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**Theodicy, Creation, and Suffering: Drawing on God's Spirit and Love**

For many people, the most difficult and challenging question in all of theology is what is known as the "theodicy question." The term "theodicy" itself combines the Greek words *theos* and *dike*, "God" and "righteousness" or "justice." The great philosopher Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, explicating Romans 3:4 and Psalm 51:6, first introduced this term to a wider audience.[[1]](#footnote-1) What today is known as the "theodicy question," succinctly put, asks, *"How can an omnipotent and, at the same time, just and benevolent God allow so much suffering in the world?"*

Following the lead of the Greek philosopher Epicurus (341–271 BCE), the early Christian apologist Lactantius (250–325) presented an exemplary formulation of this question in chapter 13 of his treatise on God's wrath, *De Ira Dei*.[[2]](#footnote-2) The perennial queries concerning theodicy, that is, concerning the connection between God and justice, can be summarized freely as follows:

*Either God wishes to avert or take away evil, and is unable; but then God is feeble, which is not in accordance with the character of God;*

*or God is indeed able to take away evil, and is unwilling; but then God is malicious, which is equally at variance with a benevolent and loving God;*

*or God is neither willing nor able to take away evil; but then we cannot possibly acknowledge this feeble and simultaneously malicious existence as God;*

*or God is both willing and able to take away evil, which alone is suitable to God; but then from what source does all the evil in the world come, and why does God not remove it?*

The theodicy question, however, takes on a decidedly more urgent tone the moment we speak not merely about abstract "evil" in the world but about the unmistakably concrete sufferings of good, innocent, and helpless or even powerless people. How, for example, can God allow children to fall ill with cancer and then die in dreadful pain? How can God allow a tsunami suddenly to sweep hundreds of people to their deaths? How can God allow drought and famine to expose thousands of people to the prospect of starving to death? How can God allow the world in which we live to provide the setting for glaring injustice, suffering, distress, malevolence, hatred, and violence? Religious references to God as unconditionally good, to God as love, and to righteousness, justice, and mercy as essential character traits of God—are such references not only utterly unbelievable but also basically hypocritical?

Attempts both to articulate and to defuse or at least mitigate the theodicy question generally distinguish between three fundamental forms of evil in the world.

1. So-called *metaphysical* evil, namely, that we ourselves and all other creatures are merely finite, earthly beings whose power and knowledge are limited, that is, precisely that we are *creatures* rather than *gods*. Because these limitations indeed remain utterly beyond our influence, one speaks of "metaphysical" evil.
2. *Physical* evil in the form of all possible forms of corporeal and spiritual suffering. Physical evil is related in part to so-called metaphysical evil, the difference being that we can indeed address it in part through the healing arts and through healthy, peaceful lives.
3. *Moral* evil, or more precisely, all forms of evil caused by people themselves, evil for which they themselves are directly responsible; such evil includes the injustices human beings perpetrate toward one another and, consciously or not, even against themselves.[[3]](#footnote-3)

So-called moral evil is generally viewed as a consequence of humans having the freedom to decide for themselves concerning their actions and thus to choose either good or evil.

Situations in which a person decides to act in a morally reprehensible way involve an incorrect understanding of freedom, indeed, an abuse of human freedom. Here the theodicy question transitions to the question of "anthropodicy," that is, to a question addressing human beings rather than God, to wit: Why do human beings not consistently act benevolently toward themselves, their fellow human beings, and their fellow creatures? Religio-critical discussions, however, have often tended and indeed still tend to direct this question back into the theodicy question. For though a great deal of misery is indeed caused by human beings, why did God not simply create human beings to be flawlessly and unconditionally good moral beings in the first place?

To avoid falling into a similarly inescapable theodicy trap of our own making, we must first surrender all false notions concerning God's omnipotence. To do so, we must examine more closely what the biblical traditions and the great confessions of faith say about that omnipotence. For they direct our attention not merely toward the visible things of creation but also toward the *invisible* things and toward the realistic powers of the divine and human spirit. God's power and goodness now move into our field of vision as *real* forces at work in our *real* lives. Here we can dispense with all deceptive dreams about God as a "perfect watchmaker" and can abandon our mistaken identification of "good creation" as a perfectly running Disney-like world.

**I. Mistaken notions concerning God's omnipotence**

Seriously addressing the theodicy question requires that we correct false notions concerning both creation and divine omnipotence. First, we must abandon primitive theistic notions of God and world that understand God as the "all-causing reality." Second, we must address the elements of dissatisfaction attaching to these notions and respond to their objections against this construed God who allegedly allows reality to be so blatantly imperfect. Popular turns of phrase used to describe the relationship between God and omnipotence include references to "God as the ground of being" or "God as the *causa prima*," with God then being viewed—usually rather unclearly—as the ultimate reference point, as the highest and final cause within a cosmogony or doctrine of the genesis of the world.

According to these views, an even *greater* power always stands behind the remarkable powers of this world, a power to which, ultimately, they owe their existence: "*Deus semper major*" (Ignatius Loyola), that is, God is always greater, regardless of whatever else you may be considering! This "ever-greater" God is then often called the "all-determining reality" (recently explicitly by Rudolf Bultmann, Wolfhart Pannenberg, Wilfried Härle, et al.).[[4]](#footnote-4) This God, conceived—or more precisely, construed—as omnipotent, was compared to a perfect watchmaker, for example, by the Christian philosopher William Paley in his influential work *Natural Theology: or, Evidences of the Existence and Attributes of the Deity* (1802). This almighty God set the world into motion with a perfect mechanism and either allows it to follow its own internal motor functions (as asserted by what is known as *Deism*) or keeps it in motion by continuing to "determine everything" (thus the *theistic* position). It is against this background that the previously mentioned problems with omnipotence emerge in the face of all the suffering and distress in the world, along with the worrisome doubts concerning religious and theological clarity and sincerity. The British evolutionary biologist and popular-scientific atheist Richard Dawkins gave his 1986 book the title *The Blind Watchmaker* and has since indefatigably propagated an aggressive populist atheism. His book *The God Delusion* even became an international bestseller.[[5]](#footnote-5)

By contrast, the biblical foundations underlying references to God's creative power and omnipotence are more complicated.[[6]](#footnote-6) The biblical creation story in Gen. 1:1–2:4 describes how God first bestows considerable inherent power on *cosmic* forces, namely, on heaven and the celestial bodies. Unlike in other ancient Near Eastern creation stories, heaven and the celestial bodies are understood here not as divine powers and entities but rather merely as creatures. They are, however, equipped with great power. Light and warmth and water, essential for life, all come from heaven. The stars fix the times and rhythms of the days and years and even holidays. At the next stage of creation, *biological* forces are called forth. The earth is to bring forth plants and animals, and the waters all sorts of fish and marine life. And again, although the biblical authors emphasize the power of these creatures, it is clear that neither the earth itself nor the waters with the great sea monsters from the depths are deities such as we encounter in other Near Eastern creation narratives.

The biblical message concerning creation and omnipotence is thus that God the Creator allocates to creatures an enormous portion of creative power; creation and evolution thus come about wholly *parallel*, and only uncultivated thinking could instead set creation and evolution in *opposition* to each other. Creation is clearly understood as being replete with its own, inherent power.

After cosmic and biological forces, the creation of *cultural* forces now comes to expression in the biblical creation narrative. The bearers of these forces are human beings, who are charged not only with propagating themselves biologically but also with exercising dominion over plants and animals. Human beings, man and woman, are to rule and organize the rest of creation. In so doing, however, they are also to represent God's own image, that is, are to act as *imago dei*, as representatives of God (Gen. 1:26–27). Psalm 8:5 formulates this notion by declaring that "you have made them a little lower than God" (cf. Pss. 21:5; 82:6; Heb. 2:7).

Alongside the remarkable power allocated to creatures, however, the biblical traditions also emphasize their powerlessness, earthly transience, and mortality. "You are dust, and to dust you shall return" (Gen. 3:19; cf. Job 10:9; Pss. 90:3; 103:14; 104:29). The unmistakable distinction between Creator and creature, however, between God and human beings, does not reside merely in the finitude, transience, and mortality of all earthly life. For all natural earthly life lives unavoidably at the cost of other life. Even vegetarians necessarily destroy essentially an infinitude of life in order to maintain themselves. Natural earthly life inevitably exhibits a predatory character.

We must dispassionately discern and acknowledge the disposition of creaturely existence according to this understanding. Nature and life, despite their undeniable beauty and fruitfulness, which we certainly should gratefully acknowledge and richly praise, are ambivalent entities, for they are full of possibilities for mutual endangerment and even self-endangerment. Quite beyond these considerations, however, they, and especially human beings, possess the freedom and power to act contrary to God's intentions. Cain's fratricide of Abel is but the first of countless biblical stories of hatred, violence, and evil among human beings. Even Israel, the chosen people of God, lives constantly under the pressure of the world powers Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome. The cross of Jesus Christ represents a drastic, glaring high point of human conspiracy against God's will and even God's presence. For Jesus Christ is crucified in the name of the world power Rome, in the name of the Jewish religion, with an appeal to both Roman and Mosaic law, and with the approval of public morality and opinion. Even his disciples deny, abandon, and betray him.

It is against this difficult background that we must pose the theodicy question rather than only in view of catastrophes affecting our own, personal life experiences or the broader course of world events. How, given the blatant, concrete experiences of real, natural, earthly life, can we speak persuasively about God's justice and mercy or about God's love and benevolence?

By far the most promising approach to addressing the difficult theodicy question is, first, to discern quite dispassionately that earthly life is radically different from God. It is finite, mortal, feeble, and endangered, and yet simultaneously also predatory, often guided by evil powers and unfortunately not infrequently inclined to enhance, consciously or not, these same malevolent forces. God grants considerable inherent power to creation for both good and evil. Second, addressing the difficult theodicy question requires that we recognize that God's so-called omnipotence, about which so many religions tend to speak and quite rightly praise, consists *not* in God's intervention into every possible situation in time and space like some instantaneous fire extinguisher but rather *in God's power to create something new and good even from suffering and distress*.

To understand this insight, let us examine more closely what the Bible itself says concerning God's omnipotence along with statements articulated in the great Christian confessions of faith.

**II. What do the Bible and the most important Christian confessions of faith say about God's omnipotence?**

Biblical statements concerning God's omnipotence are both sparse and, unfortunately, unclear. In the Old Testament, the divine name *El Shaddai* occurs several times in Genesis,[[7]](#footnote-7) frequently in Job, and also on the periphery of the Old Testament canon. Although Luther, for example, translates this name as "the Almighty," following the Greek *pantokrator*, this translation is questionable and is generally rejected by serious exegetes, who as a rule choose not to translate the divine name at all. The New Testament offers even fewer direct occurrences of terms for "almighty" and "almighty power." Second Corinthians 6:18 cites the Old Testament itself in one occurrence of *El Shaddai*. Matthew 26:64, Luke 22:69, and Mark 14:62 speak about how the Son of Man will be "seated at the right hand of the Power" (note that English translations generally use the term "Power," with an upper-case *P*, rather than "almighty power"; occasionally a version will translate as "Mighty One," "God All-Powerful," or simply "God"). All these passages are referencing the vision in Daniel 7:13–14, according to which the heavenly Son of Man is given "dominion, and glory, and a kingdom . . . that will not pass away." The book of Revelation refers to the *pantokrator* especially in connection with worship and praise of God. But what exactly do these references to God's "almighty power" mean?

Finding one's way out of this thicket of problems requires examining quite closely the most important confessions of faith of the Christian churches. The confession of faith most familiar to us, the Apostles' Creed, many of whose variations likely date back to the second century and which in any case is attested in the fifth and by the ninth century is already quite widespread, formulates this notion as follows:

"I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth."

The creed of the Council of Nicea (Nicene Creed) from the year 325 declares:

"We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of all things visible and invisible."

And what is known as the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed, the creed of the Council of Constantinople applicable to all Christendom from the year 381, emphasizes:

"We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible."

One immediately notices that these creeds do not speak directly about an "almighty Creator" who is then also a benevolent or strict Father but rather explicitly reference the "almighty Father" who is then also Creator of heaven and earth.[[8]](#footnote-8) But how are we to understand the relationship between God, Father, almighty power, Creator, heaven, earth, and, finally, the visible and the invisible? A first step toward avoiding misunderstanding the notion of divine omnipotence is to focus on creation in a differentiated fashion as "heaven and earth." Various religions or religious approaches are inclined to confuse God and heaven or to ascribe divine powers to the celestial bodies. Still others view in the interplay between heaven and earth the "all-determinative reality" in which the powers of the cosmos, nature, and evolution simply eliminate the need and even the space for divine activity, a view often tending to equate God and nature, for example, in the formulation of the philosopher Spinoza *deus sive natura* ("God or nature," *Ethics* iv, preface). Almighty nature replaces the almighty God.[[9]](#footnote-9)

These widespread notions, however, are both placatory and primitive. By mixing up correct and incorrect notions in their own turn, ultimately they merely unravel any and all theological and creation-theological orientation and end up utterly perplexed when confronted by the question of theodicy. By contrast, references to the creation of "heaven and earth" directs attention to a grand, differentiated correlation of power that, though repeatedly confused with God, is nonetheless radically *different* from God.

But first: Why have precisely God and heaven repeatedly been confused? Natural heaven, differentiated from and yet related to earth, bequeaths light and warmth, rain and water and wind, and along with them powerful forces making it possible for life itself to prosper on earth. But those same natural forces of heaven also include severe and dangerous weather and floods, devastating storms, and a scorching sun. Is heaven then not itself an almighty power, an "all-determinative reality"? The forces of the earth are similarly both enormously powerful and yet utterly ambivalent. Ecological concerns and sensibilities today prompt many people to use the terms "nature" and "life" as salvific references. "If only we would leave benevolent nature to herself, she would soon set things right!" And yet as correct as such opposition to ecological indifference and brutality surely is, just as false is any view that ignores the unequivocal ambivalence of the forces of nature.

Yet to concentrate solely on the earth itself, on the visible, natural heavens, and on the history of the earth as such is known to us does not by any stretch encompass the entirety of the divine creation activity, not to speak of God's paternal almighty power. At the beginning of creation, as the biblical traditions in Genesis 1 tell us, "the earth was a formless void," and it will become a "formless void" once more and pass away, for it is merely a finite setting for divine activity and divine glory. Natural heaven, related as it is to the earth, will similarly pass away, and with it the entire, so colossally impressive cosmic whole. Unlike German, the English language fortunately allows one important distinction, namely, that between *sky* and *heaven*, one that approximates the earlier reference to "visible and invisible things" that we encounter in the great creeds of Nicea and Constantinople.

**III. The created visible and invisible things: The human and divine spirit**

Biblical traditions and both the Jewish and the Christian faiths are convinced that the visible world and life represent but an extremely small sliver of reality, a conviction that applies not merely to the personal view of things each of us has:

Look at the moon so lonely!

One half is shining only,

Yet she is round and bright;

Thus oft we laugh unknowing

At things that are not showing,

That still are hidden from our sight.[[10]](#footnote-10)

Thus the words of Matthias Claudius in his famous "Evening Song." Yet that other portion of life in all its fullness visible to all the other people in this world at this time is also but a tiny sliver of the universe and its history. Indeed, even the entire cosmos and the entire history of the earth along with everything that ever was and ever will be visible is but a tiny sliver of the entirety of what is also a spiritual reality that we can begin to discern if we concentrate on our own spirit and then on God's Spirit as well.

Our spirit includes all our memories and all our thoughts, though also all possible combinations of our memories and thoughts, combined with the remarkable capacity to activate them, summon them, though also to dismiss them into latency and distance. We need only consider the worlds of mathematics and music and poetry to acquire a vague intimation of the extraordinary wealth of the spiritual and intellectual world. Religious conviction holds that this world, too, has been created by God, for it, too, is subject to certain norms and elements of order, regularity, and aesthetics. Similarly, the grand capacity of human beings to communicate over vast temporal and spatial distances, to exchange and mutually enhance experiences, ideas, and emotions, provides an intimation of the enormous dimensions and significance of this largely invisible spiritual and intellectual world that is also God's creation.

Like the visible world, however, so also is the invisible world by no means necessarily good, for like the natural world, it is highly ambivalent. The great forces of the spirit, the intellect, and the invisible world to which we can so easily fall prey and which we—commensurately influenced in a negative fashion—can even egregiously amplify, include delusions, racism, ethnic hatred, warmongering, mass malevolence, and pitilessness. We can, however, also draw on the good forces of the spirit, the intellect, and the invisible world, that is, on the divine powers of justice and mercy, the search for truth and peace, and freedom and love. Indeed, we can find these very powers within us and cultivate and enhance them both individually and collectively. They "come over us" again and again like a grand gift "from above," like the welcome rain from heaven, like beneficent sunlight and a refreshing breeze.

Biblical and religious references to invisible heaven and the reign of heaven deftly draw attention to this particular sphere of God's power, a sphere situated above our time and world, before our time and world, and after our time and world, but which is nonetheless not an illusion. That said, this invisible heaven, in and of itself, is indeed quite empty and open to all sorts of illusions. It does not really become an interesting and productive object of consideration until it is comprehended as the sphere of God's creative forces, the sphere from which such forces then must be revealed, come to earth, and become active among human beings. It is from the perspective of these beneficent forces of God on earth in the midst of all the otherwise ambiguous, life-threatening, indeed, life-destroying powers and forces that we can distantly sense the enormous wealth of divine and heavenly life. Here, too, creedal references to the "almighty Father" finally come into their own.

It is in the midst of the power and powerlessness of creation that God's paternal almighty power comes to expression and genuinely comes to bear, doing so, moreover, through God's Spirit, a Spirit of truth, justice, mercy, and love, and of freedom and peace. The firm conviction of Christian faith is that this Spirit has acquired clear contours in the life and ministry of Jesus Christ.

As emphasized earlier, according to the biblical traditions God's paternal almighty power is revealed **as God's power to create something new and good even in the midst of the breakdown of creation, even in the midst of suffering, distress, and death.** Beyond all our notions of success and failure, victory and futility, God is active in a creative and re-creative fashion in the visible and invisible parts of his creation. The God who reveals himself as the Father of Jesus Christ in both cross and resurrection (in the Jewish faith: the savior and redeemer of Israel) is the truly almighty!

This insight can hardly be better comprehended than through a deep and serious understanding of God's love as effected precisely through his Spirit.[[11]](#footnote-11)

The biblical understanding of God's paternal almighty power and beneficence associates it with divine love to the point of straightforward identification: "God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them" (1 John 4:16). But God's power is associated not just with love but also with justice and mercy. The kinship between love and compassion, love and mercy now discloses an access both to God's love and to a more profound understanding of love in the larger sense. Mercy comes about through free, creative self-withdrawal on behalf of others, and at its most profound level, love is precisely such joyous, free, creative self-withdrawal on behalf of a beloved person.

At first glance, this suggestion seems quite implausible. "Self-withdrawal" and "love"?—do we not wish quite to the contrary to be as close and intimate as possible with the beloved? Are not the notions of union, profound connectedness, and indeed self-surrender not much better suited for describing the essence of love than such peculiar references to "self-withdrawal"? Within the context of love, however, we are referring not merely to **some arbitrary** self-**withdrawal** but rather to a joyous and creative self-withdrawal that at once is also wholly salutary to the beloved person. But why must we speak of "self-withdrawal" in the first place? An enormously important aspect of love comes into view here that is too often overlooked. And that is the element of **freedom** in love. Genuine, true love always seeks the free development of the beloved person as well as free response.

In any genuinely loving relationship, we not only respect the depth and wealth of the other person's identity; we also rejoice in being part and discovering ever-new dimensions of that person. And we also rejoice in developing our own life and all its wealth precisely in this same relationship and in sharing it with the beloved. However, it is also with regard to the pain and suffering of the beloved that we passionately feel the deprivation and reduced possibilities and accordingly seek compensation and healing. The mathematician and philosopher Alfred North Whitehead formulated this insight brilliantly especially with respect to parental love, speaking of "the love of self-devotion where the potentialities of the loved object are felt passionately as a claim that it find itself in a friendly Universe. Such love is really an intense feeling as to how the harmony of the world should be realized in particular objects."[[12]](#footnote-12) Love seeks the free response of the beloved person, and the ultimate joy of love is doubtless a condition in which partners mutually spark and inflame each other ever anew, a condition that has traditionally inspired not a few romantic and even erotic understandings of love. This particular dimension of love, however, still does not quite grasp either the breadth or the depth of genuine love. For true love continues on through thick and thin and endures in loyalty and patience, faith and hope even through phases that offer neither a direct response nor directly edifying rewards. Thus the asseveration of the Song of Solomon (8:6) that "love is strong as death."

This is the form of love in which God, through his Spirit, turns to his creation, the form of love in which God humbles himself creatively on behalf of his creation, a creation radically different from God. Christian faith finds precisely this love revealed in Jesus Christ, whom the New Testament traditions and early church creeds thus also call the "mediator of creation." Thus does the Nicene Creed say, "I believe in Jesus Christ . . . by whom all things were made.[[13]](#footnote-13) Not only are human beings shown this power that passes through the profound powerlessness of suffering, distress, and death; they also come to participate in it through the Holy Spirit. Visible and invisible creation, God's visible and invisible activity come to be associated here in a way that challenges not only understanding but certainly also faith.

This revelation of God's almighty power discloses to creation not only the enormous distance separating it from God, but at once also its astonishing proximity to him. The cross of Christ, in its own turn, discloses to creation its grave endangerment and even self-endangerment, its forsakenness under the power of sin. And it is in this situation that God's paternal almighty power comes to vivid expression in a merciful and loving fashion in rendering possible a new beginning when human beings are taken up, in an often quite inconspicuous fashion, into new life, that is, into the divine and eternal life. Those who remain in the almighty power of love effected by the Spirit will similarly remain in God and God in them. In love, that is, in free, creative self-withdrawal on behalf of our fellow human beings, we move in a direction that now runs counter to that unavoidable situation of self-preservation at the cost of our fellow creatures. We now acquire a portion in a higher, loftier life, in eternal life. And it is the creative Spirit of God that gives us the strength to appreciate this life, to entrust ourselves to it, and to allow ourselves to be seized and ultimately elevated by it.

The elusive answer to the recalcitrant question of theodicy is, on the one hand, quite sobering and yet, on the other, enormously liberating. God created us and the world as finite, mortal, transient beings that live at the cost of other living beings. God does not spare us the experiences of suffering, distress, and death, experiences that often utterly bewilder us and bring home to us how acutely helpless and powerless we are. But we encounter God's power and God's goodness not just in the many beneficent elements and fruitfulness and beauty in both nature and the cosmos, all of which we should gratefully recognize and acknowledge. We also encounter God's almighty power and goodness in the power of his Spirit, justice, mercy, and love, with all of which he actively counters the abuse of human freedom and, at the boundaries of our earthly life and earthly possibilities, comforts, consoles, and elevates us. Indeed, even now, in the very midst of our lives, in the midst of a world radically different from God, a world perpetually also characterized by injustice, heartlessness, unkindness, falseness, constraint, and discord, God grants us a portion in the powers of his Spirit, in the powers of justice, mercy, love, truth, freedom, and peace.

(Translated by Douglas W. Stott)

1. Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, *Essais de Théodicée* (1710). Rom. 3:4 (NRSV, as are all following citations): "Although everyone is a liar, let God be proved true, as it is written, ‘So that you may be justified in your words, and prevail in your judging.’" Ps. 51:6(4): "Against you, you alone, have I sinned, and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are justified in your sentence and blameless when you pass judgment." [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Epicurus, "Fragmente über die Götter" (fragments on the gods), in *Von der Überwindung der Furcht*, ed. O. Gigon (Zürich, 1949), 80 (= DTV 1988). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. See in this regard W. Härle, *Dogmatik* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1995), 439ff., esp. 444; G. van den Brink and C. van der Kooi, *Christelijke dogmatiek: Een inleiding* (Zoetermeer: Uitgeverij Boekencentrum, 2012), 301–3. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Rudolf Bultmann, *Glauben und Verstehen*, vol. 1 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1933), 26ff.; Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Wissenschaftstheorie und Theologie* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1973), 304­–5; and others. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Richard Dawkins, *The Blind Watchmaker: Why the Evidence of Evolution Reveals a Universe without Design* (1987; New York: Norton, 2015); *The God Delusion* (New York: Bantam Press, 2006). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. M. Welker, *Creation and Reality: Theological and Biblical Perspectives*, Warfield Lectures 1991 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1999); *The Theology and Science Dialogue: What Can Theology Contribute?*, Theologische Anstöße 3 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 2012). [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Gen. 17:1; 28:3; 35:11; 43:14; 48:3; 49:25. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. See Van den Brink and Van der Kooi, *Christelijke dogmatiek*, 141–44. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. B. Spinoza, *Opera*, vol. 2, *Ethica*, Pars Quarta, Praefatio (Darmstadt, 1967), 380–87. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. *A Harvest of German Verse*, trans. Margarete Münsterberg (New York: D. Appleton, 1916), 39. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. See in this regard §12 of the *Christelijke dogmatiek*, though also C. van der Kooi's Warfield Lectures, *This Incredibly Benevolent Force: The Holy Spirit in Reformed Theology and Spirituality* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2017). [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. A. N. Whitehead, *Adventures of Ideas*, xx, section vi (1933; New York: Free Press, 1961), 288–89. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. John 1:3; 1:10; 1 Cor. 8:6; Col. 1:15; Heb. 1:2. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)