

The Gospel and the Mind: Recovering and Shaping the Intellectual Life

Having helped to start a Christian school and spent years teaching in a university setting, Dr. Green has spent years thinking through the nature of the Christian faith in relation to learning – in other words, the relationship between the Gospel and the mind. This talk will explore an observation and a question. The observation: wherever the cross is planted, the academy follows. That is, when the Christian faith takes root in a culture, inevitably there emerge forms of intellectual inquiry and activity. The question: why? What is it about the Christian faith which encourages and fires the life of the mind? In this talk we will explore this important issue.

Bradley G. Green teaches theology at Union University in Jackson, Tennessee. He earned an M.Div. at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, a Th.M. at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, and a Ph.D. at Baylor University. He is the author of several books: *Colin Gunton and the Failure of Augustine: The Theology of Colin Gunton in Light of Augustine* (Wipf and Stock); *The Gospel and the Mind: Recovering and Shaping the Intellectual Life* (Crossway); *Shapers of Christian Orthodoxy: Engaging with Early and Medieval Theologians* (IVP; editor and contributor); *Covenant and Commandment: Works, Obedience, and Faithfulness in the Christian Life* (New Studies in Biblical Theology, IVP). He is currently working on an introduction to Augustine (Christian Focus), as well as a volume in InterVarsity Press' *Reformation Commentary on Scripture*. He has also contributed essays and reviews to *International Journal of Systematic Theology*, *Chronicles*, *First Things*, *Touchstone*, and *The Churchman*. Brad and his wife Dianne have three children—Caleb, Daniel, and Victoria. Brad and Dianne also helped co-found Augustine School, a Christian liberal arts school in Jackson, Tennessee.

I. Introduction

- A. This session begins with an *observation*, and then asks a *question*

Observation: Wherever the cross is planted, the academy follows.

A Question: Why?

- B. Two Theses:

1. The Christian vision of God, man, and the world provides the necessary precondition for the recovery of any meaningful intellectual life.
2. The Christian vision of God, man, and the world offers a particular, unique understanding of what the intellectual life might look like.

II. A Biblical Theology of Knowledge

- A. A Basic Framework

1. Creation
2. Fall

3. Redemption
4. Continuation
5. Consummation

III. The Gospel and the Mind

- Problem
- Solution
- Goal

A. Problem

1. Scripture
2. History
 - a. Augustine (354-430)
 - b. Hugh of St. Victor (1096-1141)
 - c. Martin Luther (1483-1546)
 - d. John Wilkins (1614-1672)

B. Solution and Goal

1. Scripture
2. Two Key Questions:
 - a. What is the link between . . .
 - i. The *past* event of the death/burial/resurrection
 - ii. The *future* event of our face-to-face vision of God?

Key: the long-term outworking of the cross of Christ in our lives?

- b. What does . . .
 - i. Our thinking/knowing in the *present* have to do with
 - ii. Our knowing of God at the *future* face-to-face vision?

3. History

- a. John Calvin (1509-1564)
- b. Blaise Pascal (1623-1662)
- c. Augustine (354-430)

IV. Conclusion: The Story of Two Trees and Two Paradigms

Suggested Readings:

John Frame, *The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God* (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: Presbyterian and

Reformed Publishers, 1987).

Robert Jenson, Robert W. Jenson, "Hope, the Gospel, and the Liberal Arts," in *Essays in Theology of Culture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995).

Robert Jenson, Robert W. Jenson, "On the Renewing of the Mind: Reflections on the Calling of

Christian Intellectuals," in *Essays in Theology of Culture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995).

C.S. Lewis, "Learning in War-Time," in *The Weight of Glory, and Other Addresses* (HarperOne, 2001).

C. S. Lewis, "On the Reading of Old Books," Introduction to Athanasius, *On the Incarnation* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2000), 4–5. This essay can also be found in Lewis, "On the Reading of Old Books," in *God in the Dock: Essays in Theology and Ethics*, ed. Walter Hooper (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1973), 200–207.

Josef Pieper, *Abuse of Language, Abuse of Power*, trans. Lothar Krauth (1974; reprinted, San Francisco: Ignatius, 1988).

Cornelius Van Til, "Why I Believe in God."

Dallas Willard, "The Unhinging of the American Mind: Derrida as Pre-Text," in *European Philosophy and the American Academy*, ed. Barry Smith, Monist Library of Philosophy (LaSalle, IL: Hegeler Institute, 1994).