

A long, arched stone portico with a brick floor and hanging lanterns. The walls are made of rough-hewn stone, and the arches are constructed from reddish-brown bricks. Sunlight filters through the arches, creating a rhythmic pattern of light and shadow on the floor. Two ornate, black metal lanterns with glass panes hang from the ceiling. The perspective leads the eye down the length of the corridor towards a distant opening.

THE PORTICO
GLOSSARY

In so far as a man uses and is master of language, has he also attained clearness of thought; the developed and spoken language of a people is its expressed intelligence.

Attributed to the philologist Hartung

**To change the world, quietly turn
the meaning of one word at a time.**

Jeff Reed, in his poem, One Word At A Time

**No one feels the need for exegetical or
linguistic precision as they propagate what
is already accepted by the majority.**

Roderick Graciano, in Alien Righteousness

APOTHEOSIS, also THEOSIS

In Hellenistic thought: elevation a human being to the status of a god, deification. According to subsequent **Eastern Orthodoxy**, taking its own tradition and 2Pe 2.4 as its point of departure: the Christian's perfect union with God, accomplished by a progressive *divinization* throughout this life that comes to culmination in the resurrection. According to Orthodox theologian Vladimir Lossky, Satan did not lie in telling Eve that she could become "like God" (Gen 3.5), since man "is called to deification." The lie consisted in the suggestion that Eve could attain deification on her own, apart from God.

ATONEMENT

An English word that originally meant *reconciliation*, but has since been used to mean so many different things that it has lost its usefulness in theological debate. Now it is best to say **reconciliation** when that is meant. Likewise, when **expiation** or **propitiation** are meant, it is best to use those specific words for the sake of clarity and precision.

BELIEF

Mental consent to the truth of some proposition, or to the reality of some entity or phenomenon.

CHARACTER

With regard to human beings, *character*

is a person's psychological and moral disposition. In contrast to **nature**, *character* is distinctive to an individual, and is also variable; it can be changed so as to exhibit more or less of certain qualities than before.

CLARITY

The quality of being coherent and easily intelligible. To have "theological clarity" means that a theological idea is expressed or held in a way that makes it unambiguous and easy to assess in the light of Scripture and in relation to other theological principles.

CREATIONISM (Soul Origin)

With regard to the origin of the human soul, the belief that God creates each soul directly, as opposed to the soul being propagated by human parents. This theory of the soul's origin has some biblical merit, but was propounded by some early church fathers who had been influenced by the Hellenistic dualism that posited an enmity between the soul and the body, suggesting that soul and body had to have originated from different sources. The contrary belief is called **Traducianism**.

EPISTEMOLOGY

Derived from the Greek verb meaning *believe*, epistemology is the study of, or enquiry into the different kinds and sources of knowledge, as well as of the means for gaining knowledge.

EXPIATION

The act of covering or removing something. To expiate **sin** means to cover or remove it as a grievance from before God's eyes.

FALLENNESS

The state of human beings since Adam and Eve "fell" into **sin**. Fallenness refers to the totality of consequences, brought about by our first parents' sin, to the bodies and souls of their descendants. Those consequences can be summarized as various kinds of death, the chief result of which is a propensity to sin which cannot be overcome by natural effort.

Historically, the church has tried to explain human fallenness, and its transmission through the generations, in terms of "original sin." However, "original sin," not to be confused with the first sin of Adam (or Eve), was a doctrinal invention popularized by Origen (c. AD 200) and codified formally by Augustine (c. AD 400).

As to the transmission of fallenness, theologians have tended to explain it in terms of the passing down of a sin "substance" that adheres to the body and/or the soul. This, in effect, makes fallenness a disease passed down by a "germ," and it begs the question as to how Jesus escaped this congenital infection.

The infectious disease theory of "original sin," or "fallenness," bred the

continuing debate between **Traducianism** and **Creationism** with regard to the origin of the human soul.

A far less problematic way to understand human fallenness and its transmission through the generations, is to see it as *a deficiency*, rather than as a "substance" added to the human constitution by the sin of our first parents. If we understand human fallenness as the loss and subsequent deficiency of something, then we can understand its transmission through the generations as simply the passive inability of our parents to bequeath to us what they do not have. In this view, Jesus was not born with any deficiency, because His Father was wholly able to bequeath to Him what fallen parents cannot.

FORGIVENESS

In the teaching of Jesus, the release or cancellation of debt (real or perceived). Forgiveness between human beings does not imply bypassing either reproof or accountability for wrongdoing. On the contrary, among God's people, when an offense has been committed, restoration of relationship calls for confrontation, and when necessary confrontation by increasingly higher authorities (Mat 18.15-17).

INFERENCE

A (sometimes tentative) conclusion arrived at by reasoning from **presuppositions**, available data or given proposi-

tions. In theology, inferences become necessary when there is a paucity of explicit biblical information in connection with a theological or doctrinal hypothesis. While theological inferences are unavoidable, they must be consciously held as distinct from conclusions based upon explicit statements in Scripture, and so held tentatively in case continuing research should shed further light upon the ideas in question.

NATURE

With regard to living beings including God and all of His creature, *nature* is the whole complex of potentialities that constitute a member of a given class or species of beings, and that collectively distinguish a member of that class or species from members of a different class or species.

With regard to human beings, the whole complex of potentialities that specifically constitute a human, and that collectively distinguish human beings from all other classes and species of living beings. We speak of potentialities, because human nature does not consist of the actualization of those potentialities.

In contrast to **character**, *nature*, as existing in God, or as created by Him in His creatures, is stable, i.e., it cannot be changed into a different nature. However, in creatures nature can be helped or hindered in the actualization of its unchanging potentialities.

ONTOLOGICAL

To speak of something in the ontological sense is to speak of its essential nature or fundamental reality, as opposed to its **Phenomenological** aspect, i.e., how we perceive it, or its **epistemological** aspects, i.e., what we believe about it. Ontological can also be distinguished from functional. For example, in the Bible the phrase son of God sometimes speaks of a functional office rather than an essential reality.

PHENOMENOLOGICAL

Having to do with our perception or awareness of things, rather than with the essential reality of those things; cf. **ontological**.

POLYVALENT

With regard to words, this adjective describes a term that can have different meanings or connotations, depending on the context in which it is used. Cf. **univalent**.

PRESUPPOSITION

An idea assumed beforehand, that forms the premise from which other ideas can be **inferred**.

PROPITIATION

The restoration of an offended party to a positive disposition toward the offender.

RECONCILIATION

The setting at one, or reuniting, of once estranged or alienated parties. Reconciliation usually implies unidirectional or bidirectional **forgiveness**.

REDEEM

Biblically speaking, to do the part of a kinsman in buying back a relative's freedom and/or his land. When needed, the kinsman **redeemer** might be obligated to marry a relative's widow in order to produce a legal heir who will insure that the redeemed property will remain in the original family line.

REDEEMER

The person who brings about the **redemption** of a relative or the relative's ancestral property. In the biblical story of Naomi and Ruth, Boaz acts as Naomi's redeemer by buying Naomi's land *and* marrying Ruth, Naomi's daughter-in-law, in order to produce a legal heir for Naomi who will maintain her ancestral land. When Ruth's baby, Obed, is born *he also* is recognized a redeemer for Naomi because through him Naomi's land would be "bought back" from the brink of disappearing from her husband Elimelech's family line.

REDEMPTION

In Israelite civil law, the buying back of a relative's freedom and/or his land. In the

biblical doctrine of salvation, redemption refers collectively to all the aspects of Christ's role (as a kinsman-**redeemer**) in "buying back" people from their bondage to **sin** and Satan, and "buying back" the human dominion of the earth (Rev 5.10; 11.15), much of which currently suffers under the "god of this world" (cf. Mat 4.8-10; 2Co 4.4). Thus, justification, for example, is one aspect of the redemption being accomplished by Christ.

SIN

Sin refers to both the current state of humanity as at enmity with God, and to specific acts expressive of that enmity. The Bible words translated with our word *sin* have their roots in the idea of going wrong or missing a mark. So with regard to specific acts, near synonyms for sin in the Bible include *transgression, unrighteousness, iniquity, and doing evil*. The Bible regards as sin any thought or action (or inaction) that is contrary to the laws, will, and character of God. Any act contrary to what God loves is sin. Furthermore, any prioritizing of self above the will of God, and any action that ignores or violates God's right to direct our lives is sin.

THOUGHT EXPERIMENT

An experiment carried out only in thought so as to test a question or proposition under imaginary — and often *impossible* — conditions.

TRADUCIANISM

The belief that the human soul (like the physical body) is transmitted from the parent to the child, rather than directly created by God. The presupposition that human fallenness consists, at least in part, of a diseased soul, gave impetus to this theory, since it was inconceivable that God would directly place a diseased (fallen) soul into each new human body. Also, starting from the same presupposition regarding the essence of human fallenness, traducianism has been used to explain how Christ was born sinless since His Father was God. The contrary theory of the soul's origin is called **Creationism**.

UNIVALENT

With regard to words, this adjective means that a word has only one meaning, regardless of context. Cf. **polyvalent**.