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THE GOOD, THE TRUE, AND THE BEAUTIFUL: Toward a Theology of Whole Life Discipleship

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I. AN INTRODUCTION

I have titled this portion of my article “An Introduction” because there are multiple ways to start this discussion. In fact, my argument asserts that every “artifact” of our common history contains “traces” of the philosophical-theological assumptions from which it sprang, like budding plants, in the soil of human relational life. Each “trace” is, in turn, only one aspect of a woven tapestry of varied patterns. These patterns, though broken, marred, and frayed by human struggle, prideful selfishness, and the loss of memory, nonetheless, contain residue of primordial beauty, the longing for the truth of reality, and the hope for the fullness of goodness yet to be fully realized.

I am more convinced than ever that the human pilgrimage is compelled, at the deepest level, by a profound quest for meaning. A meaning that lies outside of ourselves but includes and reorganizes our self-centered focus on our own survival, on our own estimation of our needs, and on our own measure of our significance. This deeply compelling quest for meaning shapes the ground for convictional knowing. It provides the impetus for our recognition of the primary importance of relationships. It is the dynamic of community life and gives shape to human culture. The fulfillment of this quest, however, cannot be found in what we make or do. The meaning that brings wholeness and profound satisfaction is the gift of the One who calls us to himself in love and grace.

There is a threefold purpose to this brief article. First, I would like to try to convey the outline of the narrative of “forgetfulness” that provides the contours of our shared cultural anguish. Second,

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I will illustrate the “hidden theology” of our age by examining the influence of one thinker. Third, I will suggest how the resources found within a biblically shaped worldview can provide guidance and direction for Christ-followers, within any field of life, to begin the journey of whole life discipleship, which is a difficult task of thinking and living consistently with our convictions shaped by the confession: “Jesus is Lord.”

II. THE TYRANNY OF FORGETFULNESS

In the next few paragraphs, I will summarize a complex narrative, which is very close to us and vaguely familiar. It is so close to us that we scarcely realize its pervasive influence on our daily lives. The assumptions rooted in the story of Western intellectual history shape the conduct of our academic and professional pursuits. They inform the dynamics of our relationships. This brief review of our shared story could begin with an analysis of the primary thinkers or events at almost any point during the last 500 years of human history. The fact that I would even construe this narrative as one that can be understood only within a “historical account of development” is part of the narrative itself and part of that which we have a hard time remembering.

This account, of course, reflects my embeddedness in time and place but I hope it will point beyond my experience toward the nature of Reality. However, even that statement raises our common problem and the first element of the tyranny of forgetfulness. Our common presupposition, deeply rooted in our culture, is the assertion that the “self” – “*my self*” – is the most important reality. The focus on the “I am” is of primary importance. We teach our children in grade school to begin their understanding of history with themselves – their own memories, where they live, and with whom. It is so close to us, so common; we do not even question it. We forget that before the beginning of the modern era very few would have started the discussion of the meaning of life with themselves.

This modern pattern is started, in part, by Rene Descartes and continued by many thinkers who, although rejecting his theories of knowledge, nonetheless adopt his point of beginning. For Descartes, the search for “indubitable” knowledge starts with the “I am a thinking thing.” The self, so construed, is dominated by reason, doubtful of

the body, and isolated from others. The “self” asserts its way towards knowledge through deductive arguments for God’s existence. God’s existence provides the means by which the self, defined as reason, can claim knowledge of the world outside the self. The argument of the “I think” establishes the reality of God. If God be God, and not an “evil demon,” then this God justifies the knowledge obtained by human reason as reliable. Human reason and self-consciousness, thus secured, are freed to pursue the knowledge of the mechanism of the universe unhindered by any restraint. If the ontological argument for God fails to compel our belief, then our efforts to secure knowledge of the world become increasingly doubtful.

This image of the self-conscious “*self*” freely uncovering the hidden mathematical structure of the universe and utilizing it for the benefit of the “*self*” dominates the understanding of much of Western culture throughout modernity. The image is not static. There are changes and alterations in the details. The quest for more knowledge takes unexpected turns but the basic image remains intact well into the late twentieth century. The individual item or phenomenon is all there is. Philosophers call this understanding of reality nominalistic or naturalistic materialism. The bold hero of knowledge carefully and inevitably masters the individual phenomenon before her. Moreover, with that mastery, she gains control of the mechanical framework of the universe. Such is our conceit. Such is our assumption regardless of our discipline. Such is the depth of our forgetfulness. We are master. We can chart the next stage of human evolution. We are unchained by any horizon or restraint or pre-determined nature.

The optimism of this self-understanding, however, encounters profound difficulties as the method of knowledge acquisition is pursued. This is the second movement within the modern narrative. A counter theme unfolds as ever deeper questions arise concerning the nature of human knowledge. These questions begin to temper the basic narrative of our common experience. The “Kantian Copernican Revolution” asserts that human knowledge of the world outside the mind is limited and shaped by the very structures of the mind. Reason cannot know anything beyond the automatic way in which the given mental structures interpret and organize experience. What is experienced, is actually constructed by the structure of the mind. In sum: a person can understand only that which the individual

mind can construct.

This movement asserts that certain realities exist, but no one can know these realities directly or experientially. Our autonomous selves are elusive and ultimately unknowable. And, God, whom Kant presumed to be necessary to ensure morality, is not knowable by either argument of reason or by direct experience. The autonomous self is bound by the contours of the mind. Autonomous reason is the basis of all knowledge, all moral order, and all social relationships. But the mysterious and unknowable “I” is ultimately trapped within the given structure of the individual mind. In this setting, humans still longed for universals: asserting universal norms or laws or patterns. But the governing assumptions of the age undermined these assertions. A person is only an individual mind, ruled by reason, who asserts the existence of his or her “I” that is unknowable in a world whose ultimate nature is a mystery and whose destiny is beyond their grasp.

The deeply disturbing nature of these understandings led a variety of thinkers to three conflicting conclusions. This conflicted debate is the third movement within modernity. First, in an effort to escape the limitations placed on us by own minds and experience, nineteenth-century thinkers asserted the existence of a reality that can give a deeper meaning. These thinkers began to focus on “history” as the unfolding of the self-understanding of a larger Force or Mind. This “Reason” or “Mind – Spirit” governs the affairs of nations and civilizations. History becomes the arena within which humans can discover who we are and what our destiny can be.

This metaphor is applied to all areas of thought. Evolutionary theory is a “meta-theory” or “meta-history” of all things. Everything is the product of natural development. It is asserted that this “meta-history” can explain the nature of all of life – even the emergence of life itself.

Historical knowledge can provide the explanation of human activity and culture. If an accurate account of the development of any human structure, event, or historical pattern of behavior can be stated then the hope exists that humans can understand themselves.

If a careful investigator can uncover the history of the tortured individual consciousness, then there is the hope that we can understand the mystery of our own behavior. Yet, if we are honest, these efforts have led not to meaning but to disillusionment.

Second, other thinkers asserted that history itself has been subverted by social, economic, and political forces that wield power. Will, not reason, is the center of human history and experience. Will can liberate or oppress. Human “nature” is essentially good, but “human” institutions are essentially evil and are shaped to oppress and distort human life in all aspects. The answer to the isolation of the human self-consciousness is its liberation into new social collectives that reestablish our linkage to our common history and provide new horizons of meaning to which we can strive. Yet again, human efforts to pursue this solution continue to lead to untold suffering by millions upon millions of our brothers and sisters.

A third response asserted that the concerns for history and for liberation were over-wrought expressions of ideology. The real answer was to be found in the re-doubled efforts to know the “facts” before us. The imperative is this: utilize extensions of the human sense I-structures through emerging technology to deepen the knowledge of the natural world and the inner life of the human consciousness.

It has been asserted that social science, enhanced with technology, can unleash the constricted human will to achieve unimagined greatness. Humans have unlimited potential. The mysterious caves of human self-consciousness can be explored, exposed, freed, and exploited for the sake of human greatness.

Thus, the natural sciences and the social sciences can lead humanity into a new future unchained from the past and unshackled from any restraint imposed from outside the natural order—which is all there is. A liberated humanity will then be free to be free. Freedom will secure our future. Freedom will disclose what is “fact” and “true.” Yet, at the beginning of the second decade of the twenty-first century, we find ourselves living in a world that no longer believes there are “facts” or “truths.”

These claims should sound familiar, for these ideas remain close to us. These dreams continue to be expressed, but we are not free. We are living under the tyranny of forgetfulness. We have forgotten our own history. We have forgotten our own painful journey, our devotion to “the Self,” “the Mind,” and the “the Facts” of history – be they centered in natural, or economic, or social and psychological narratives of that history. We have forgotten that which is older and wiser. We have chosen to live in a world that we have “disenchanted.”

It is a world made narrow, flat, uniform, and largely meaningless. Before exploring how we as Christ-followers can respond to our contemporary crisis of meaning, I would like to explore, briefly, a case study.

III. THE DISENCHANTED LIFE

Max Weber was born in 1864 and died in 1920.¹ After completing a legal education, his academic work shaped the disciplines of political economy, sociology, sociology of religion, and the remaining social sciences. Despite challenges to his health, Weber taught at Freiburg and Heidelberg, edited two different journals in sociology, deeply influenced the development of sociological methodology, and influenced German political life as a public intellectual. In November 1917 during WWI, Weber, after returning to university life, was asked by students at the University of Munich to deliver a formal lecture. That lecture was entitled: “Science as a Vocation.” Two years later this lecture was published.

The main theme of the lecture emerges as Weber begins to define science. Fritz Ringer, in his careful treatment of Weber’s intellectual development, summarizes Weber’s extensive examination of the sciences (*Wissenschaft*) broadly understood. Ringer argues that Weber understands the sciences as the systematic disciplines² that are “focused upon the transmission of expert knowledge and the exercise in logical analysis.”³

In “Science as a Vocation,” Weber argues that these disciplines require “strict specialization”⁴ and the self-acknowledgment by the scientist that “what he has accomplished will be antiquated in ten, twenty, fifty years. That is the fate to which science is subjected; it is the very meaning of scientific work.”⁵ The only meaning that can be attached to this work is the realization that it is “a fraction, the most important fraction, of the process of intellectualization ...”⁶

¹ Fritz Ringer, *Max Weber: An Intellectual Biography* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 1.

² Ringer, *Max Weber*, 9.

³ Ringer, *Max Weber*, 225-26.

⁴ Max Weber, “Science as a Vocation,” in *Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* (trans. and ed. H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills; New York: Oxford University Press, 1946), 135.

⁵ Weber, “Science as a Vocation,” 138.

⁶ Weber, “Science as a Vocation,” 138.

Weber then defines what this process of “intellectualization” is:

Hence, it means that principally there are no mysterious incalculable forces that come into play, but rather one can, in principle, master all things by calculation. This means that the world is disenchanted. One need no longer have recourse to magical means in order to master or implore the spirits, as did the savage, for whom such mysterious powers existed. Technical means and calculations perform the service. This above all is what intellectualization means. This process of disenchantment, which has continued to exist in Occidental culture for millennia, and, in general, this “progress,” to which science belongs as a link and motive force.⁷

In some respects, this quote is the most significant passage in Weber’s address. Science is the most important driving force in the process of “intellectualization,” which will never end. An individual contribution by the individual scientist is rendered meaningless by the process. All wonder and mystery are reduced to “calculation.” The world is the exclusive domain of material and natural forces that have no purpose or telos. In Weber’s own words, what the civilized person “seizes is always something provisional and not definitive, and therefore death for him is a meaningless occurrence. And because death is meaningless, civilized life as such is meaningless: by its very ‘progressiveness’ it gives death the imprint of meaninglessness.”⁸

This insight, derived from Weber’s reading of Tolstoy, causes Weber to ask: “What is the value of science?”⁹ In his effort to answer this question, Weber dismisses the notions, rooted in our common history, that science is the “way to true being” or “the way to true art,” or “the way to true nature,” or “the way to true God” or, as “the way to true happiness.”¹⁰ Despite this brief analysis of the history of the Western civilization, Weber is unwilling to totally agree with Tolstoy’s answer to the question of the value of science, namely: that

⁷ Weber, “Science as a Vocation,” 139.

⁸ Weber, “Science as a Vocation,” 140.

⁹ Weber, “Science as a Vocation,” 140.

¹⁰ Weber, “Science as a Vocation,” 143.

“Science is meaningless because it gives no answer, the only question important for us: ‘what shall we do and how shall we live?’”¹¹ Yet, Weber does say, despite the fact that science cannot answer this value question as Tolstoy posed it, “science might yet be of some use to the one who puts the question correctly.”¹²

Weber suggests there are two ways that science may yet prove of some use even though it cannot answer the question posed by Tolstoy: First, Weber argues that science is important because it “presupposes that the rules of logic and method are valid.” Second, he asserts that the knowledge emerging from scientific work is “worth being known.” Science itself, however, cannot prove that either one of these presuppositions is the case. This is the problem: science, on the basis of its own methods, can neither prove that knowledge itself nor the “existence of the world which these sciences describe is worthwhile, that it has any ‘meaning,’ or that it makes sense to live in such a world.”¹³ Weber goes on to assert that, this question cannot be answered by medicine, or by aesthetics, or by jurisprudence, or by the historical and cultural sciences, or by sociology. Science can only provide three things: a “contribution to the technology of controlling life” through calculation; a “method of thinking;” and a process that produces “clarity.”¹⁴

The “disenchanted” world asserts that “science, ‘free from presuppositions,’ in the sense of a rejection of religious bonds, does not know of the ‘miracle’ and the ‘revelation.’ If it did, science would be unfaithful to its own ‘presuppositions.’”¹⁵ Christian monotheism provided, Weber argues, the basis for the emergence of the “grandiose rationalism of an ethical and methodical conduct of life.”¹⁶ The driving “intellectualization” of modernity, thus set in motion, has created a new situation in which “the routines of everyday life challenge religion.”¹⁷ In this situation Weber argues:

Many old gods ascend from their graves; they are

¹¹Weber, “Science as a Vocation,” 143.

¹²Weber, “Science as a Vocation,” 143.

¹³Weber, “Science as a Vocation,” 143-144.

¹⁴Weber, “Science as a Vocation,” 150-151.

¹⁵Weber, “Science as a Vocation,” 147.

¹⁶Weber, “Science as a Vocation,” 149.

¹⁷Weber, “Science as a Vocation,” 148-149.

disenchanted and hence take the form of impersonal forces. They strive to gain power over our lives and again they (the gods) resume their eternal struggle with one another. What is hard for modern man, and especially for the younger generation, is to measure up to the *workaday* existence. The ubiquitous chase for “experience” stems from this weakness; for it is weakness not to be able to countenance the stern seriousness of our fateful times.¹⁸

Weber approvingly asserts, quoting James Mill, the father of John Stuart Mill, “(I)f one proceeds from pure experience, one arrives at polytheism.”¹⁹ This dynamic analysis posits an unending tension between the bureaucratic monotheism of rationality and a polytheistic struggle between privatized, subjective value structures, leaving no “objectively ascertainable ground for one’s convictions.”²⁰ Weber captures his idea in these words:

This proposition, which I present here, always takes its point of departure from the one fundamental fact, that so long as life remains immanent and is interpreted in its own terms, life is an unceasing struggle of these gods with one another. Or speaking directly, the ultimately possible attitudes toward life are irreconcilable, and hence their struggle can never be brought to a final conclusion. Thus, it is necessary to make a decisive choice.²¹

Weber includes in this analysis the theological task. He argues that theology is seeking to interpret the world using presuppositions that lie “beyond the limits of ‘science.’” Therefore, the assumptions and conclusions of theology do not “represent ‘knowledge.’” The “tension between the value-spheres of ‘science’ and the sphere of ‘the holy’ is

¹⁸Weber, “Science as a Vocation,” 149.

¹⁹Weber, “Science as a Vocation,” 147.

²⁰*Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, s.v. “Max Weber.” <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/weber/#10>.

²¹Weber, “Science as a Vocation,” 152.

unbridgeable.”²² The fragmentation wrought by modernity generates a profound crisis that challenges the possibility of the integrated personality. Weber writes near the conclusion of this address these haunting words:

The fate of our time is characterized by rationalization and intellectualization and, above all, by the “disenchantment of the world.” Precisely the ultimate and most sublime values have retreated from public life either into the transcendental realm of mystic life or into the brotherliness of direct and personal human relations.²³

It is now important to reflect on the philosophical and theological assumptions that undergird this decisive address. Weber gives us a version of a Neo-Kantian world. What we can know is determined by the rational structure of our mind. In this schema, nothing can be known that is un-interpreted by and un-shaped by this “given” structure. We can never know or claim knowledge of anything that we assert that may lie outside of this schema that controls the knowledge acquisition system of our mind. All the scientific investigator can do is track the causal relationships of the natural order. Thus, God may be inferred by our assumptions about the moral order of reality or by moments of encounter with the “sublime” but God, as such, can never be known.

In addition, values and meaning cannot be found embedded in any of the knowledge structure of the phenomenal world in which we live. It is for this reason that Weber cannot provide an answer to Tolstoy’s critique. The “disenchanted” world of “intellectualization” inevitably leads to the atomistic and polytheistic fragmentation of all values into a pervasive subjectivism which drives all discussion of meaning from public life. In this setting, the scientist can only seek methodological clarity acknowledging that her efforts will be considered meaningless due to the inevitable progress of science and her eventual death will be devoid of significance. Weber gives us a prophetic vision of the dystopia of “disenchantment” and the

²²Weber, “Science as a Vocation,” 154.

²³Weber, “Science as a Vocation,” 155.

presumed victory of a secularized culture. Weber's lecture is mysteriously both a vigorous call to "meet the 'demands of the day'" and a lament that it is our fate that "each find and obey the demon who holds the fibers of his very life."²⁴

IV. THE RETRIEVAL OF RESOURCES

The issues raised by Weber's address are varied and profound. This one article is not the entire story of modernity, but it is a window into the common history and experience of life in our twenty-first century context. A disenchanted world is a flattened world. It is a closed world, a world of fate and impersonal power. It is the world of "intellectualization," but it is also a world of latent, vague, and shadowy memory. This is the context of the "forgetfulness" I mentioned earlier in this essay. Even the claims made by "exclusive humanism,"²⁵ emerging within a secularized social structure asserting complete moral self-sufficiency and the disenchanted intra-human reality, cannot fully escape a vague and distorted cultural memory of a cosmos filled with the divine presence.

I am convinced that there are three narrative themes that provide clues to the role of faithful thinkers who commit both personally and academically to the challenging task of recovering and restoring these submerged memories. Here are three tangled and difficult questions that trouble our time: What is good and what is truth and what is beauty? Weber alludes to these questions in his address. The question posed by the concept of "good" can be translated, in part, by the question: "What is the flourishing life or the fulfilled life?" In Weber's discussion of Tolstoy's critique of modernity, Weber writes, "... civilized man, placed in the midst of the continuous enrichment of culture by ideas, knowledge, and problems, may become 'tired of life' but not 'satiated with life.'"²⁶ One who comes to the end of life "satiated" with life is filled or fulfilled with the meaning of life. What, then, is the shape of this good life that fulfills?

The question of beauty alerts us to the lurking possibility of wonder. Wonder is discovered not just in encounters with nature but also in the full engagement with works of art. The artist's achievement,

²⁴Weber, "Science as a Vocation," 156.

²⁵Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 2017), 242-69.

²⁶Weber, "Science as a Vocation," 140.

Weber argues, in contrast to the work of the scientist, survives. He writes: “[A] work of art which is genuine ‘fulfillment’ is never surpassed; it will never be antiquated.”²⁷ A good life and a genuine work of art, never to be surpassed, may serve as a cipher of a forgotten world to entertain “goodness” unaware and engage works of art. In doing so, it may just open the door to the question of truth.

From the perspective of our contemporary moment, Weber’s address provides a window into the horrors and hopes engendered by the last 100 years and reveals his assumed reliance upon the haunting memory of a world largely forgotten and presumed lost. Notions of a fulfilled life draw us to discussions of the nature of goodness. Encounters with wonder weaken our illusion of control and instrumental “intellectualization.” Together these questions point us to the question of truth. There is an inextricable relationship between these three narrative themes. Fullness of life demands the presence of truth. Encounters marked by wonder and awe entice us to begin the search for deeper meaning. Meaning that feeds our broken need is implicitly interpreted as something pointing to goodness. The quest for relational meaning continues to lie at the center of secularized culture. The distortion and brokenness of relationships do not cause us to deny the centrality of relationships but, rather, serve as the source of deeper longing.

As Christ-followers we are called to bear witness in all areas of our lives to both the deep longing for and the possibility of the convergence of goodness, truth, and beauty. Our “frame” or “picture” of these questions is often too restrictive and reactive. We often do not listen enough. We are often unaware of our own forgetfulness. We often fail to realize that within the word of God are powerful metaphors and deeply moving images of a metanarrative saturated with profound meaning. Nevertheless, the profound resources of the history of faithful witness can provide us a place to start our new journey to revitalize both our own struggle and to begin the excavation of the deepest assumptions of our disciplines.

At the heart of the matter is the imperative for the Christ-follower to recover a vital and biblically centered, Trinitarian theology. Contrary to Weber’s vision of the scientific vocation, this recovery does not require each of us to become a “specialist” in systematic

²⁷Weber, “Science as a Vocation,” 138.

theology. Rather, it does call us to engage seriously the disciplines of the life of the church and grasp the theological understanding revealed by the Bible and mapped by the early church's ecumenical creeds, affirmed during the fourth and fifth centuries.

In our common confession, we can find the central faith-convictions that will illuminate the faith assumptions of our various academic disciplines as well as our various life callings. The conviction that Reality is Triune is the central and most distinctive contribution to human understanding made by Christian witness. In the dynamic relationship between Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as the apostle Paul writes, lies the "mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things" revealed according to "the eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Eph. 3:1-13). I will state the implication of our confession this way for those who serve in academic settings (with implications that can be drawn for those who serve in various other contexts):

- If your discipline challenges you to see the "whole" or the "one" in light of the smallest and the many;
- if your discipline challenges you to recognize the mathematical structure of physical reality;
- if your discipline challenges you to recognize deep relationships and interactions;
- if your discipline challenges you to imagine that which lies beyond your senses;
- if your discipline challenges you to struggle with human brokenness and evil that divide and destroy;
- if your discipline challenges you to long for a goodness that heals, a truth that reconciles, and a beauty that illumines the most damaged will;
- then, you will find all the resources you need to recover the center of your discipline in a life-long pursuit of the Triune God.

The Trinity provides the clarifying model of the **oneness**, **duality**, and **many-ness** of all things. The Trinity helps us hold together goodness, truth, and beauty. We see the fullness of the human and the grace-filled possibility of the healing of the brokenness of the

human – all in the same place.

If Christ is, in reality, the Logos – the divine Word/Deed of God who created the rational structure of the cosmos – and the Icon of the “invisible God,” then there is hope. There is hope that, by God’s grace, we will once again be able to discover the center of all things. There is hope that we will realize the deep inter-relatedness of all aspects of all our academic pursuits as well as all aspects of our lives. There is hope that we will begin to see the cosmos as multilayered and multidimensional, open and not closed, animated by the divine presence who became flesh and blood for our salvation. Indeed, there is hope that calls us to faithfulness and whole life discipleship for the glory of God.

V. CONCLUSION

Now, 100 years after the publication of Weber’s address, we stand at a crossroads. This is a “**cruciform**” moment. Can we commit to reflect the living vitality of the historic and orthodox church, the body of Christ in the world, in such a way, that through all our humble scholarship, through our diverse pursuits in this life, and through all our winsome living in a community shaped by transcendent love others will begin to remember, to see again, to seek life again, to know hope again?

The hope implicit in this personal concluding statement is now clear. It is my fervent prayer that Christ-followers will commit their personal and professional lives to the task of living consistently, thinking deeply, and caring winsomely about our world and our *vocatio* in Christ. We must work to re-center our lives in the Logos who became flesh and blood for us. I am convinced that out of that reconciling center where the confession “Jesus is Lord” rings true can emerge a new community where humble erudition, winsome witness, and sacrificial love will echo the Spirit’s summons of hope. As T. S. Eliot reminds us:

We shall not cease from exploration
 And the end of all our exploring
 Will be to arrive where we started
 And know the place for the first time.
 Through the unknown, remembered gate

When the last of earth left to discover
Is that which was the beginning;
At the source of the longest river
The voice of the hidden waterfall
And the children in the apple-tree
Not known, because not looked for
But heard, half-heard, in the stillness
Between two waves of the sea.
Quick now, here, now, always ---
A condition of complete simplicity
(Costing not less than everything)
And all shall be well and
All manner of thing shall be well
When the tongues of flame are in-folded
Into the crowned knot of fire
And the fire and the rose are one.²⁸



²⁸T. S. Eliot, *Four Quartets* (Orlando, FL: A Harvest Book – Harcourt, Inc, reprint 2014), 59. Portions of this article have been adapted from an address given in February of 2020 at California Baptist University.