

## CHAPTER FIVE

### REASON, AFFECTIVITY, HOLY HABITS, AND CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY

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This chapter offers a welcome opportunity for Christian scholars from both Wesleyan and Catholic traditions to interact and to discover which philosophical approaches, projects, problems, and resources they already, perhaps unknowingly, share with their interlocutors, and which they might draw upon and appreciate. The area of possible dialogue between Catholic and Wesleyan thinkers I plan to discuss is the fundamental, and therefore ongoing, ever-renewed, and never fully resolved question of Christian philosophy. From the start, it must be noted that speaking of this “question” or “issue” or “problem” in the singular is only a shorthand which could give rise to the mistaken impression that it does not actually consist in a set of interrelated questions or problems raised by the interaction between Christianity and philosophy. And, the very plurality of viewpoints on what Christian philosophy is, could be or should, be, on its historical forms and development, on its defining issues, themselves form a part of that set of problems. Understood in this light, and looking to history, one sees that the problem of Christian philosophy was raised fairly early on in the Patristic age, that it continued to develop under different aspects through the Middle Ages, and becomes all the more pressing in modernity.

The problem of Christian philosophy has been felt, articulated, and grappled with differently by the varied Christian traditions. The Lutheran tradition includes Leibniz, and in the 19th century other thinkers of lasting philosophical merit. It must be admitted the fortunes of Roman Catholic thought on Christian philosophy declined from its 17th and 18th century apogee, which included Pascal, Malebranche, and Bossuet, until the mid to late 19th century Thomistic revival. In the 20th century, the problem of Christian philosophy has played a major role, at times explicit, at times implicit, in Catholic thought, especially after the 1931-35 French debates about Christian philosophy. The Reformed tradition has had a longstanding interest in Christian philosophy, and the 20th century has seen two different major threads of

Reformed discussions carried on: a Anglo-Dutch one, with which American scholars are most familiar, including in the past Dooyeweerd and today Alvin Plantinga; and a Francophone one, which included Roger Mehl and Paul Ricoeur. Other Christian traditions have displayed less explicit interest in and sustained reflection on the issue. In my research, which centers on Christian philosophy, in particular on the 1930s French debates, I have occasionally run across members of the Anglican, Orthodox, Pentecostal, and Wesleyan traditions writing about Christian philosophy. Tom Oord's 2003 presidential address to this Society, "Types of Wesleyan Philosophy,"<sup>1</sup> provides one recent example.

His address is particularly relevant to our dialogue here, for it indicates why dialogue is desirable. On the one hand, it exemplifies a central aspect of the question of Christian philosophy. It involves reflection on what it means to be a Christian philosopher, to do and to contribute to Christian philosophy, in this case explicitly identified with the Wesleyan tradition. On the other hand, his reflections, even his typology of Wesleyan philosophy and philosophers, replicates quite similar reflections and distinctions made long ago by scholars belonging to other Christian traditions. This replication has a positive and a negative side. It is heartening and confirming to see members of other Christian traditions independently arrive at similar reflections and distinctions, and undoubtably it is philosophically valuable for them to carry out that work for themselves. Still, there is a certain sadness involved in seeing fellow Christian scholars have to reinvent the wheel, so to speak, unaware of and therefore unable to draw upon the efforts, achievements, insights and suggestions of generations of Christian scholarship. Oord's paper, described as "a work in progress," could have made additional contributions to Wesleyan Philosophy had he done two things: first, indicated the relations between the types of Wesleyan philosophy he distinguished, since clearly the first type is Wesleyan in an only accidental way, while the others are more essentially so; and second, indicated the nature of Wesleyan philosophy as Christian philosophy. I would hazard that stronger intellectual contact and dialogue with currents of 20th century Catholic or Reformed thinking about Christian philosophy could have beneficially informed Oord's address.

I hasten to add that in my view, further contributions to continued discussions about Christian philosophy can emerge from setting Wesleyan and Catholic thought in productive dialogue with each other, and that this can

1 Tom Oord, "Types of Wesleyan Philosophy," *Wesleyan Philosophical Journal* 2, n. 1 (2003).

happen precisely because Christian philosophers of the Wesleyan tradition can and ought to make contributions of their own to study, understand, and further develop Christian philosophy, contributions developed from perspectives distinctively conditioned and illuminated by Wesleyan thought, practice, and worship, and developed both in internal intra-Wesleyan discussion and in dialogue with interlocutors external to the tradition. Those contributions, however, must be worked out by Wesleyan philosophers themselves. As a Catholic potential dialogue partner, I can suggest that these contributions will most likely come from the second and fourth types of philosophy Oord distinguished: “Examiners of Wesley’s Own Philosophical Thought” and “Constructors of Philosophy That Develop Wesleyan Concerns”.

I can also suggest one topic studied and emphasized by some members of my tradition as an integral feature of Christian philosophy, a topic upon which, even with my admittedly very rudimentary and selective study of Wesley’s thought, I think philosophers much better versed in his thought and formed by the practices of Wesleyan spirituality would have much to contribute and discuss: the roles of affectivity, habits, and practice in the Christian use of reason in philosophy. Reductionist caricatures of Wesleyan thought grant that in it affectivity and practice are given central place, while, however, holding that it renders the content of belief and the use of reason unimportant. If this were true, the expression “Wesleyan philosophy” would be an oxymoron, which, of course, it is not. In my view, reading through and reflecting on Sermons 39, “Catholic Spirit”, and 70, “The Case of Reason Impartially Considered”, suffice to show not only does Wesley neither overvalue nor undervalue human reason, or the contents, evaluations, or justifications of belief, or even academic disciplines including philosophy; he also does not simply sunder or compartmentalize the intellectual from the practical, the affective and habitual from the reasoned and reasoning. Instead, he attempts to give each their due, and to integrate them with each other and within the wider scope of the Christian life. These features of Wesley’s thought open possibilities for development of Christian philosophy informed by a specifically Wesleyan spirituality.

One central issue on which the 1930s Christian Philosophy debates turned was the age-old one of the possible or desirable relations between reason and faith. Considered in greater detail and concreteness, the issue takes more determinate shape as a set of interrelated questions about philosophy and Christianity: In what sense can philosophy be distinctively Christian and remain genuinely philosophical? Does Christianity impose any demands or condi-

tions upon philosophy, and can philosophy meet these without forfeiting its autonomy and its rationality? Has Christianity historically made any genuine contributions to the development of philosophical concepts, doctrines, approaches, or systems? Can it do so in the present? How can there be any intrinsic relations or connections between a purely natural human reason and a supernatural revelation, a body of doctrine, a community of faith, a relationship of grace, a divine and ultimately mysterious Trinitarian economy? The answers one gives such questions depend very much on the conceptions of philosophy and of reason one employs. Philosophical perspectives, methods, and systems which are inadequately self-reflective, which are too restrictive or one-sided in their scope, which are not well conversant with the matters upon which they purport to give reason's verdict, are poor candidates for exploring or even framing, let alone answering such questions.

During the debates, some participants noted the need to take account of practices, habits, and affectivity, as well as rationality, in thinking about and doing Christian philosophy. And although some of them expressed fundamental disagreements with each other, a central point of agreement was that one condition necessary for properly understanding Christian philosophy's possibility and nature was according proper attention to the concrete condition of the philosophizing subject. Etienne Gilson, for example, argued that "precisely because philosophy and religion are concepts, they do not exist, there exist only religious men and philosophers,"<sup>2</sup> and "If there were a faith and a reason in us, whose being was radically distinct from that of a thinking substance to which they belong, we could not say of any of us that he was a man. In this sense, everyone agrees that faith and reason are rooted in the unity of the concrete subject."<sup>3</sup>

One of my reasons for focusing specifically on Maurice Blondel here is that he, arguably more than any of the other Catholic participants in the debates, adopted and developed a "philosophy of the concrete" in which rationality was intimately and inextricably tied in with practices, habits and affectivity, and which was also a reflectively critical "philosophy of insufficiency" open to the supernatural. Although the debates would bring him to develop and clarify his position further, Blondel had already been reflecting on these matters for more than three decades. His philosophical work is dense

2 *Bulletin de la Société française de Philosophie*, Session of 21 March 1931 (henceforth cited as *BsfP*), 47. Note: all translations, unless otherwise noted, are the author's.

3 *BsfP*, 45-6.

and complex, and in lieu of attempting to give a satisfactory overview, I will simply present three features of his thought relevant here.

The first is his critique of philosophical attitudes that ultimately lead to unproductive and misconceived relations between philosophy and Christianity. In Blondel's view, if anything was properly to be called Christian philosophy, it would have to be authentically philosophical, i.e. autonomous, rational, allowed to follow out its paths as best it could wherever reason would lead, allowed to discern and to attempt to answer to its own demands and requirements. Accordingly, he rejected any sort of concordism, where a philosophy would be deemed Christian philosophy simply because it happened to agree with Christian doctrine in its conclusions, as well as what was then called "separated philosophy", philosophy that would develop entirely and deliberately disassociated from Christianity, avoiding formulating and engaging the "religious problem." He also rejected uncritically working out philosophy by directly relying on principles provided by Christian faith, "integrat[ing] dogmas, ideas, ascetic practices, mystical experiences coming to it from outside within itself," since then philosophy "introduces a foreign body into its flesh,"<sup>4</sup> and he rejected the inverse error of attempting to bring the supernatural within philosophy by reducing it, by rationalizing it, "forcibly stripping the data of their supernatural originality."<sup>5</sup> Closely connected with all of these was yet another critique and rejection, of the view that "philosophical doctrines, as different as they may be, ultimately aim at sealing themselves off in closed, sufficient, and exclusive systems; these systems organize themselves with and terminate in concepts, and all that does not succeed in being raised into concepts repulses philosophy."<sup>6</sup> All of these critical rejections develop through a dialectical phenomenology that, by following out philosophy's explicit and implicit assumptions, aims, and demands, reveals the criticized philosophical comportments as insufficiently philosophical, as cutting short and cutting off from many of its resources the philosophy they purport to best embody.

The second feature of Blondel's thought involves elaboration of another philosophical option, that of an "open philosophy" or a "philosophy of insufficiency." This type, or better put, attitude, of philosophy can be explicitly, self-consciously, and systematically developed as such, as Blondel

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4 *BSfP.*, 89.

5 *BSfP.*, 89

6 *BSfP.*, 87-8.

did throughout his philosophical career, but it can also be discerned at work throughout the history of philosophical thought, particularly through those illuminated by, continuing, and contributing to Christian Tradition. What then is an open philosophy? In Blondel's view, it is philosophy that "recogniz[es] how it is normally incomplete, how it opens in itself and before itself an empty space prepared not only for its own ulterior discoveries and on its own ground, but for illuminations and contributions whose real origin it is not and cannot become."<sup>7</sup> He notes that this is not a matter of an always deficient character of particular systems that, despite their relative perfection of synthesis. . . remain contingent [caducs] and are always to be surpassed. It is not a matter either of the perpetual renewal of the philosophical tradition in general, always perfectible because it is always incomplete or inadequate, even where it is sure of itself and grounds its incessant movement on definitive acquisitions.<sup>8</sup>

An open philosophy is one that self-critically examines philosophy's aspirations and conditions, needs and possibilities, achievements and failures, discerning where philosophy has lapsed or is at risk of lapsing into infidelity to its own nature and purposes. In terms of the history of philosophy, it means recognizing legitimate demands raised and given articulate voice by modern thought, while at the same time critiquing to its very roots modern philosophy's pretensions to an autonomy conceived as emancipation from and rejection of any higher wisdom or lights determinately conditioning philosophy, its dogmatic and irrationally rationalist rejection of whatever it casts as irrational, its deracination from and blindness to the concrete living subjects and communities in which philosophy subsists, and its closing off the horizons of the real, the intelligible, even the possible to what it permits to be so.

The Blondelian notion of the "open space," expressed in other places as a "gap from above" or "fissure," within philosophical thought is centrally important here for several reasons. It reflects philosophical awareness of human reason's actual condition as dynamic, developing its capacities and resources more fully only in fruitful contact with reality, all of reality, rather than just portions that fit its conceptual schemes, methods, or assumptions. Taking up Gilson's insight that Christianity has been "generative of reason"<sup>9</sup> Blondel adds that "first, we have to be shown how reason, far from stabilizing every-

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7 *BSJP.*, 88.

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9 *BSJP.*, 39.



thing in closed concepts, discovers in itself needs that nature does not satisfy at all, something unfulfilled, always naturally unfulfilled and yet incoercibly avid for fulfillment.”<sup>10</sup> Once philosophy recognizes and prepares this open space, it becomes possible for philosophy and Christianity to come into contact there without denaturing philosophy, since philosophy through its own work and self-reflection realizes its own condition, and without rationalizing Christianity, reducing the supernatural and transcendent to the purely natural and immanent. This contact can take place precisely because the seemingly empty space is not simply “vague and amorphous,”<sup>11</sup> “a black hole. . . an ocean for which neither ship nor sail would seem possible,” nor is it “a chimerical fiction, projection of restlessness, sickness of the soul.” Instead, it offers to philosophical examination “contours to discern, a reason for being to meditate upon and to render rationally admissible, an attractive and imperious character.”<sup>12</sup> It becomes possible to ask: “yes or no, does this place, open to the intervention of what alone can fulfill and fill the creature, remain empty. . . or is it in reality occupied, and by what? And, if it is occupied, by what method, to what degree, to what advantage does reason’s gaze bear on this secret guest and indicate the welcome one should give it, one’s own response to contribute.”<sup>13</sup>

This leads to the third feature. We can speak abstractly of philosophy opening this empty space in which the supernatural can or already has entered, and where it can meet it, but what must be kept in mind is that philosophy exists through and for human subjects, that the reason by which philosophy operates and extends itself belongs to concretely existing human beings in which reason is distinguishable but not separable from affectivity, emotions, desires, habits, and volitions. Through the phenomenological analyses in his early work *Action* (1893), Blondel indicated how philosophical thought both reflects and plays its part in a fundamental dynamic of the human will, a drive and striving to produce or attain, as he puts it “an adequation of mind and life, of the intelligent and the agent, of the willing and the willed.”<sup>14</sup> When

10 Maurice Blondel, *Le problème de la philosophie catholique* (Paris: Bloud & Gay, 1932), 135.

11 Maurice Blondel, “Le problème de la philosophie catholique: Seance de 26 Nov 1932”, *Les Etudes Philosophiques* vol. 7, no. 1, 19.

12 *BSJP*, 90.

13 Blondel, *Le problème*, 166.

14 Maurice Blondel, *Action: Essay on a Critique of Life and a Science of Practice*, 1893, trans. Oliva Blanchette (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984),

philosophy becomes adequately self-reflective, it is realized by the subjects engaging in philosophy that while possessing its own relative autonomy and independence, it is also a type of action, of practice, tied in with, drawing on, conditioned by, and expressing and orienting all the other dimensions of the human subject. As Blondel expresses it: "Every great philosophy, far from being simply a construction of the mind, has its principle and its end in a conception of human destiny: practice directs it and in turn it directs practice."<sup>15</sup>

Viewing human reason and philosophy through the lens of action and the problem of human destiny highlights the often overlooked centrality of affectivity, practice, and habits. We do not simply possess a faculty of reason which works and develops entirely and unproblematically on its own: emotions, attachments, desires, good or bad habits, right or wrong volitions and actions with their ensuing consequences all form the tissues of our intellectual life and capacities. We come to know ourselves, and to verify and to better understand our thoughts, reasonings, and judgements, through the illumination action provides, if we will to accept and learn the lessons afforded. Philosophy, as a determinate and reflective activity and product of human reason, in order to be done well, likewise requires collaboration, proper orientation, even recognition of the affective, habitual and deep volitional conditions and structures of the human subject who philosophizes, and in its turn, philosophy can do its part by examining, elucidating, even judging and orienting them.

The philosophizing subject can also be brought to recognize that philosophy, like all human life and activity, is permeated and driven by a desire unsatisfiable within the purely human or natural order, a need, at the same time affective and intellectual, often displaced or misrecognized, for God, and for determinate creaturely relation with God. The empty space a philosophy of insufficiency opens and acknowledges within itself is not only a locus for divine presence and grace, but also for the human creature's apprehension of and collaborative response to divine action within their life, thought, and experience. This grasp and response takes determinate form through particular types of affectivity and through willing particular habits and practices, and these in turn inform and aid the fuller development of rationality and philosophy for the subject. Here is where affectivity and holy habits legitimately enter into philosophy, into an authentically and specifically Christian

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282.

15 *Ibid.*, 277.



philosophy.

For interests of time, I will briefly mention four of the recurring forms these assume in Blondel's philosophy. First, he stresses the necessity of what he calls "literal practice," committed habits and choices involved in and guided by Christian life. Holy practices and habits are the locus in which we allow ourselves to be formed and reformed by God. As he writes: "In the simplicity of the most common practices, there is more infinite than in the haughtiest speculations or in the most exquisite feelings. . . . What is external still, are feelings, thoughts; what is most intimate, what manifest life best and transfigures, are works."<sup>16</sup> Second, he regards suffering and mortification, properly approached and understood by the suffering subject, as components necessary to the full development of both the philosophical and the Christian life. He writes: "Mortification, then, is the true metaphysical experiment, the one that touches on being itself. What dies is what hinders from seeing, from doing, from living."<sup>17</sup> Third, the theological virtue, in its interconnected affective, volitional, and intellectual aspects, which lies at the center of Blondel's philosophical doctrine and method is charity, or love. Fourth, finally, and important never to forget, the Christian philosopher is also part of a community and history of faith, through which God engages him or her, and from which he or she inherits "a tradition and a discipline represent[ing] a constant interpretation of thought through acts, offering each individual, in the sanctified experience, something like an anticipated control, an authorized commentary, an impersonal verification of the truths it is for each one to resurrect in himself."<sup>18</sup>

I turn now briefly to Adriaan Peperzak, a contemporary Christian philosopher whose thought is particularly relevant here, for two interconnected reasons. The first is that he is one of the few Catholic philosophers since the 1930s Christian philosophy debates to have made any genuinely new contribution to thinking about Christian philosophy. The second is that while clearly influenced by and acknowledging his intellectual debt to Blondel, he productively goes beyond him in much more specifically thematizing affectivity's relevance and specific modalities in Christian philosophy. Peperzak's recent works focusing on Christian philosophy share many themes in common with

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 376-7.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 353.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 380. For Blondel's more developed and classic position on Tradition, cf. *The Letter on Apologetics and History and Dogma*, trans. Alexander Dru and Illtyd Trethowan

Blondel. He criticizes the repeated, unsuccessful, and unlearned-from attempts of modern philosophies and philosophers to develop completely autonomous and autarkic modes of human thinking, in the process trying, as he puts it, to “exclude and erase the problem of God.”<sup>19</sup> He also advocates and embodies return to a broader, more comprehensive, more deeply reflective view of philosophy as “a mode of life,” “an existential search for wisdom,” in which “thinking is then codetermined by the philosopher’s basic desires and the manner in which he has made himself at home in the world.”<sup>20</sup> And, like Blondel, he regards the problem of Christian philosophy as one that, if not articulated and examined in theory, must be addressed in practice and in concrete life by philosophers who are Christian, and as one that in the present conditions of modern thought will in many cases be badly resolved in practice if not addressed by new theorizing on it. Although he does not use the Blondelian terms “empty space,” “open philosophy,” or “philosophy of insufficiency,” he deploys analogous notions reaching similar conclusions. Lastly, condensed in a passage worth quoting at length, he notes the unavoidability of addressing the nature and the demands of religion as a consequence of philosophy’s own demands for and faithfulness to itself.

If religion . . . is an essential phenomenon, it cannot be excluded from philosophy. For within philosophy, all exclusions are arbitrary—or rather they are impossible—because the horizon of philosophy is unlimited. If religion is not a genuine phenomenon, philosophy must show which more genuine dimension hides behind its masks. If it is genuine and irreducible to anything else, philosophy will have to confront the rivalry that emerges from this fact. . . . If philosophy is indeed autonomous, it takes itself to be the highest tribunal for questions of meaning; if not, it remains open to the possibility that the ultimate judgement might come from another, higher or deeper realm.<sup>21</sup>

Peperzak discusses three connected ways in which affectivity is a necessary dimension of philosophical thought, precisely because it is a necessary condition for any thought or practice whatsoever. First, human reason and the rational activity of philosophy while not reducible to it, are always oriented by desire. “Plato and Saint Augustine are right,” he argues, “experience and

19 Adriaan T. Peperzak, *Thinking: From Solitude to Dialogue and Contemplation* (New York: Fordham University Press. 2006), 137.

20 Peperzak, *Philosophy Between Faith And Theology: Addresses to Catholic Intellectuals* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press. 2005), 4

21 *Ibid.*, 77-8.

intelligence are driven by eros, desire, love.”<sup>22</sup> Desire, of course, can take on all sorts of modalities, orderings, and directions, good or bad, better or worse, and it can be intellectually articulated and understood in varied, even contradictory ways. “What inspires and orients our desire?”, he asks. “The answer is a wager,” which involves further questions, among which are: “Is it true that our heart is restless until it finds rest in God? Is the Infinite itself the unique desirable that moves us from the beginning from being loved? . . . Is Desire, as transcendence beyond the finite, inherent to our common human nature?” He adds: “If so, philosophy should make it the basis for all investigation.”<sup>23</sup>

While many other types of philosophy will, at least implicitly, make a negative response, Christian philosophies will answer Yes to such questions, and that leads to a requirement: “The truth of desire is best known by those who are very sincere and advanced in desiring. As ancient and medieval thinkers knew, all emotions must pass through several purifications to be radical enough to orient our understanding.”<sup>24</sup> Affectivity must be addressed not only because it can be illuminating and properly orienting for reason, but also because it can equally cloud it and lead it astray. Peperzak notes, “[I]n order to discover what I myself ‘basically’ and ‘essentially’ long for most of all, my affectivity must already be purified.”<sup>25</sup>

Second, drawing on a phenomenological perspective, Peperzak maintains that affectivity is involved in and required for any thought, perception, or practice whatsoever:

[T]o the extent that the consideration of a phenomenon’s being expresses or awakens our interest, it has the character of something interesting. This character is specified in a variety of the good, the beautiful, the pleasant, the admirable, the monstrous, the detestable, but it can neither be abolished, nor separated from the being of phenomena. . . . Attention is always a mode of being affected, pleased, or pained, attracted, fascinated, anguished, or astonished.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 49.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 49-50.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 50. Peperzak stresses that affectivity is not merely passivity. We cannot entirely, directly, or immediately chose our fundamental affective responses, but they do depend on “the openness and refinement of our sensitivity, our character, the story of our life, and many other conditions”, (75) and we can exercise some choice and direction in these. This leads him to conclude: “an ethics of emotions and moods is necessary” (160-1).

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 123.

Affective neutrality is impossible if one pays enough attention to discover how a given shows itself to be. No theory is disinterested and no being exists for affective indifference.<sup>26</sup>

Third, more globally, Peperzak contends that every philosophical perspective, as an activity of concrete existing human beings, is oriented by and based on a type of “faith.” “[S]o-called non-believers are equally supported by a certain trust or faith. It is simply impossible to live a human life without belonging to some community with its own fundamental trust and history, tradition and authority.”<sup>27</sup> This is not simply social, but involves “an affirmation that existence . . . has an overall meaning,” an affirmation that “is lived, rather than pronounced or thought, . . . the element of consent in our moods, the basic mood that grants us the possibility of having a position and an attitude with regard to the universe and our existence in it.”<sup>28</sup> He outlines some of the possible basic affectivities: “awe, admiration, gratitude, anxiety; we can feel threatened, safe, secure, content, frustrated, nostalgic.”<sup>29</sup>

Christian philosophy, in Peperzak’s view, will be philosophy done in communication with Christian faith, motivated and permeated by the Christian faith of the philosopher. Although he cautions against simply appealing to doctrine or Scripture to resolve philosophical questions, Christian faith will inevitably provide some content, some direction, some criteria for development and interpretation to one’s philosophical work. Peperzak argues, echoing a similar view Alvin Plantinga expressed two decades ago: “It is a mistake to make the philosophy of nonbelievers the standard for philosophy as such. Their perspectives are equally motivated by prephilosophical convictions about the ultimate questions.”<sup>30</sup> The philosophical activity, interaction, and life of the Christian philosopher will be marked by, and may also thematize certain affectivities and practices in particular, to which Peperzak devotes much attention and discussion. Closing this brief exposition of Chris-

26 Ibid., 130. Cf. also his specific discussion “Affective Correspondence”, 159-161.

27 Ibid., 65.

28 Ibid., 75.

29 Ibid., 75.

30 Ibid., 105. For Plantinga’s discussions, cf. “Advice to Christian Philosophers”, *Faith and Philosophy* 1, no 3; “Christian Philosophy at the End of the 20th Century”, in *Christian Philosophy at the Close of the Twentieth Century: Assessment and Perspective*, eds. Sander Griffioen and Bert M. Balk. This insight was also particularly stressed by several of the Catholic interlocutors in the 1930s debates: Gilson, Maritain, Blondel, Marcel, Sertillanges.

tian philosophy, affectivity, habits, and the views of Blondel and Peperzak, to leave time for and perhaps provoke dialogue and discussion, I will simply bring up one practice and several modes of affectivity Peperzak highlights. The practice, simply put, is that of prayer,<sup>31</sup> what Peperzak calls “the clearest expression of Christian faith, a way in which we enter into, or better put, respond to dialogue offered to us and initiated by God,<sup>32</sup> a dialogue which can and should be thematized philosophically in part and to some degree, and which in turn should play an integral role in forming and directing one’s philosophical work, commitments, and engagements. Peperzak claims that to understand adequately what prayer “does and expresses, we must clarify the attitudinal constellation in which both [prayer and Christian faith] unfold,”<sup>33</sup> a constellation, he adds, “of dispositions, virtues, practices, beliefs, and yes, also theologies and philosophies.”<sup>34</sup> Peperzak also issues a caution: “If reflection completely isolates itself from prayer and praxis, it reverts to the stance of an outsider, thereby losing the attitude that is necessary for understanding faith on its own terms, and thus obscuring its relationship to reflection.”<sup>35</sup>

The affective dispositions Peperzak regards as central to Christian faith and philosophy, and devotes investigation to in his recent works, are gratitude, wonder (or awe), trust (or faith), hope, love (sometimes articulated by Peperzak as charity, sometimes as compassion), peace, and joy. That all of these are what could be called positive modes of affectivity does not mean, of course, that he regards more negative ones, such as sorrow, anxiety, or even anger as unconnected or unimportant to Christian faith and philosophy, nor that they do not merit study, cultivation, or direction. But, the positive modes are particularly relevant in his view. A Christian philosopher’s activity of

31 On the relevance of prayer for Christian philosophy discussed during the 1930s debates, cf. Yves Simon, “Philosophie chrétienne: Notes complémentaires”, *Études Carmélitaines* (April 1934); Aimé Forest, “Une philosophie orante”, *Études Philosophiques*, v. 16, n. 3 (1961); and Peter Wust, “L’homme et la philosophie,” *Revue de Philosophie*, v. 6, (1936).

32 He writes: “If philosophy . . . reaches out to God, it culminates in thinking and speaking about God. Speaking to God, however, occurs only in prayer, not in (modern) philosophy. Does God speak in prayer? If we are to understand “speaking” as an illuminating metaphor for God’s turning to the person who prays, the answer is clear: Yes; God has already spoken, awakened, and provoked the praying person before she, by way of answering, began to pray.” *Thinking*, 143-4

33 Plantinga, *Thinking*, 144.

34 *Ibid.*, 145.

35 *Ibid.*, 115.

thinking will be fundamentally conditioned by these modes of affectivity, if not in every case by having them in the present, at the very least by being led by desire for them. To take one example Peperzak provides: "A philosopher cannot avoid meditation on the question: Who, how, what am I? In Christians, such meditations are characterized by gratitude, hope, patience, and adoration."<sup>36</sup> Christian philosophy must also, in Peperzak's view, direct itself to better understanding and cultivating proper and fruitful affective attitudes as an integral part of the philosophical enterprise itself. "A phenomenology of radical gratitude, hope, trust, delight, wonderment, and inner peace discovers their basic and irreplaceable significance when it understands them as modes of contact with the truth of reality."<sup>37</sup>

Blondel's and Peperzak's reflections on the overlooked relevance of practice, affectivity, and habits for philosophy, all of which for the Christian philosopher must be transformed into modes of holiness, of sanctity, through prayer, reflection, and engagement in Christian life and community, provides some grounds, occasion, and perhaps even shared vocabulary for dialogue here between Wesleyan and Roman Catholic Christian philosophers.

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36 Adriaan Peperzak, *Reason in Faith: On the Relevance of Christian Spirituality for Philosophy* (Mahwah, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1999), 128.

37 *Ibid.*, 86