rejoice in God through Jesus Christ, by whom we have received the atonement; that the love of God may be shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. Let us count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ our Lord; being ready for Him to suffer the loss of all things, and counting them but dung that we may win Christ.

— I am Your affectionate servant for Christ’s sake.

Wesley’s “olive branch to the Romans” was a far cry from a dialogue on Full Communion but presaged efforts over two centuries later to find common points of believing into Christ together. The International Methodist-Catholic Dialogue Commission has worked since 1967 toward ends such as the World Methodist Council’s formal agreement with the Roman Catholic-Lutheran

104 Ibid., §16, Works/I, X:85. The concrete resolutions that follow are 1) “not to hurt one another,” 2) “to speak nothing harsh or unkind of each other,” 3) “to harbor no unkind thought, no unfriendly temper, towards each other,” 4) “to help each other on in whatever we are agreed leads to the kingdom” (§17, Works/I, X:85-86).

105 Ibid., §17, Works/I, X:86.

106 Albert C. Outler, quoted in Wainright, 37.

“Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification” and the 2012 report (one of nine since 1967) “Encountering Christ the Saviour: Church and Sacraments.”

Rejecting *credere in eum* in favor of mere *credere eo* and *credere eum*, on the other hand, may render sacraments (to which Wesley would refer also as “means of grace” or “ordinances of God”) nothing but going through motions and render those motions less effective spiritually than if they never had gone through them at all. Consider with Bede those who call themselves Christians and are known as good churchgoers, with the creeds memorized and never missing mass, but who are so entirely self-centered and curved inward that their aloof rejection of fellow members or the poor seeker sullies the Christian witness. Many seekers who might otherwise have sought to be incorporated in Christ’s members, upon being judged or rejected by such “Almost” Christians, then want nothing to do with the body and its apparently inefficacious sacraments. *Credere in eum* turns such a parable on its ear, as the “bad” that Augustine foresaw alongside the “good” in the *corpus permixtum* are in fact the ones who concern themselves with their neighbors only for the purpose of judging them but lack the love of God and neighbor, which their purely propositional curve has left them unable to allow the Holy Spirit to conceive and bring to birth in them. Their penchant for rejection of difference and unwillingness to suffer with others is not new, but it is not constitutive of Christianity. “What the church rejects,” notes Kendall Soulen with regard to division dating back to the earliest “mixed body” of Jewish and

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Gentile Christians, “is not the difference of Jew or Gentile, male and female, but rather the idea that these differences essentially entail curse, opposition, and antithesis.”

In sum, I asked in Chapter 1, “Under Augustine’s instruction, such as what is clear in the sermons here considered, what do new believers know believing to entail as they go into the water? They know that believing into the God whom their creed describes is a gift of that God and unites them intimately, almost bodily, with the Son of God in such a way that where his limbs go – to surrender self on behalf of the sinner, the needy, the sick – they will now go, too.”

To those content with *credere eum* and *credere eo* alone, such suffering is distasteful. Here humility of bold surrender to become truly “one with Christ” in his suffering and ours enters in, as Lee points out in Augustine’s mature ecclesiology:

> The church is united with Christ the head in a mystery of solidarity, a union made possible by the incarnation. Christ “came to receive insults and give honors, he came to drain the cup of suffering and give salvation, he came to undergo death and give life.” There is a wonderful “exchange” (*commercium*) between the head and members of the one Christ. The head takes on the sufferings of the body “toiling on earth,” while the members are given a share of the glory of the head in heaven by baptism. Christ’s solidarity in suffering conforms the members to the head, as signified by the head “crying out on behalf of the members,” for “the head was transfiguring the members into himself.”

Now Augustine’s language has gone a step further than believers-into going into and being Glued in Christ’s members, with the result of being transformed into members themselves. Now it’s a transformation of those members into Christ himself! Believers-into have the creeds

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109 Kendall Soulen, *The God of Israel and Christian Theology*. (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Press, 1996), 170. In light of the preceding discussion of Roman Catholic-Protestant dialogue and the doctrine of justification, the rest of Soulen’s thought bears consideration: “Understood in this way, the church is the social embodiment of the doctrine of justification, for justification in its social dimension means the reconciliation of different kinds of people. Reconciliation does not mean the imposition of sameness, but the unity of reciprocal blessing.”

handed over to them, and even when they have given them back, they cling to their words, so that in times of toil, the song of the Other to whom they have boldly surrendered comes to mind immediately, and they cling to God’s promises as those who have entered into the waters that wash away sin and who have ingested the body and blood of the Son. As they cling they are reminded of the surgical Glue of the Holy Spirit who keeps them turned out and toward God, and not curled in on themselves. Now more than simply turned Godward, they go Godward, as God, so to speak. But literally transfigured? Almost, but not quite. According to Meconi, what we have here is another deification metaphor without the actual word *deificare*: “Augustine’s cleaving to God ultimately means to be transformed into God in a nonliteral yet real way.” Nonliteral but real. And ultimately more real than the literal things we mistake for ultimate. Yes, that sounds like sanctification, to which, with its twin doctrine of justification, we turn in the next chapter.
CHAPTER 5

Test case: Believing into Christ and Wesley’s Twin Doctrines of Justification and Sanctification

‘Now faith is the evidence of things not seen.’ Heb. 11:1. Many times have I thought, many times have I spoke, many times have I wrote upon these words; and yet there appears to be a depth in them which I am in no wise able to fathom.¹

Thus begins the final sermon John Wesley preached and printed, seven weeks before his death in his 88th year. The sentence encapsulates a lifelong development of the concept of faith as he practiced, preached, adjusted, preached, practiced, adjusted, and preached it. Though there is no evidence of his having been familiar with Augustine’s formula,² his three-stage development from a propositional to a relational sense of belief as constitutive of the Christian faith nearly parallels the formula. Thus Wesley’s doctrinal development presents an excellent test case for training the theological lens of credere in eum on the twin doctrines of justification and sanctification. Furthermore, Wesley’s emphasis on sanctification (“holiness of heart and life”) engendered the bold surrender that is characteristic of credere in eum in Methodist


² In the words of Rex D. Matthews, “…the attempt to trace the definitive influences on Wesley’s theology at any given point is usually futile…” due to his wide-ranging quotations and allusions, often without citation. Rex D. Matthews, “Religion and Reason Joined”: A Study in the Theology of John Wesley. (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Dissertation Services, 2000), 30.
members of the body of Christ. A case study of one such member and the human flourishing brought about through the broad influence of his bold surrender concludes the project as promised, “connecting Christian belief with action to undergird a compelling Christian epistemology and more graceful interfaith dialogue.”

5.1 Wesley’s Faith Developments and the Twin Doctrines of Justification and Sanctification

John Wesley’s developments on faith and his important innovations with justification and sanctification over the course of nearly seventy years arose from 1) a merciful concern for too high a standard of faith that had led people (including himself) to despair, 2) the need to disentangle faith from assurance – and justification from sanctification – with emphasis upon experience of God (like faith itself) as gift from God, and 3) the importance of checking all such experiences, subjective responses that could be witnesses of the Holy Spirit with his hearers’ spirits, against Scripture, Anglican and primitive Church teachings, and reason.

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3 Abstract. Much of the material in 5.1 has been reworked from a research paper entitled “Faith is the Evidence: John Wesley’s treatment of faith in and beyond the canonical sermons.” A reworked version of that paper was presented at the 2016 Annual Meeting of the Wesleyan Theological Society in San Diego, CA as “Wesley’s Doctrinal Distinctions in Developing the Faith That Marks the New Birth” and has been published under that title in Wesleyan Theological Journal Vol. 52 – No.1 Spring 2017 (some errata appear in the Fall 2017 issue). Much of the material on James M. Lawson, Jr. in 5.2.1 has been reworked from a paper presented at the 2015 Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion in Atlanta, GA, a version of which was published as “James M. Lawson, Jr., Called by King ‘The Greatest Teacher of Nonviolence in America’” in Methodist History 54:3 April 2016.

4 The choice of this word is very deliberate, as the twin doctrines of Justification and Sanctification remain connected and vital in Wesley’s theology. The entanglement resulting from their conflation conceptually and temporally was the conundrum solved by Wesley’s doctrinal innovations.

5 Matthews, (20). Matthews notes that for Wesley, the reason (or reasoning) that Wesley after 1738 saw as related to faith depended on data of sensory experience, which required “spiritual senses” assisted by grace for “perception of the divine or spiritual realm” in order for reason to function there. “Reason, faith, and experience are in essential harmony with each other.”
By looking at John Wesley’s treatment of faith in what William J. Abraham has designated the “canonical sermons” (the 44 Sermons Upon Several Occasions that he designated as encapsulating his teachings) and in three later sermons, against the backdrop of his life, letters, and journals, the first part of this chapter traces Wesley’s development of how faith – particularly as constituted by the relational sense of “believing into” as we have now come to understand it – operates in the life of the believer, including in Wesley himself. In light of what Rex D. Matthews has identified as Wesley’s three “temporal shifts” between three distinct conceptions of faith, and in order to treat the third as a lens on justification and sanctification, we focus specifically on eight sermonic sources: “The Circumcision of the Heart” (1 January, 1733), “Salvation by Faith” (7 or 11 June, 1738),6 “Justification by Faith” (6 October, 1739 or 1746), “Scriptural Christianity” (1744), “The Marks of the New Birth” (1741 or 1748), “The Scripture Way of Salvation: (1765), and finally “On Faith” on Hebrews 11:6 (9 April, 1788) and “On Faith” on Hebrews 11:1 (17 January, 1791).

While Randy Maddox agrees with Matthews on the identification of the three temporal shifts between Wesley’s three distinct conceptions of faith, these conceptual shifts are more complicated to map onto Wesley’s timeline than Maddox and Matthews seem to suggest.7 Both Abraham and Richard Heitzenrater provide nuances that enable us then to see in the canonical

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6 Timothy L. Smith and Albert C. Outler frequently differ on the dates of preaching/publication for Wesley’s sermons. Whenever there is disagreement, Smith’s date is listed first, followed by Outler’s.

7 Randy Maddox, Responsible Grace: John Wesley’s Practical Theology. (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1994), 127. Curiously, in light of Basil Mitchell’s “fides in the sense of fiducia” that we addressed above in Chapter 3, the summary to which Maddox refers in Matthews indicates that, of the three “languages” of faith, as Matthews refers to them, the one that amounts to bare assent Wesley deemed “fides,” and the one that he defined as “a sure trust and confidence of salvation” he called fiducia (240-241).
sermons these different conceptions of faith in operation and its impact on his articulation of the
doctrines of justification and sanctification, coming to full maturity in his final sermons “On
Faith.” Our lens of believing into Christ reveals that, in these last two sermons, his heavenward
orientation so late in life has significant implications for his doctrinal innovations.

Maddox and Matthews identify Wesley’s first, earliest concept of faith as merely “assent
to truth claims” with little attention to the operation of faith in the life of the believer. It is easy to
see in this phase a reflection of the propositional in Augustine’s credere Deum. Then around
Wesley’s Aldersgate experience in May 1738, it shifted to “trust in God's love,” which shift
Maddox identifies as “central to his deeper appropriation of the theme of justification by faith in
1738.”8 This phase connects closely to credere Deo and gestures toward but does not quite attain
to the credere in Deum of the next and final phase. By the mid-1740s, Wesley had arrived at the
most mature of the three conceptions of faith, “spiritual experience of God's love,” and a notable
shift away from language of “assurance” toward “evidence,” upheld by Abraham’s
epistemological insights.9

The first part of this chapter is organized along the lines of these three concepts of faith
and their shifts toward credere in eum, but it is heavily nuanced by Heitzenrater’s insights 1) into
the influence of the Moravians on Wesley and his theology, as well as his struggle with their

8 Maddox, 127.

9 William J. Abraham, Aldersgate and Athens: John Wesley and the Foundations of Christian Belief. (Waco: Baylor
University Press, 2010), 5-6. Abraham sees three sources of Wesley’s confidence and boldness in claims to know
God surrounding his Aldersgate experience: promises of God fulfilled, experience of God that involves personal
awareness of divine forgiveness/pardon (the one Wesley addressed most), and power of God in human lives.
Abraham also explores Wesley’s concept of divine revelation, another relevant element to the present project.
influence and 2) into the effects of Wesley’s hearers on Wesley and his theology, particularly in the open air.\textsuperscript{10} Throughout, we explore how evident the three faith concepts were in Wesley’s preaching, which Heitzenrater notes was not often from a written manuscript.\textsuperscript{11} Nevertheless, as manuscripts are all that remains available to examine today, we examine them acknowledging the tension that Maddox and Heitzenrater note Wesley held at times (and even contradiction) between private, personal development and public preaching.

5.1.1 Wesley’s Earliest Concept of Faith: Assent and Little More (credere Deum)

Faith in Wesley’s young adulthood was “primarily...assent to the truth of a proposition based on its rational credibility.”\textsuperscript{12} According to Maddox, Wesley’s parents attempted at this point to persuade him to avoid what they perceived to be deistic devotion to rational credibility, which to them amounted to subordinating divine revelation to it.\textsuperscript{13} Nevertheless, what Abraham perceives to be Wesley’s peculiar empiricism, rather than cold rationalism,\textsuperscript{14} shows that his openness to the senses offered seeds of hope to grow his concept of faith beyond assent. Both Maddox and Heitzenrater highlight a letter from John to his mother, Susannah, on 18 June 1725 that makes it clear John took for granted a connection between faith and assurance, writing of the latter’s necessity to avoid misery:

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\textsuperscript{10} Heitzenrater 162.

\textsuperscript{11} Maddox, 124.

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., 125.

\textsuperscript{13} Abraham, \textit{Aldersgate}, 61.
…by the Lord’s Supper all the members are united to one another, and to Christ the Head; the Holy Ghost confers on us the graces we pray for…Now surely these graces are not of so little force as that we can’t perceive whether we have ‘em or not; and if we dwell in Christ and Christ in us,…certainly we must be sensible of it…But if we can never have any certainty of our being in a state of salvation, good reason it is that every moment should be spent, not in joy, but fear and trembling, and then undoubtedly in this life WE ARE of all men most miserable!

How prescient those words would be as Wesley would struggle with a lack of joy over the next decade and even after his Aldersgate experience, having difficulty in producing evidence of happiness and holiness of which he believed he should be aware through the self-examination his mother urged. Rather than producing either happiness or holiness, his methodical efforts to record his own efforts at moral perfection, even at simple sincerity, only frustrated him more and more! He attempted to rely upon and even counseled a friend in 1731 to rely upon the “typical Anglican response” to matters of faith and doubt that sincerity was sufficient, but that reassurance did not last for him. Suffice it to say, an excellent illustration of how believing propositionally in a God or a Savior who justifies does not lead to bold surrender and incorporation in members, but to further focus on one’s own efforts to produce assurance.

By the late 1720s and early 1730s, Wesley remained convinced that inward holiness would lead to true happiness, which is reflected in his 1733 sermon on “The Circumcision of the


16 Heitzenrater, 110.

Heart,” which Heitzenrater dubs “his first major sermon on Christian Perfection.”18 In it, Wesley describes “circumcision of the heart” particularly by adding “humility” to the theological virtues of “faith, hope, and charity.”19 Recall the key role in *credere in eum* that both the theological virtues that the Holy Spirit gives in baptism and the humility that binds Christ’s body and Head together play for Augustine. Wesley’s mention of them in this sermon are subtle evidence of growing faith, that he was already moving in the direction of more than mere assent. Clearly it is not yet the trust or spiritual experience of God’s love that would come to be Wesley’s later understanding of faith (at which point he will add a description of it back into this sermon, according to the editorial notation).20

The seeds of future understandings are not necessarily evident in some of the most beautiful language Wesley uses here, such as “that faith which alone is able to make them whole…The best guide of the blind, the surest light of them that are in darkness, the most perfect instructor of the foolish…”21 These images do clearly reflect the well-known notion, which Wesley would never lose, of noetic impairment as the effect of original sin, such that prevenient grace involves restoration of the senses to be able to perceive truth aright.22 A foreshadowing is better found in phrases about “faith which is not only an unshaken assent to all that God hath

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20 Heitzenrater comments in his footnote 47 to the effect that more of the sermon than Wesley let on may be later interpolations.


revealed in Scripture”23 and “Such a faith as this (which) cannot fail to show evidently the power of him that inspires it...(such that)...they now ‘yield’ themselves entirely ‘unto God, as those that are alive from the dead.”24 A glimmer of bold surrender is visible here, but again it is possible that he was trying to convince himself.

The language of evidence appeared in Wesley’s vocabulary here and later in the sermon in a way that would become much richer later on in his preaching.25 As he drew his concluding truths about circumcision of the heart, more language of his eventual favorite passage of Scripture, Hebrews 11, emerged: “Another truth…is that none shall obtain the honor that cometh of God unless his heart be circumcised by faith, even a ‘faith of the operation of God;’” …not unless “…he lives and ‘walks by faith,’ directs every step, as ‘seeing him that is invisible,’” drawing on Hebrews 11:27.26 He further appealed to the language of Hebrews 12 in describing faith in terms of its object and source, “Christ…the Author or his Spirit …the inspirer and perfecter both of our faith and works.”27 Though his account of Christian perfection will itself be perfected over time, the notion of “true religion” described here as having the Spirit of Christ 28


24 Ibid., §I.8, Works, 1:406.

25 Matthews locates Wesley squarely in the epistemological debates of 18th century England “about the respective roles of reason and faith in the religious life and “evidences” for the truth of Christianity (15).


27 Ibid., §II.4, Works, 1:411. He includes another eventually important passage as well in §II.5, that of Romans 8:16.

28 Ibid.
and the mind that was in Christ Jesus,²⁹ rather than a holiness or “perfection” attained on one’s own merit, would remain unchanged. Heitzenrater directs the reader’s attention to Wesley’s affirmation 50 years later in his Plain Account of Christian Perfection, that “This was the view of religion I then had, which even then I scrupled not to term ‘perfection.’ This is the view I have of it now, without any material addition or diminution.”³⁰

Nevertheless, as far as Wesley’s view of faith itself, a shift was on the way throughout the mid-1730s to an understanding of faith as trust in God’s love. What transpired to make it so? Maddox attributes seeds of the shift to Wesley’s father, Samuel, who on his deathbed had insisted on the epistemological proof of the Holy Spirit’s inward witness, which puzzled John at the time.³¹ Tossed about in his search for a “right faith, which would then open the way to a right practice,” according to Heitzenrater, Wesley found himself in awe of the bold faith of the German Moravians with whom he endured terrible tempests on his Atlantic crossing to Georgia in 1735, enough that he eventually submitted 31 questions about their theology and practice to

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²⁹ Ibid., §II.10, Works, 1:414.

³⁰ Heitzenrater, 243 (fn 41). §25.II.4 of Wesley’s A Plain Account of Christian Perfection does show more of a bold surrender in love on the mature Wesley’s part and highlights a solidarity in suffering between Christ the Head and the body of Christ similar to that of Augustine’s: “Humility and patience are the surest proofs of the increase of love. Humility alone unites patience with love; without which it is impossible to draw profit from suffering; or indeed, to avoid complaint, especially when we think we have given no occasion for what men make us suffer. True humility is a kind of self-annihilation; and this is the centre of all virtues. A soul returned to God ought to be attentive to everything which is said to him, on the head of salvation, with a desire to profit thereby.” John Wesley, A Plain Account of Christian Perfection: Annotated. eds. Randy Maddox and Paul Chilcote. (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 2015), 148-149.

³¹ Maddox, 125. cf Heitzenrater, 118.
their leader, August Spangenberg. One question concerned the Moravians’ entire reliance on the Holy Spirit as interpreter of Scripture, without assistance for “the Ancient Church” (by which Wesley meant the Fathers of the first three centuries). To the young Anglican accustomed to relying on reason and tradition, the Moravians’ version of sola Scriptura was mystifying. He also appealed for a better understanding of the “visible church,” which concerned apostolicity of the early church, not yet the sense of the eucharist as the “converting ordinance” he dearly needed it to be for himself.

In fact, even his sense of a missionary call was self-interested: He had gone as a missionary to the colony hoping that the “uncorrupted” natives would be able to detect true faith in his preaching, so he could burn away the chaff in himself! His doubt and fear contrasted sharply with the Moravians’ faith as surrender to the Holy Spirit, and he observed them closely. The sermons he wrote during his time on board the ship with them reflected increasing attention to the Holy Spirit. Though they would not come to be included in the canonical 44 sermons, Heitzenrater observes, “The development of a more vital doctrine of the Holy Spirit (pneumatology) in Wesley’s thought was to have important consequences for his

32 Geordan Hammond, *John Wesley in America: Restoring Primitive Christianity*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 93. He did also have an effect on the Moravians, influencing them to draw lots and decide to have more frequent celebrations of the eucharist (87).

33 Ibid., 94.

34 Ibid.

35 This view, being both naïve and presumptuous, shows how far he had to go in learning humility, as well as the extent to which he was understandably a product of his colonial milieu.

36 Heitzenrater, 119.
epistemology….”\textsuperscript{37} Certainly it would also animate his doctrine of sanctification, as well. Once in Georgia, he was confronted by echoes of his father’s emphasis on assurance in the Spirit’s witness as he read Macarius and other Eastern writers.\textsuperscript{38} In Georgia, Spangenberg pressured Wesley to attend to this assurance – or lack thereof – in himself, and Wesley found himself to have faith, just not “enough” faith.\textsuperscript{39}

While it is clear that he believed in God (\textit{credere Deum}) at this point, there is no movement to his belief, and the “Moravian view of \textit{sola fide}” was appealing to him, causing him to note on his self-examination on board the ship returning him to England that his heart would not be troubled “if (he) believed in God, and rightly believed also in him.”\textsuperscript{40} Upon his miserable return from his failed mission in Georgia, he became convinced that his doubt and fear of death reflected sheer unbelief, a lack of inward feeling curable only by another inward element, “a true, living faith.”\textsuperscript{41} While his fellow Methodists assured him that he was not an unbeliever, English Moravian Peter Böhler was more than happy to affirm his faithlessness and to describe to

\textsuperscript{37} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{38} Maddox, 125.

\textsuperscript{39} Heitzenrater, 120. The penetrating questions his friend Spannenberg asked him included, “Does the Spirit of God bear witness with your spirit that you are a child of God? Do you know Jesus Christ?... Do you know he has saved you? Do you know this for yourself?” Spangenberg’s description of fruits of faith led Wesley to respond that he then had \textit{no} faith, which Spangenberg countered with “\textit{Habes fidem, sed exiguam}” (You have faith, but insufficient.). The commodity language was never going to get Wesley outside himself and believing into Christ.

\textsuperscript{40} Ibid.

Wesley what the latter would unfortunately come to consider “a new gospel.”⁴² By March 1738, thanks to Böhler, “the experience that Wesley was expecting and for which he was hoping and praying was to be an experience of faith, inevitably attended by an assurance of pardon, which would necessarily result in freedom from sin, doubt, and fear, and be accompanied by a full measure of peace, joy, and confidence – all this in a moment....”⁴³ What appeared to be that “moment,” with an attendant shift in Wesley’s concept of faith that became evident in his preaching, was soon to come, on May 24, 1738. Yet the short duration of that expectation’s consummation would ensure that the next conceptual shift would be merely a transitional one.

5.1.2 Transitional Concept of Faith: Trust in God’s Love (credere Deo)

It is unnecessary to recount here Wesley’s famous transformation of a “heart strangely warmed” by the reading of Martin Luther’s Preface to the Epistle to the Romans that resulted in the feeling that he did trust Christ alone for salvation and the assurance that Christ died for him.⁴⁴ It is interesting that, having “resolved to seek it unto the end,” it was nevertheless “very unwillingly” that he had gone to the society in Aldersgate Street.⁴⁵ Perhaps it is evidence of the contradictions that coexist so easily in one who has moved no further in believing than credere Deum.⁴⁶ Both because of the initial reluctance (hardly “by believing to love” as he went into the

⁴² Heitzenrater, 121. See also Journal (24 May, 1738), §11, Works, 18:247-248. Wesley writes that Böhler described the two fruits of “true faith” as “…dominion over sin, and constant peace from a sense of forgiveness”, I was quite amazed, and looked upon it as a new gospel.”

⁴³ Heitzenrater, 122.

⁴⁴ Abraham, Aldersgate, 1.


⁴⁶ There is no way to know whether awareness of the formula might have helped him believe into Christ sooner.
Society meeting) and the short duration of the heart-warming in the absence of sacramental connection, we designate this shift *credere Deo*. He was trusting/believing Christ’s promise that he had died for his sins (or technically Martin Luther’s words about Christ’s promises and faith). He in essence believed—that God loves him. Better than before, but still no better than demons, as it remained propositional and soon would not only be darkened with doubt but also would convince him that his problem was that he was not making enough time for prayer—a conviction that came upon him while he was already worshipping and singing spiritual songs.47

However, the manner in which this improvement and movement in the direction of believing into God began to enhance his doctrine of justification is clear in the changing definition of faith that Wesley offered in the immediate wake of Aldersgate. He preached canonical Sermon 1, “Salvation by Faith,” in June 1738. The expansion upon what Wesley now means by “not merely an unshaken assent,” as he had put it in his 1733 “Circumcision of the Heart” is evident:

Christian faith is then not only an assent to the whole gospel of Christ, but also a full reliance on the blood of Christ, a trust in the merits of his life, death, and resurrection; a recumbency upon him as our atonement and our life, as given for us, and living in us….and in consequence hereof a definite closing with him and cleaving to him as our ‘wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption,’ or, in one word, our salvation.48

There are several notable, new distinctions in this definition: He newly described reliance and trust in Christ’s own promises on which Christ makes good as a meritorious, atoning sacrifice for


human sin, Wesley’s freedom from which reflected Böhler’s promise of freedom from sin through the assurance that comes with faith. Wesley definitely believed he now had experienced assurance, despite the absence of peace and lack of joy. The language of “uniting with” and “cleaving to” is worthy of Augustine’s *Exposition of Psalm 77*, in which, we recall from Chapter 1.4, by believing into God, the spirit entrusts itself to the Spirit of God, and rather than merely believing God the way one does any fellow human, one is able “to cling by faith to God, who effects good works in such a way that we collaborate well with God, for we are told, without me you can do nothing.” But beyond the clinging, the rest seemed somewhat lacking. Wesley persisted in an individualistic faith understanding and lacked a full-bodied sense of incorporation. How does this transitional concept of faith, this *credere Deo*, impact his doctrine of justification as evident in this sermon on Ephesians 2:8, “By grace you are saved through faith?”

There clearly remains room for yet another shift, though there is assurance and a vestige of collaboration in which God is effecting the works: “…the love of God is shed abroad in their hearts through the Holy Ghost which is given unto them” who are saved through this faith from sin and fear, and “whosoever believeth is born of God,” such that “it is’ then ‘God that

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50 Sermon 1 (1738), “Salvation by Faith,” §II.4, *Works*, 1:123. Note the emergence of the key verse, Romans 5:5, though there is yet to be a going into associated with the assurance. His language is increasingly relational, but not yet full incorporation in Christ’s members.


52 Ibid., §II.5, *Works*, 1:123.
worketh in us.” What Matthews refers to as the *spiritual experience* of God’s love still appears to be undefined, if not lacking entirely. He urges preachers (using Romans 8:16 in the commission as vigorously as he uses Romans 5:5 above) not to cease from proclaiming “salvation by faith” against all objections, but it almost seems as if he doth protest too much. He appears to have been calling for the right things to establish right relationship with God in Christ, as well as for accomplishing holy works (not that “holy works” are a complete doctrine of sanctification). Even if he was preaching ahead of himself, preaching what he hoped to believe, he still had not yet come as close to *credere in eum* as he would soon, nor had he yet articulated the twin doctrines in a way that was as conducive to flourishing as he soon would.

In reality, Wesley had had misgivings about what he had received on Aldersgate Street that welled up almost immediately after the event. Within weeks, though his preaching was clearly transformed, his “great expectations” that after Aldersgate he would experience continual peace, joy, and certainty were shattered. Based on Böhler’s promises, he had expected to experience, in addition to the freedom from sin of which he was certain, absence of doubts and fear. While he never lost the sense that he was newly free from sin and strengthened against temptation, he felt himself, by comparison to Böhler each time they met, to be devoid of the love

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54 Ibid., §III.7, *Works*, 1:128. The love of God shed abroad in hearts and the Spirit bearing witness with humans’ spirit quickly become quintessential Wesleyan concepts. He appears to be trying to convince himself, to name what he seeks.
of God and absent the promised joy and peace in believing.\textsuperscript{55} One thing of which he remained certain, however, was that he still had at least a degree of faith.\textsuperscript{56}

Noting the “testimony of Scripture: 1 Corinthians 3 speaks of ‘babes in Christ’” and perhaps remembering his conversation in America with German Moravian Spangenberg about weaker and stronger degrees of faith, Wesley decided to seek the counsel in Germany of “those holy men (sic) who were themselves living witnesses of the full power of faith and yet able to bear with those that are weak.”\textsuperscript{57} While their tolerance was questionably displayed toward him, Wesley was nevertheless delighted to discover that these Moravians were not of one mind with Peter Böhler and the English Moravians, after all! In fact, the head of their community, Nikolaus von Zinzendorf, allowed assurance to occur separately from justification, and understood other “evidences of justification” differently, too – the believer may have evidence of peace (note the subjunctive, not indicative, mood), but joy often is lacking.\textsuperscript{58} Wesley found these views much more consonant with his own and with his reading of Scripture, leaving room for degrees of faith.\textsuperscript{59} Since his March conversation with Böhler, he had been speaking and preaching in terms of “salvation by faith,” but now, after interviewing individuals about their experiences and hearing one of them, German Moravian Christian David, preach about those who had “weak faith” of justification but not yet the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, he began to address more

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\textsuperscript{55} Heitzenrater, 124, cf Maddox 125.
\textsuperscript{56} Maddox, 126.
\textsuperscript{57} Heitzenrater, 124.
\textsuperscript{58} Ibid., 124-5.
\textsuperscript{59} Ibid., 125. Recall from Chapter 3.2.1 Price’s treatment of assent by degrees.
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precisely the concept of “justification.” David generously spent several hours sharing his own story of how slow he was to understand that “‘being justified’ is widely different from having the ‘full assurance of faith’.” He appealed to the example of Jesus’ declaring the disciples all clean before he even went to the cross, yet they did not receive any assurance until after the ascension. David also described a very vital and fruitful preaching ministry that he had carried out despite his own misgivings.

The effects upon Wesley’s preaching in transition are detectable, despite the fact observed by both Maddox and Heitzenrater that he continued to preach publicly from his immediately post-Aldersgate, “salvation in a moment,” Böhlerian understanding of simultaneous faith and assurance, while privately working out his newfound understanding of degrees of faith and distinctions among doctrines. At least, the transitional effects are detectable if Timothy L. Smith is correct in the dating of canonical Sermon 5, “Justification by Faith” to October of 1739, rather than Outler’s date of 1746. Coming as it would at the end of a year of serious self-examination and less than a year before Wesley’s official break with the English Moravians, the 1739 date might enable us to see “Justification by Faith” as a transitional sermon from this period toward the third and final shift of the concept of faith.

61 Ibid., 18:274.
62 Ibid.
63 Ibid., 18:275.
64 Heitzenrater, 126. cf Maddox, 126. Maddox is clear that Wesley was not being duplicitous but just following the advice of Böhler to “Preach faith till you have it, and then, because you have it, you will preach it all the more,” until he had solid evidence that such preaching was harmful.
Upon returning to England from Germany in Autumn 1738, Wesley continued attempting to meet with the Moravians there, but found them increasingly tending toward quietism.\(^{65}\) while he himself increasingly emphasized for his societies the means of grace as occasions in which the Holy Spirit could work to overcome doubts and increase degrees of faith.\(^{66}\) Heitzenrater describes Wesley’s struggle with this tension in terms of Wesley’s efforts at self-examination for evidence of his faith.\(^{67}\) Wesley admitted his lack of love, joy, and peace in October, 1738 journal entries, but declared, “I nevertheless trust that I have a measure of faith, and am ‘accepted in the Beloved’; I trust…that I am ‘reconciled to God’ through his Son.”\(^{68}\) While this declaration was still in terms of “belief-that,” not quite full belief-into Christ, he was increasingly approaching both \textit{credere in eum} and a clearer articulation of the doctrine of justification, one including relational terminology like reconciliation. He vacillated for the rest of the year between finding assurance against his doubts in Scripture and being bedeviled by so-called friends among the Moravians about the necessity of full assurance.\(^{69}\)

The German Moravians’ distinctions that he had discovered during his visit to them became increasingly crucial for Wesley. Hesitantly at first but with increasing determination throughout early 1739, he began to distinguish, just as they did, justification from assurance,

\(^{65}\) Heitzenrater 137. Susanna Wesley, John’s mother, “convincingly testified” to quietist Moravians who claimed “no sacrament but Christ himself” and were trying to convince her she had no faith, that she had recently received full assurance of faith “while receiving the Sacrament.”

\(^{66}\) Ibid., 138.

\(^{67}\) Ibid., 128.

\(^{68}\) Ibid., 128.

\(^{69}\) Ibid., 129-30.
faith from assurance, and the beginning of sanctification from the fullness of sanctification.\textsuperscript{70}

Heitzenrater notes an increasing clash between what was essentially a Lutheran view of faith that conflated justification and sanctification and Wesley’s Anglican theological sensibilities, revived for him by his recent rediscovery of the Anglican \textit{Homilies} on salvation, faith, and good works.\textsuperscript{71}

According to Heitzenrater, “The English Moravians looked for marks of salvation that Wesley would have more naturally understood (within his own tradition) as evidence of sanctification.”\textsuperscript{72}

Herein lies an important distinction that the lens of believing-into Christ helps us appreciate. Particularly as he was so taken with the primitive church, this aspect might have resonated with him. The language of “going into him” and “being incorporated in Christ’s members” is itself associated with an ongoing process, the process of baptismal preparation, as well as entry into water. The handing over and giving back of the Symbol was a process of learning by heart, which came at the end of the long season of Lent, at the end of a three year catechumenal formation process. And all that was just to receive the justifying sacrament of dying and rising with Christ in the Triune name. After Christ did the baptism and applied the Spirit Glue that then would transform the believers-into into members, deifying them into Christ, they then went to the Table, and the invocation that would then begin the Spirit’s continued work of formation in the eucharist. By the 17\textsuperscript{th} century, patience with the process of grace at work in believers-into in the body of Christ had become as lost in translation as “believing-into” had. The primitive church’s devotion to \textit{credere in eum} had disappeared from the twin doctrines of

\textsuperscript{70} Ibid., 125, 130-131.

\textsuperscript{71} Ibid., 130.

\textsuperscript{72} Ibid., 126.
justification and sanctification. Could Wesley believe into God and demystify these doctrines for other potential believers-into?

If Sermon 5, “Justification by Faith,” indeed dates from 1739, then both Wesley’s plain distinctions in response to the question “What is ‘justification?’”73 and his bold retort to opponents on the matter of “…who are they that are justified?”74 reflect his working out of this contrast between marks of salvation and evidence of sanctification. He would be doing so in preparation for an impending break with the Moravians. Their disdain for him as their quietism mounted would also be understandable in the wake of this sermon. Throughout part II of the sermon, Wesley was emphatic that nothing in Scripture expands the definition of justification to include sanctification. “The one (justification) implies what God does for us through his Son; the other what he works in us by his Spirit. So that although …(rarely) ‘justified’ or ‘justification’…(is) used in so wide a sense as to include sanctification also,” Wesley continued, “yet in general use they are sufficiently distinguished from each other both by St. Paul and the other inspired writers.”75 Having defined justification simply and only as “pardon, the forgiveness of sins,”76 he then leveled a rebuke likely conjured by the memory of even the German Moravians refusing him the Eucharist based on his lack of full assurance.77


74 Ibid., §III.1, Works, 1:190.

75 Ibid., §II.1, Works, 1:187. (italics original)

76 Ibid., §2.5, Works, 1:189.

77 Heitzenrater., 124.
Forgiveness therefore has an immediate reference to sin and (in this respect) to nothing else. It is our ‘unrighteousness’ to which the pardoning God is ‘merciful;’ it is our ‘iniquity’ which he ‘remembereth no more.’ This seems not to be at all considered by those who so vehemently contend that man (sic) must be sanctified, that is, holy, before he can be justified; 78

Clearly the clarification of the reference for forgiveness was aimed at the “friends” who would persist in convincing him that his confident freedom from sin was not “enough” and that, short of full assurance, he still entirely lacked faith or worse, had the pressing sin of doubt/disbelief. The vehement ones he referred to are likely the English Moravians, who at this point (assuming an October 1739 date) were falling under the teachings of Philip Henry Molther. 79 Molther had the Fetter Lane Society convinced that the presence of fear and doubt – which for them indicated total absence of faith – indicated that they should “cease from all outward works and ‘be still.’…the ordinances (the Lord’s Supper, in particular) were not means of grace – the only means of grace is Christ.” 80 Molther seemed to be Böhler, amplified. Wesley, who had come to understand faith as trusting in God’s loving grace, was not going to let stand unopposed theological positions that threatened to cut people off from the means of grace through which they might come to enjoy the spiritual experience of God’s love. That theological opposition appears to have galvanized his own clarity both about personal faith and communal operation thereof by participation in sacramental community that undergirds the twin-but-distinct doctrines of justification and sanctification.

78 Sermon 5 “Justification by Faith,” §III.1-2, Works, 1:190-191. (parentheses original)

79 Heitzenrater, 138.

80 Ibid., 137.
5.1.3 Fully Developed Faith: Spiritual Experience of God’s Love (credere in Deum)

Wesley’s disentanglement of justification from sanctification and assurance from both faith and justification prepared the way not only for his Summer 1740 complete break from the Moravians but also for the third shift in his concept of faith. He was getting very close near the end of “Justification by Faith,” in which he had set out to describe justifying faith specifically, against the backdrop of “faith in general (as) a divine, supernatural ‘evidence’ or conviction ‘of things not seen.’”

Appealing to the “words of our own Church,” with his descriptive powers reportedly failing, he had declared, “‘The only instrument of salvation’ (whereof justification is one branch) ‘is faith, that is, a sure and certain trust and confidence that God both has and will forgive our sins, that he has accepted us again into His (sic) favour for the merits of Christ’s death and passion.’”

The language of “favour” is not quite the corporeal imagery of credere in eum, but it clearly prepared the way. The Anglican Homilies had been good to Wesley.

Precipitated as the break with the Moravians was by his coming to understand the Holy Spirit to be absolutely central to faith, one other factor in his third and final conceptual shift was simply his seeing the results of his preaching on his hearers, particularly as he came to embrace outdoor preaching.

The first factor, coming to see the Holy Spirit as central, is evident, according to Maddox, in canonical Sermon 4, “Scriptural Christianity,” from the Summer of 1744. Here Wesley emphasized the “ordinary fruits” of the Spirit over and against the “extraordinary gifts” in

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82 Ibid., 41.
83 Ibid., 132.
consideration of the filling with the Holy Spirit that Acts 4:31 records. Maintaining that constant definition of true religion that Wesley traced from “The Circumcision of the Heart” through *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, “the mind which was in Christ” was seen as being given by the Holy Spirit.\(^8^4\) The Spirit was further charged with filling Christ’s followers with the fruits of the Spirit as enumerated in Galatians 5:22-24, as well as “to endue them with ‘faith,’ (perhaps it might be rendered ‘fidelity’),”\(^8^5\) enable them to overcome sinful desires, and “‘to walk as Christ also walked,’ in the ‘work of faith, the patience of hope, the labour of love.’”\(^8^6\)

What Wesley continued to describe was an indwelling, a spiritual experience of God’s love at the molecular level, a cell-change of sorts. It is an excellent way to imagine the Holy Spirit’s being applied by Christ in baptism as surgical Glue genuinely knitting believers’ cells into Christ’s and vice versa, as we become truly members of the body. Hebrews 11:1 and Romans 8:16 joined a host of other Scriptural references to describe “faith of the operation of God, which was the very ‘substance,’ or subsistence, of things hoped for (Heb. 11:1), the demonstrative ‘evidence of invisible things,’” which involves reception of the Spirit of adoption.\(^8^7\) Furthermore, “This, then, was the very essence of … faith, a divine *elenchos*

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\(^{8^5}\) Ibid. (parenth original). Incidentally, he had declared faith a gift in “Justification by Faith” as well (§IV.5, 1:196).

\(^{8^6}\) Ibid., *Works*, 1:161.

\(^{8^7}\) Ibid., §I.1, *Works*, 1:161. (parentheses mine)
(evidence or conviction) of the love of God the Father, through the Son of his love, to him (sic) a sinner, now ‘accepted in the beloved.’”88

Now, having affirmed the separation of faith from assurance, by which a child of God can be justified without yet being sanctified – which was the Holy Spirit’s work to do – “Wesley felt an increasing need to develop a way to explain the sensation of divine evidence for justification: spiritual senses to discern the operations of the Spirit.”89 Then the Hebrews 11:1 definition of faith can make more sense, as what cannot be seen with the eyes can nevertheless be increasingly sensed by the Holy Spirit that fills believers.

Yet what Wesley was able to see with his own eyes was also a boon to his faith, once he had “submitted to be more vile” by following George Whitfield’s lead as early as April 2, 1739 into the “pretty remarkable precedent of field-preaching” in what he referred to as “this new period of my life.”90

He saw his listeners’ dispositions changed before his eyes as they gathered by the thousands to hear his words, which were not known to be expressed with any particularly stylistic flair.91 Having so struggled himself with faith and assurance, Wesley surely counted it a major transformation when it was reported that, “during his sermon at the Bowling Green on ‘Free Grace,’ ‘one who had long continued in sin…received a full, clear sense of His pardoning...

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88 Ibid., §1.2, Works, 1:161-162.
89 Heitzenrater, 141. cf 135.
90 Ibid., 132.
91 Ibid., 163.
love and power to sin no more.””\(^{92}\) Wesley would be careful to apply and to encourage others to apply to these reports of inner experiences the outward checks of “the only certain test – the Law and the Testimony.”\(^{93}\) Thus believing into Christ still applies reason in its doctrines of justification and sanctification, to ensure that what is at work is not a desire to attract attention to oneself or otherwise deceive, but in fact grace at work transforming dispositions.

Such changed dispositions may be what inspired him to incorporate the language of “disposition” more directly in pressing his definition of faith the farthest he had yet in canonical Sermon 18, “The Marks of the New Birth.”\(^{94}\) Offering “faith” as the first mark of the New Birth, he defined faith by once again starting from the premise that it is more than assent, “not a bare assent to this proposition, ‘Jesus is the Christ;’ nor indeed to all the propositions contained in our creed, or in the Old and New Testament.”\(^{95}\) Wesley was now clear that neither \textit{credere Deum} nor \textit{credere Deo} constitute Christian faith. He moved quickly on to proclaim, “The true, living Christian faith, which whosoever hath is ‘born of God,’ is not only an assent, an act of the understanding, but a disposition which God hath wrought in his heart; ‘a sure trust and confidence in God that through the merits of Christ his sins are forgiven and he reconciled to the

\(^{92}\) Heitzenrater, 133.

\(^{93}\) Ibid., 134.

\(^{94}\) John Wesley, Sermon 18, “The Marks of the New Birth,” in \textit{The Bicentennial Edition of the Works of John Wesley Volume 1 [Sermons I]} ed. Albert C. Outler. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984), 415-430. The widest disparity in dates between Smith and Outler occurs here, as Smith dates the sermon to April 3, 1741 and Outler to 1748. Either one is long enough after his break with the Moravians and his move out-of-doors to preach with large crowd response to have been encouraged in further development of his concept of faith.

\(^{95}\) Ibid., §I.2, \textit{Works}, 1:418.
favour of God.” Renunciation of trust in self, earnest desire for salvation, and trust in Christ suffice.

He described, as he himself had experienced, the freedom from the power of sin that results. He went on to describe other fruits, but it was clear that peace and happiness in God flow from, rather than are immediately included with, faith. Other marks of the new birth, such as hope and love, also come after faith, very much in keeping with Augustine’s description of hope and love that are added to faith as part of *credere in Christum* (*Sermo CXLIV*). Characteristic of Wesley’s shift to the third and final concept of faith is that everything else does not automatically have to be present in order for this faith to be present, real, and operative. Rather, it is possible for fruits to develop and grow from this spiritual experience of God’s love, over time, leaving room for those who do not yet exhibit these fruits nevertheless to be true Christians who have a degree of faith. For those listeners who find themselves to be lacking in the marks of the new birth, rather than the cold criticism Wesley had received at the hands of the Moravians, he now offered a closing exhortation to “let not Satan put into your heart to cavil at a word, when the thing is clear” but rather to prepare hearts to receive “the ‘Spirit of adoption, crying in their hearts, Abba, Father!’” His closing prayer interceded for his listeners. As in Wesley’s case, the

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96 Ibid., §I.3, *Works*, 1:418-419. If only Wesley had preached in Latin, this passage would have been an opportunity to examine the manuscript for any heretofore undiscovered awareness of the uniqueness of *credere in eum*, or perhaps the whole formula if he were to have encountered it in Bede, Lombard, or Thomas Brinton. He frequently communicated with the German Pietists in Latin, so his fluency might have helped him develop *credere in eum* faith sooner (though all that might have been available to him at that time might have been Chemnitz and the Lutheran Scholastics versions).


98 Ibid., §IV.5, *Works*, 1:430. One of numerous times he refers to the Spirit of adoption in this sermon (and others!).
absence of too high a standard of faith seems to have made it less likely that his hearers would despair and curve inward and more likely that they would be unfurled to experience the Holy Spirit’s power upon and in them.

Heitzenrater contends, “The story of Wesley's quest for assurance takes an unexpected turn – it becomes less singularly personal as he begins to sense the work of the Holy Spirit in the midst of the people....” 99 I submit that Wesley’s own faith struggles were a helpful element in recognizing the surprising response of his hearers in the fields as the work of the Holy Spirit. While he surely had already come to understand similar experiences about which he had learned Jonathan Edwards was having in New England as such, his own sense of his personal imperfections likely hastened a humble willingness to attribute the amazing responses of his hearers, once checked against the Law and the Testimony – to the Holy Spirit.

In defense of himself against his brother’s offense at his outdoor preaching and hearers’ responses, he refers to those transformed people as “my living arguments for what I assert.” 100 And just what was it that he asserted? That, in the words of Charles’ sermon “Awake, Thou Who Sleepest” (considered very similar to John’s sermon of the same title), together with his own words in “Scriptural Christianity” 101 that “Faith is the life of the soul,’ and the Spirit of God is sufficient evidence, the elenchos pneumatos (divine consciousness, evidence), the witness of

99 Heitzenrater, 133.


God that is ‘greater than ten thousand human witnesses.’”\(^{102}\) Wesley was surrounded by thousands of witnesses to the transformation in their own spirits each time he preached! “Such confirmations of God’s action bolstered his own faith to a great extent,” avers Heitzenrater.\(^{103}\)

Is this bolstering what Böhler expected with his “preach faith till you have it” advice? That the hearers’ response would inspire Wesley’s own faith? The climax of Sermon 4, “Scriptural Christianity,” had called his hearers to envision a Christian world, starting with the faith that is in each person receptively “filled with the Holy Ghost,” the only true “scriptural Christianity.”\(^{104}\) As the spiritual experience of God’s love through this filling with the Holy Spirit, the concept of faith that Wesley had now developed could withstand or coexist with doubts and fears. Doubts and fears were in fact topics of later canonical sermons of the 1750s and 1760s, in which Wesley addressed them as wilderness (Sermon 40, “The Wilderness State”), and as heaviness and manifold temptations (Sermon 41, “Heaviness and Manifold Temptations”). In short, he was doing for his hearers what both the Moravians and the Church had failed to do for him, though he at least had been able to rely on the Homilies to get his resistant reflections started, which led to his believing into God and his more graceful doctrines of justification and sanctification.

5.1.4 Beyond the Canonical Sermons

At the time of his preaching “Scriptural Christianity,” Wesley had over half his life and ministry left before him – what became of his concept of faith beyond the third temporal shift? It

\(^{102}\) Heitzenrater, 134-135.

\(^{103}\) Ibid., 133.

behooves us here to recall Matthews’s three concepts and consider Maddox’s analysis: 1) faith as assent to truth claims, 2) faith as trust in God’s love, and 3) faith as spiritual experience of God's love. Maddox considers the last to have been fully developed by the mid-1740s, from which point it goes on to dominate Wesley’s later writings. This claim squares with Abraham’s identification of the epistemological source of “faith and personal experience of God” as the one that Wesley “unpacked most explicitly, frequently, and enthusiastically.”

Maddox goes on to explain that Matthews’s most important point is that this third concept becomes the foundational, “objective,” i.e., non-self-generated ground of the other two human actions of assent and trust. Once again, the lack of rigid ordo credentis is evident. The development across the canonical sermons here considered, which never eliminate assent or trust but subordinate them to the experience of God’s love by indwelling of the Holy Spirit as divine evidence of the unseen (just as the propositional is not rejected by believing into Christ, but rather becomes a means toward the relational end), bears out these claims.

I agree with Maddox that it is no accident that this shift coincided with Wesley’s moves to disentangle assurance as a free-standing possibility after, not a Böhlerian essential requirement to, justification and also notice across the trajectory of the sermons here considered that Wesley seems increasingly hesitant to use the word “assurance,” preferring instead “evidence.”

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105 Maddox 127. He sides with Outler’s date for “Justification by Faith” of 1746 (see fn 62), but his point still holds.
106 Abraham, Aldersgate, 24.
107 Maddox, 127.
108 Ibid., 128.
made explicit his motivation of not wanting his hearers to abandon faith for lack of instantaneous assurance upon experiencing justifying grace in a 1747 letter to his brother and co-laborer Charles. It is not that he did not still expect assurance to come, John explained, but that he no longer was considering it essential to justifying faith. It was rather an element of the work of the Holy Spirit in sanctifying grace. This emphasis on grace is evident in one of his most popular sermons, “The Scripture Way of Salvation” (1765).

This sermon demonstrates that Wesley’s own faith had all the features of credere in eum, just not the actual language of “believing into Christ.” It is also appropriate for training the “believing into” lens on justification and sanctification simultaneously, for it marshals the best material from “Salvation by Faith,” “Justification by Faith,” and “The Circumcision of the Heart” to synthesize the “most successful summary of the Wesleyan vision of the ‘way of salvation’ in the entire sermon corpus.” Indeed, the sermon is so popular that the unfortunate side effect is its establishing its ordo salutis so firmly in the minds of some Methodist scholars as to make them resistant to some of the claims in this project regarding the lack of a rigid ordo credentis. “The Scripture Way of Salvation” recapitulates all that has gone before and allows

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109 Ibid., 126, fn 53. With reference to “Letter to Charles Wesley (31 July 1747).”


111 An individual attending the presentation of some of this material (which was then based entirely on the examination of the canonical sermons with brief mention of the sermons “On Faith” that are about to be discussed below) expressed indignation and sharply criticized my omission of the “standard” ordo salutis of “The Scripture Way of Salvation” from the conversation. It is worth noting that this sermon is not a “Standard” in British Methodism, as it is one of four that is “in the fifty-three sermons in the first edition of the Works…but not in the first four volumes of 1788” (Heitzenrater, Mirror, 183).
us to pause and consider whether *credere eum* or *credere eo* are sufficient for salvation if *credere in eum* is constitutive of Christian faith:

If by “salvation” one means justification apart from sanctification, then yes, believing in God (that there is a God whose Son is Jesus) – so long as one also believes God’s promises are true – suffices, and my whole argument for *credere in eum* as constitutive of the Christian faith is defeated. There are necessary corollaries, however, that defeat this apparent defeater:

1) If one holds that justification devoid of sanctification is possible, one doesn’t believe the words of Scripture (commented upon by Bede in James 1-2) that “faith without works is dead,” so one doesn’t believe God (*credere deo*). Wesley had repeatedly insisted in sermons considered above that “bare assent” (*credere Deum* alone) was not even sufficient for justification.112

2) Believing God (akin to Wesley’s transitional, second concept of faith in Matthews’s scheme) is in fact sufficient faith for justification and to avoid condemnation; however, remember that in “Justification by Faith” Wesley had preached justification as one “branch” of salvation, indicating that there are two, the other of which is sanctification. Wesley’s disentanglement of justification from sanctification was less like building a wall of separation and more like performing an operation elected by conjoined twins to relieve a condition. Once the operation is over they still are twins. They still love and accompany one

\[112\] It is not germane to the present argument, but one might align *credere eum* level of assent to some extent with God’s work of prevenient grace that prepares the way for the believer to recognize Christ and come to a decision to believe him for justification or believe into him for sanctification.
another, they just are no longer required to arrive everywhere they go at the same
time.113 Wesley indicated in “The Scripture Way of Salvation” that “Justification
is another word for pardon.”114 In the next moment, he continued, “Sanctification
begins at the time of justification.115 It can be accomplished in a moment, which
Scripture promised that God is willing and able to do in an instant,116 or “Perhaps
it may be gradually wrought in some.”117 Believing into God as an exercise of
sanctifying faith is a matter of going into Christ by choosing to “boldly say, at any
point of time, ‘Now is the day of salvation.’”118 Wesley echoed God’s constant
invitation, “Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.’ Behold! all
things are now ready! Come unto the marriage!”119
3) Works of piety and works of mercy that sanctification involves are not
necessary in the same sense that faith – “the only condition which is immediately
and proximately necessary to sanctification” – is.120 For the one overly worried

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113 It is important to note here that this metaphor is just a metaphor and does not intend to endorse a particular norm with regard to the identity, way of living, or medical decisions of living conjoined twins.


115 Ibid., §I.4, Works, 1:158. “And at the same time that we are justified, yea, in that very moment, sanctification begins.” (italics original)


117 Ibid., §III.18, Works, 1:168.

118 Ibid., §III.16, Works, 1:168.

119 Ibid.

120 Ibid., §III.9, §III.10, §III.13, Works, 1:166-167.
that credere in eum is not yet their experience of God, there is the reminder that faith and the experience of God are gifts, not controlled by anything other than grace. The good news is that if you have to ask humbly about the state of your own faith that is merely credere eum and credere eo, you are likely closer to the credere in eum that you desire than you think you are.

On the contrary, it is those either who actively reject believing into God or who assume they have it and therefore judge whether others have it and exclude based on their judgment, as in our parable in Chapter 4, who are the ones in trouble. By the time he wrote “The Scripture Way,” Wesley’s antagonists were no longer the Quietists, but Scottish dissenters who would question the validity and discard the necessity of assurance altogether.121

In the decades to follow, Wesley would publicly encourage those despairing of a lack of full assurance as he once did.122 He responded consistently by distinguishing between the faith of a servant (sufficient for salvation in its own right, for justification to occur by grace and for sanctification to begin) and what that faith could develop into, the faith of a child of God.123 He went so far as to add clarifying footnotes to earlier publications, emphasizing positive aspects of nascent faith, including, for example, the addition to the 1733 sermon, “The Circumcision of the

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121 Outler and Heitzenrater, John Wesley's Sermons: An Anthology, 371. They contrast dissenter leader Robert Sanderman’s “advocacy of salvation by assent” and “faith as an act of will” with Wesley’s “heart religion.” Like Augustine before him, an appeal to Romans 5:5 would appear in Wesley’s argument, to describe how believers(-into) experience “a real as well as a relative change” within and “feel the ‘love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us’, producing love to all (hu)mankind, and more especially to the children of God….” (Sermon 43 [1765], “Scripture Way of Salvation,” §1.4, 373).

122 Maddox, 127.

123 Ibid. See also the ensuing treatment of Sermon 106.
Heart” that continued the statement that faith is more than consent with language of “the revelation of Christ in our hearts: a divine evidence or conviction of his love, his free, unmerited love to me a sinner; a sure confidence in his pardoning mercy, wrought in us by the Holy Ghost…. “” 124 In these moves, Wesley did not reject assurance. On the contrary, he assured his Anglican colleague in 1788, “We preach assurance as we always did, as a common privilege of real Christians; but [now] we do not enforce it, under pain of damnation, denounced on all who enjoy it not.” 125

In the end, Wesley appeared to be channeling the very best insights he had gained from the German pietists, allowing for growth in faith that may take a lifetime…or more! Consider his final two sermons “On Faith.” In Sermon 106, he presented in stark clarity the distinction between the faith of a servant and the faith of a child in defining “saving faith:”

But what is the faith which is properly saving; which brings eternal salvation to all those that keep it to the end? It is such a divine conviction of God, and the things of God, as, even in its infant state, enables every one that possesses it to “fear God and work righteousness.” And whosoever, in every nation, believes thus far, the Apostle declares, is “accepted of him.” He actually is, at that very moment, in a state of acceptance. But he is at present only a servant of God, not properly a son (sic). Meantime, let it be well observed, that “the wrath of God” no longer “abideth on him.” 126

By now Wesley was well established in this line of thinking and thoroughly encouraging, in a way not seen in the canonical sermons, that one may still be a true Christian even before one


fully believes (or believes-into), because a spiritual experience of God’s love is the work of the Holy Spirit, and the same Spirit that helps one have justifying faith is eager to help one grow in assurance of faith and sanctification at the loving Father’s behest.

This eagerness is evident in this same sermon, which first openly confessed Methodism’s earlier error along these doctrinal lines: “Indeed, nearly fifty years ago, when the Preachers, commonly called Methodists, began to preach that grand scriptural doctrine, salvation by faith, they were not sufficiently apprized (sic) of the difference between a servant and a child of God.”127 The preachers, Wesley now was confessing, had been apt to accuse people with doubts of being children of the devil, when in fact they should simply have said, “Hitherto you are only a servant, you are not a child of God. You have already great reason to praise God that he has called you to his honourable service. Fear not. Continue crying unto him, ‘and you shall see greater things than these.’”128 This happy reference to Christ’s words to cynical Nathanael in John 1:50 make plain Wesley’s well-developed belief that even so simple a faith as is impressed with Christ’s recognition of us sinners is sufficient to save and can be developed further. This development, the elderly Wesley does not hesitate to detail with exegesis of Galatians:

And, indeed, unless the servants of God halt by the way, they will receive the adoption of sons (sic). They will receive the faith of the children of God, by his revealing his only begotten Son in their hearts. Thus, the faith of a child is, properly and directly, a divine conviction, whereby every child of God is enabled to testify, ”The life that I now live, I live by faith the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.” And whosoever hath this, the Spirit of God witnesseth with his spirit, that he is a child of God. So the Apostle writes to the Galatians: “Ye are the sons of God by faith. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father;” that is, giving you a childlike confidence in him, together with a kind affection toward him. This then

127 Ibid., §1.11, Works, 3:497.

128 Ibid.
it is, that (if St. Paul was taught of God, and wrote as he was moved by the Holy Ghost) properly constitutes the difference between a servant of God, and a child of God. "He that believeth," as a child of God, "hath the witness in himself." This the servant hath not. Yet let no man discourage him; rather, lovingly exhort him to expect it every moment.¹²⁹

In the admonition to “let no man discourage him,” he as surely preached to the preachers of the 1780s as he also reflects back across the decades to his own former friends among the Moravians, none of whom were likely still living and ministering as he was.

His still ministering as an octogenarian bears out Abraham’s diagnosis of Wesley as an “incurable workaholic.”¹³⁰ So does the imagery he concocted in Sermon 132, delivered January 17, 1791, less than two months before his death, which included numerous references to the possibility of believers’ still ministering in heaven, perhaps even assisting angels unseen here on earth.¹³¹ His form of belief into God carries his doctrines of justification and sanctification into eternity. Furthermore, the righteous soul that on earth has the faith that is the spiritual experience of God’s love, in heaven is still capable of growing, maturing, or ripening in knowledge, holiness, love, gratitude, benevolence, and perfection.¹³²

How could he claim such otherworldly knowledge of the service of children of God in the hereafter? Sure, it is true that Wesley, shortly after the opening line quoted in the first sentence of this chapter, had admitted, “I am now an immortal spirit, strangely connected with a

¹²⁹ Ibid., §I.12, Works, 3:497.

¹³⁰ Abraham, Aldersgate, 2.


¹³² Ibid., §11, §12, Works, 4:196-197.
little portion of earth...In a short time I am to quit this tenement of clay, and to remove into another state, Which the living know not, And the dead cannot, or they may not tell!”133 But his knowledge came another way, one available to us all. We know that God desires to work not only by God’s own power but through us by God’s own revelation, through which we also know even what little we know about heaven to come...recall Wesley’s most certain tests for the responses of his hearers over fifty years earlier, the Law and the Testimony. “These things we have believed upon the testimony of God, the Creator of all things, visible and invisible; by this testimony we already know the things that now exist, though not yet seen, as well as those that will exist in their season, until this visible world will pass away, and the Son of Man shall come in his glory.”134

Wesley went on to express in his empirical manner – reflecting an unchanged notion of noetic impairment resulting from sin – a trust in restored and even entirely new spiritual senses,135 “What a relief is it to the defects of our senses, and consequently, of our understanding; which can give us no information of anything, but what is first presented by the senses! But hereby a new set of senses (so to speak) is opened in our souls....”136 He translated this statement to designate the ultimate operation of faith as the instrument of revelation by

133 Ibid., §2, Works, 4:188.
134 Ibid., §17, Works, 4:200.
135 Abraham, Aldersgate, 58. cf Heitzenrater’s reflections on the development of spiritual senses, as well as Maddox’s interpretation of Wesley’s development of faith as “not a human action or creation, but the passive reception of God's gracious pardoning overtures”(128), when he notes that through a “gift of new senses...faith for Wesley is not just an act of trust on our part in response to the gospel; it is an act of trust generated by a God-given capacity to see and become aware of what God has done for us in the death of Jesus Christ” (26).
turning to his own brother’s lyrics of what we now consider verse 6 of the hymn, “Author of Faith, Eternal Word:”

The things unknown to feeble sense
Unseen by reason’s glimmering ray,
With strong, commanding evidence,
Their heavenly origin display.
Faith lends its realizing light:
The clouds disperse, the shadows fly
The Invisible appears in sight,
And GOD is seen by mortal eyes!\textsuperscript{137}

The final act of John Wesley’s final sermon was to borrow his younger brother’s words to let faith as he had developed it remove the shades from the truth of Hebrews 11:1, the promise to render the Unseen visible and prove that faith had been the evidence of the unseen all along.

5.2 “Belief Into Christ” in Action: Bold Surrender as Evidence and Encounter

Even before his sermons “On Faith,” John Wesley’s fear as he approached his own death was not for his own soul (obviously, as he expected to keep up the sanctifying works of mercy in heaven). Rather he worried for his movement and its conspicuous sanctity as a religion of the heart, visibly embodying the work of the Holy Spirit begun by Christ. The last sermon he would publish in his own \textit{Arminian Magazine} was “Thoughts Upon Methodism” (1786).\textsuperscript{138} He wrote:

\begin{quote}
I am not afraid that the people called Methodists should ever cease to exist either in Europe or America. But I am afraid, lest they should only exist as a dead sect, having the form of religion without the power. And this undoubtedly will be the
\end{quote}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{\textit{137}} Ibid.
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case, unless they hold fast both the doctrine, spirit, and discipline with which they first set out.\textsuperscript{139}

We have here considered the centrality of the twin doctrines of justification and sanctification to Methodist “doctrine, spirit, and discipline.” As he went on to synopsize a kind of \textit{sola Scriptura} as Methodists’ “fundamental doctrine,” he encompassed the core principles not only of the twin doctrines for Methodists but also of the bold surrender engendered by Augustine’s believing into God as the body of Christ. Wesley summarized what Methodists learned from the Scriptures as: “That religion is … no other than the mind that was in Christ… the renewal of the soul after the image of God, in righteousness true and holiness,” which “ cannot be wrought in us, but by the power of the Holy Ghost” and which “we receive … merely for the sake of Christ,” who ensures that “whosoever hath the mind that was in Christ… is our brother, and sister, and mother.”\textsuperscript{140}

The purpose of this reminder, along with a very brief history of how their fellowship in pursuit of holiness of heart and life started and had grown, was to warn that the wealth that Methodists’ diligence and good stewardship was amassing grew at their spiritual expense unless surrendered through sacrificial giving.\textsuperscript{141} The works of mercy by which believers-into Christ, empowered by sanctifying grace, boldly surrender themselves and their earthly gifts to those in need on earth simultaneously grow givers in grace, humility, and unity, he contended.

\textsuperscript{139} Ibid., §1, \textit{Works/J}, XIII:258.

\textsuperscript{140} Ibid., §2, \textit{Works/J}, XIII:258.

Not that Wesley was urging his people to become paupers, but incorporation in Christ’s members does mean conforming to his body of suffering mercy. “As Augustine proclaims,” notes Lee, “Christ has mercy on us so that we might have mercy on one another. To be a member of Christ’s body means to be conformed to the mercy of God, and to offer works of mercy as part of an ecclesial community bound in charity.” Even catechumens were taught this deification as part of believing into Christ. Augustine urged those who would instruct them about “the Holy Spirit enabling us to fulfill the law of love for God and neighbor,” despite the Devil tempting “us” to abandon hope in God “through the dread caused by suffering, but performing the works of mercy with humility helps us hold fast in the face of these temptations.”

Love of enemy carries this mercy and the bold surrender engendered by believing into Christ to its extreme. Yet Augustine encouraged believers-into Christ not to fear this extreme, which may even be a means of “converting” enemies. Faith working through love best demonstrates the flourishing made possible by believing into God when it works through love of enemies.

So what…ought we, in the fellowship of the love of God, to be doing? …we should love our enemies; after all, we have nothing to fear from them, because they cannot possibly deprive us of what we love; instead, we feel sorry for them, because the more they hate us, the more it shows how far they are cut off from the one whom we love. If, however, they are converted and turn back to him, they must needs love both him as their bliss-conferring good, and us as their companions in enjoying such an unimaginable good.

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142 Lee, 56.


144 Hill, Teaching Christianity, 119: 1.29.30.
5.2.1 Bold Surrender as Compelling Evidence

If they “turn back to him” and are incorporated in his members, they become part of a more compelling evidence of the truth of the promises of Christ than is the treatment of creeds within the church as mere knowledge-by-description lists of tenets to be memorized by rote with little impact on one’s living. Love of enemy is the ultimate bold surrender as Christianity’s “central experiential content and moral effects.” It gives people a glimpse of the God who is in peaceful relationship within Godself and invites all people to believe into and be incorporated in that loving relationship.

This love and incorporation is implicit in the kind of community at the heart of both Wesley’s vision of sacrificial giving for the doctrine, discipline, and spirit of Methodism and equally long-lived Methodist minister James M. Lawson’s ministry of nonviolence. Lawson’s love of enemies demonstrates that belief into God results in the believer’s bold surrender to God’s will and even to earthly authorities when necessary. The call to suffer for and with others out of love for neighbor as oneself dates back to before Augustine, even to the New Testament. Wesley’s theological motive of “renewing the Church by reviving the practices of the primitive church” is borne out in Lawson’s determination to renew a nation by reviving the New Testament practice of “Following the Non-violent Jesus.”

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145 As of this writing, Lawson is 89 years old. Wesley died in his 88th year.
146 Hammond, 61.
The son of a pistol-carrying Methodist minister father and a Jamaican-American mother, who opened his mind to Christ’s teachings on non-violence, Lawson can still pinpoint an Aldersgate Street experience of his own when, at the age of ten, he boasted to his mother of his having disciplined a younger, white boy for a racist comment with a firm slap, only to have his mother surprise him with a response worthy of Wesley’s first two General Rules for the United Societies.148 Lawson would later describe to biographer David Halberstam the moment Philane asked young Jimmy where the harm and good had been in the situation, telling him how much God and his family loved him, as “what John Wesley would have called a sanctification experience, a moment when his life seemed to stand still and then change forever.”149 This definition of sanctification emphasizes an inbreaking of grace to break free from sin – in this case the sin of violence – that frees the human agent for bold surrender to transformation by God. One of Methodism’s gifts is the understanding of sanctification, accompanied by assurance, as a lifelong process of growth in holiness by grace. Thus young Lawson, by surrendering the hand that slaps to be strengthened by the Holy Spirit for extension instead in Christian fellowship,150 had embarked upon a process of transformation, as sanctification continued.

As a young adult, he sought and attended a college where the student body was driven by their religious beliefs to seek justice. Methodist-related Baldwin-Wallace College was a setting

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148 David Halberstam, *The Children*. (New York: Ballantine Publishing Group, Inc., 1998), 31. While a sharp contrast is clear between the expectation James M. Lawson, Sr. had for his son to fist-fight injustice and Philane’s challenge to non-violent action, not all Lawson, Sr.’s actions were violent: he also founded a chapter of the NAACP and Urban League in most of the eight places he planted or led AME Zion and later Methodist churches (see 28-29).

149 Ibid.

150 Including the Methodist Youth Fellowship of his father’s church.
where the local chapter of the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR) was welcome to recruit members like Lawson. He was a conscientious objector to the Korean War, spending over a year in an American prison before his three-year missionary tour in India. Upon his return, he had settled on a five-year plan of graduate study at Oberlin and Yale, then serving God as part of the movement for civil rights in the American South. Meeting Martin Luther King, Jr. when King spoke at Oberlin, however, led Lawson to submit that timetable of his will to God’s will, and he soon accepted an assignment as southern field secretary with FOR.

Bound not for Atlanta and Gammon Theological Seminary as he had first hoped, but for Nashville and Vandebilt, Lawson would soon come to see why God provided this opportunity. John Wesley had wrestled with his own concerns about the virtues he lacked en route to (and after his return from) the American South. So, too, Lawson worried on his way to the American South about his own strong pride and independence in the face of legal segregation that he had not experienced in Ohio, leading him to question whether he was worthy of the call

Halberstam, 37. Far more than the mere “group of activists, primarily with Protestant religious affiliations, who wanted to use the force of Christian love in all relationships…” that Halberstam describes (17). The Fellowship of Reconciliation has a rich history as a transformational pacifist organization from its beginning. Founded in 1914 in England following an ecumenical conference in Switzerland that had sought to prevent the outbreak of World War I, its incorporation in the United States followed a year later. From its origin in a conversation and pledge at a German train station between an English Quaker and German Lutheran who were disappointed to have to depart the Swiss conference as their countries were now at war, it has developed into “an interfaith and international movement with branches and affiliated groups in over 50 countries and on every continent. Today the membership of FOR includes Jews, Christians, Buddhists, Muslims, Indigenous religious practitioners, Baha’i, and people of other faith traditions, as well as those with no formal religious affiliation” (http://forusa.org/about/history).

Halberstam, 15-16; Dreier, 348.

Halberstam, 17.

Hammond, 48.
he was answering.\textsuperscript{155} Upon reflection, however, he became confident that he “was doing nothing less than God’s work,” in teaching students an activism that would be reviving the “protest” in their Protest-ant religious backgrounds.\textsuperscript{156}

He could soon identify the remarkable way in which God seemed to have assembled in Nashville a core group of young visionary black ministers and bright, eager college students. Facing the students’ initial doubts about his gently-voiced insistence on the power of non-violent love required his confidence in this providence.\textsuperscript{157} Those skeptical about the effectiveness of his approach gradually experienced transformation of their angry, frustrated desire for violent action into camaraderie and courage to transform an unjust society as Lawson appealed to the Wesleyan sources that God had provided him.

In addition to Jesus and Gandhi, Lawson’s particular understanding of whom he has attributed to Methodist Missionary E. Stanley Jones,\textsuperscript{158} Lawson taught the non-violent example of John Wesley.\textsuperscript{159} Lawson modeled the demonstrators’’ ideal non-violent response to mob

\begin{footnotes}
\item[155] Halberstam, 25.
\item[156] Ibid., 28.
\item[157] Ibid., 60.
\item[159] Halberstam, 61, 78.
\end{footnotes}
violence on Wesley’s own response to the mobs that had frequently found him: look the mob
leader in the eye and show such love as to convert the leader into an advocate.\footnote{Halberstam, 78. Accounts of Wesley’s peace amid mobs, such as that in John Fletcher Hurst’s \textit{John Wesley the Methodist: A Plain Account of His Life and Work} (NY: Eaton & Mains, 1903) are remarkable.}

Wesley and Lawson share a preference for instructing the workers on the ground, rather than contributing to formal theory. They sought to transform the consciences of specific individuals or small groups in the interest of transforming a nation. Wesley wrote his most direct challenge for moral transformation in his “Thoughts Upon Slavery” (1788) not to the general public, nor Members of Parliament, but to slave ship captains, merchants, and plantation owners.\footnote{John Wesley, “Thoughts Upon Slavery” (1778), §V.1, in \textit{The Works of the Reverend John Wesley, A.M.} Volume XI [Thoughts, Addresses, Prayers, Letters] ed. Thomas Jackson. (London: Wesleyan Conference Office, 1873), 75.} Similarly, Lawson and the students of Nashville did not storm the doors of City Hall but instead went to the downtown lunch counters, where the everyday injustices were being inflicted by store managers and counter attendants and felt most severely by women and children doing their shopping.\footnote{Halberstam, 91.} Of course, affecting the bottom line of business might arouse not just conscience but anger, as Wesley less deliberately did in Georgia by allegedly using his public store procurement to provide for the poor.\footnote{Hammond, 167. Likely an exaggeration, but possibly a sign Wesley advocated “a primitive community of goods.”} Both Wesley and Lawson seem to have counted the cost and understood the extent to which this emphasis on non-violent love could make them the object of violent hatred.

The hateful reactions to Lawson’s just actions began with academic injustices he suffered at Baldwin-Wallace during his conscientious objector trial and continued with his expulsion from
Vanderbilt amid sit-ins. Such hatred even followed him, albeit in subtler forms, to his pastorate in Memphis, where he advocated for better conditions and wages for local garbage workers. Said their union leader Jerry Wurff, “What Lawson never understood was the degree to which he was hated in Memphis. They feared [him] for the most interesting of all reasons – he was a totally moral man, and totally moral men you can’t manipulate and you can’t buy and you can’t hustle.”164 Yet both Wesley and Lawson escaped the harm of the haters so effectively as to be able to continue – well into their eighties – encouraging the beloved community not to be deterred by the hatred of others.

Evidence for the truth of what Augustine envisioned, enemies beloved and turning back to the body of Christ, emerges in the life of Lawson. After his dear friend Martin Luther King, Jr. was murdered by James Early Ray, Lawson visited Ray in prison and befriended him. When recently asked why, he replied, “The motivation was simple. I did not see it as something apart from the love of God or the love of Jesus.”165 If Lawson could become the friend and pastor of the man imprisoned for killing his friend, perhaps that vision of a great round Communion Table with the cross as its Volfian axis is not only possible, but is too modest a goal. Perhaps the relational sense of belief can result in Christians’ bold surrender to relationship with people of other faiths altogether. His conspicuous sanctity, flowing from his being in right relationship with the Christ into whom he believes, captivates the attention of many seekers who see in him evidence of faith working through love.

164 Dreier, 350.

5.2.2 Bold Surrender and Encountering Others in Interreligious Dialogue

Jim Lawson developed the tools he uses in following the non-violent Jesus while living in
the land of Hinduism and Islam. What other confluences that bring peace might be possible if
bold surrender of believers-into Christ transforms dialogue? The World Council of Churches
Faith and Order Commission draws together members of the body of Christ from all over the
world. In Confessing the One Faith, they also offer insights on interreligious dialogue with
respect. Taking seriously “Challenges posed (to the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed and to
Trinitarian belief) by other religions and living faiths,” they conclude the observations about
difficulties with the hopeful fact that, “Although Christians confess God, revealed to them in
Jesus Christ, in a way which, according to their conviction, is the only true way, they do not deny
important elements of truth in other religions.” In specific discussion of the Creed’s clause on
the Holy Spirit, the WCC Faith and Order expresses the hope that the sanctifying “Spirit of
God,” being the same One who spoke through the prophets of the Hebrew Bible and has
continued to speak to the Jewish people to the present day, “will draw both communities closer
together by (the Spirit’s) continuous activity (Rom. 11:29-32).”

There is simply, as Augustine noted about enemies, no reason to feel threatened. The God
into whom believers go in order to be incorporated in Christ’s members is not threatened in the
way that descriptions of God as “jealous” (Exodus 20:5, 34:14) suggest. David Meconi notes, in
addressing criticism of Augustine’s cosmology as not being in union with God the Creator:

166 WCC, COF, 27.

167 Ibid., 80.
Creation is God’s purposeful sharing of (God’s) goodness with his creatures. At least once Augustine combines the divine attributes… (of) God’s power, God’s lack of jealousy, God’s goodness, as well as God’s enjoyment of that which (God) has brought about. God brings other beings into existence and is in no way diminished by his creation: he is neither endangered by hostile forces nor threatened by sharing his life with other beings.

Therefore the deified believer-into-Christ shares what she holds to be good news, and without feeling threatened, listens to the news of others’ faith without either attacking it or defensively severing the relationship with the “other.”

5.3 Conclusion: Relational Sense

A willingness on the part of those with intellectual or religious authority to enter into relationship across differences is essential for any of the above proposals to become reality. I may be intrigued by recent theological developments that could allow a new understanding of belief along Augustine’s ancient lines to come to the fore, such as the turn toward religious experience as epistemic data in Analytic Theology and the unity of love for God and neighbor reflected in Liberation Theology. Nevertheless, if I never reach out to scholars in those fields to build relationship, that conversation will never get off the ground. Even that example is barely a boundary transgression or risk of bold surrender. Augustine’s life instructs us in the importance of reaching out beyond (or in his case being dragged out of) our preferred sphere of influence in order to discover needs for doctrinal innovations, restorations, or adjustments.

Consider Augustine’s encounters with real people and their real struggles that would never have happened at Cassiciacum among his inner circle. Then compare the inward turn of his

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168 Gn Litt 4.16.

169 Meconi, 29.
Platonist period to the vision of flourishing that his work offers the world after he had the priesthood and episcopacy thrust upon him and matured in contact with actual hearers of his sermons. Readers of the rest of John Wesley’s “Thoughts Upon Methodism” might marvel to wonder what would have happened had he and Charles kept their Holy Club to themselves and their friends at Oxford. Compare his understanding of faith as bare assent to the spiritual experience of God’s love that he gained and shared after having open air preaching thrust upon him, where he could see the Holy Spirit at work in people’s responses to his words. Remember James Lawson’s plan for his education involved his going further north to earn his PhD and then perhaps be of use to the Civil Rights movement. After Martin Luther King, Jr. met Lawson and persuaded him not to delay, and after he’d had a city that was not his preference thrust upon him, he was able to marvel at what God had drawn together, boldly surrendering to give his lessons in nonviolence to “children” who changed the world.

So, too, we theologians are enchanted with our own theories and methods and have grand, specific research agendas. When we encounter real people of the church, we perhaps see where our theories can help and grow faith in others but also where our theories need to grow more earthbound themselves. Lest I fail to be concrete or seem hypothetical and critical, I discovered the credere formula as an interesting footnote nearly 20 years ago and expected to do little more with it than privately ponder and perhaps plan a sermon series on the creeds. Instead I found myself in the trenches of ministry, referring to it frequently in counseling and faith formation class settings. More frequently than not, I would recall and present it in response to questions from people troubled by what it meant to believe in Jesus, if harmful people call themselves Christians while hating God or neighbor. They did not need to know Latin grammar
to understand the difference between believing in (a) God or believing God and believing *into* God in such a way as to be incorporated in and move in the loving directions of Christ’s members. Openness to relationships, whether they appear to advance my research agenda or not, is the best expression of the relational sense of belief as constitutive of the Christian faith. Once in right relationship, we are sanctified by the Holy Spirit and continue believing into Christ in relationship with others – all kinds of others… fellow members of Christ, followers of other ways, or even enemies, to all of whom we boldly surrender.

“In answering who created the world, we encountered a God who is defined by personal relationship.”170

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170 Meconi 31.


Thomas Aquinas. *Scriptum super Sententiis, liber III a distinctione XXIII ad distinctionem XXV.* Corpus Thomisticum, Opera omnia S. Thomae.  

_____. *Summa Theologiae, secunda pars secundae partis a quaestione I ad quaestionem XVI.*  

_____. *Super Epistolam B. Pauli ad Romanos lectura a capite I lectione VI ad caput IV.*  

_____. *The Summa Theologica* (Benziger Bros. edition, 1947), Trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province,  


_____. *De Civitate Dei.*


_____. *In Psalmum CXXX Enarratio: Sermo ad plebem.*


_____. *Sermo CXLIV*

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