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Apologia Pro Vita Sua

Clark Pinnock replies to Roger Nicole's charge that he has violated the doctrinal basis of the Evangelical Theological Society (ETS) in his book, Most Moved Mover (Baker Academic, 2001) and has thereby merited expulsion from the Society.

Introduction

In a resolution on November 21, 2002, the ETS commended Roger Nicole, a charter member of the Society, for seeking clarity on the status of members holding to what is called "open theism." Many in the Society have felt for some time that this was an issue needing to be resolved and members voted for the motion to expel to go forward to the executive committee. In voting thus, the membership was not actually committing itself to expulsion but to having the issue resolved, one way or the other. Thus the motion to expel became an item of business for the following year.

On a personal level, of course, it was not a happy day for me, as one of those indicted and whose integrity was called into question. I have been a member of the ETS for thirty five years and now, doubt is cast on the soundness of my work and (by implication) on my sincerity in signing the doctrinal statement. His action also had the quality of a personal vendetta - in that he was heard to say that either I (Clark) am expelled or he (Roger) himself will leave the Society. The tenor of his campaign to oust me obviously is hurtful and alienating. I have the impression, rightly or wrongly, that Roger will do practically anything to have me ejected from the ETS by fair means or by foul. I get the impression that Roger does not wish to engage the truth with me but to win out over me whatever the cost. The whole incident illustrates what Darrell Bock says: "My sense is that we do not engage each other very well when people feel that the stakes concerning the truth are high."¹

Earlier in my life I heard the call of God to defend and to secure the truth. Later the call came to go and do better work in its defence. I know that some who appreciated my earlier work do not now appreciate the later work. But I submit that they are both important vocations.

My place in the ETS

Attending the annual meetings of the Society has been a highlight of my life since 1965. It has been a good place to meet other Bible-believing scholars and to share insights in an atmosphere of respect. It has been an open society, relatively speaking. Given our diversity, trust has had to be an important factor. We have had to honour one another even in our differences and we have done so reasonably well by observing what Wayne Grudem calls "the honour system."² In my thirty five years in the ETS, moves to expel members have been rare because the Society has a generous (may I say "liberal") basis of membership, requiring only adherence to biblical inerrancy and the doctrine of the trinity.

It gives liberty to members to speak freely, to investigate matters, and to grow as interpreters of the word of God. The authority of the Bible is assumed of course (we all sign the doctrinal statement each year) and we test one another's interpretations. We have benefited from this.

In the wisdom of the charter members, the ETS developed no statement of faith unlike comparable groups. They were confident in the Bible and believed that its truth would win out in a fair and open discussion. It was communicated that one does not need to read Scripture through the eyes of a confession of faith but can approach the Bible with fresh eyes as if for the first time. Of course, if the founders thought that commitment to the Bible would result in a set of uniform interpretive conclusions, they were naive and overly optimistic. For better or worse, they gave us a society which allows liberality in matters of interpretation. I have always valued the "openness" of the ETS and its confidence in the power of God's truth to prevail in the market place of ideas without resorting to power politics. But now this is being tested. Do I detect a whiff of despair? Are we going back on our conviction?

Resorting to expulsion on a matter of interpretation now could be a step backward. It could do harm to the Society, continuing a trend since the Gundry affair to narrow the representation of evangelicalism in the ETS. I don't think that we want an Evangelical Theological Society but the Evangelical Theological Society, if at all possible. So why are we driving scholars away too who (like me) want to be creative in their conservatism? We may be opening the door of membership wider to custodians of tradition than to our visionaries, thus reducing opportunities for dialogue. Good discussion in the ETS requires that evangelicals with different ideas feel welcome and safe from such punitive measures.

We need to ask where this will stop and who will be next? Will it be the biblical feminists like Nicole himself? (People in glass houses should not throw stones.) After all, the Southern Baptist Convention has already ruled them out, so it's bound to come up at a future ETS business meeting now that the precedent is set.³ In part, this is a struggle for the soul of the ETS - will it be the open society as founded by the earlier Roger or will it close in on itself at the hands of a later Roger? It seems like the ETS of 1949 was confident in open discussion but the ETS of 2003 is fearful.

I have been a member in good standing of the ETS for many years and I have played by the rules. Like Roger, I have signed the doctrinal statement and have been part of the discussion. One may judge some of my opinions to be faulty but one has to admit that I have played fair. I have done what was asked - I have sought to understand the authoritative Scriptures as best I can. The ETS is an open society and I have been a member of it in good standing. This action against me is uncalled for. It hurts the Society too and should not (I think) be happening.⁴

I have to admit being surprised and dismayed by the controversy surrounding open theism in the ETS. I have had difficulty understanding the intensity of the furor and the over-the-top criticisms. When I see extreme titles like "God Under Fire" and "Beyond the

Bounds” and “Battle for God” and “God's Lesser Glory” and “No Other God” and “No Place for Sovereignty” and “Creating God in the Image of Man” etc. And when I hear open theism called “a cancer”, “a pernicious error,” “a heresy,” “a crisis of unprecedented magnitude,” etc. And when I learn that open theism is “replacing historic Christianity,” “denying the gospel of Christ,” “needing to be ruled out of order,” etc, I have to ask myself what is going on here? How could so many of my colleagues in the ETS, ordinarily calm and sensible people, be such extremists? I must have done something terrible but I cannot for the life of me figure out what it was. So often these very people will acknowledge the important things we are saying and then condemn us as if it were not so.

What has to be done (I suppose), if I am to be expelled, is that the ETS will need to draw a new boundary, as Grudem has argued. If open theism cannot be excluded because the Society has no relevant doctrinal standard, one such must be added. Then the open theists can be legitimately ejected. This having not yet been done means that as of now my standing in the fellowship ought to be secure.⁵

A problem admittedly difficult to handle

What do we do though when members espouse biblical inerrancy but draw non-traditional inferences from these texts? What if (for example) a Mormon signed on espousing a social trinity in the context of a polytheistic world view? I think that there would be a motion to prevent it and I would support it. Thus I do not oppose Roger's motion in principle. Maybe open theism is beyond the bounds - one cannot rule that out a priori. We just have to proceed carefully case by case in a society which enjoys a lot of diversity.

In the case of open theism, we have a difference of opinion and a different theological hermeneutic. Roger sees it almost as a cult and “a cancer” (his words), while I see it like another Roger does, Roger E. Olson, as a neo-Arminian model and a variant of free will theism.⁶ Our differences pertain, not to inerrancy at all, but to beliefs concerning the doctrine of God. For Roger Nicole, the open model is “beyond the bounds.” He writes: “In my judgment, open theism with its denial of God's advance knowledge of future decisions of free moral agents, is a cancer on evangelicalism. Since radiation and chemotherapy have not worked so far, the time has come for surgery.”⁷ Elsewhere, he tags me with the Socinian label, a low tactic of guilt by association, just as former Calvinists did to Arminius, centuries ago.

Although I respect Roger's right to hold it, I submit that this is a mistaken judgment on his part. In respect to the term Socinian, he knows that I am a social trinitarian and not a unitarian. Nevertheless, he introduces the term anyway in order to poison the air and arouse

people against me. It is the tactic of guilt by association. He also commits a genetic fallacy, as if Socinians are incapable of getting anything right. More importantly, the point of doctrine that concerns him most (that is, the nature of the knowability of the

future in the light of libertarian freedom) belongs to the Wesleyan tradition and discussion.⁸ Is he aware of the work of Jack Cottrell in the ETS who works with an understanding somewhat similar to ours which is dubbed “incremental foreknowledge?”⁹

The fact is that, like it or not, there is a debate over divine foreknowledge going on among evangelicals today and ejecting me from the ETS is not going to change that. It might even backfire and create sympathy for my views. People are asking, “Does God know everything that will come to pass?” or “Does God know all that shall be as well as what may be?” This is a good debate for us to be having. Apart from a few Molinists and Methodists, it has not received sufficient attention. There is a desire out there for a better view of the matter among large numbers who are not able to accept Roger's view that God knows the future exhaustively because he predestined it completely. I rather think that some of the animus against me here arises from a fear that this is so. There are some good reasons, as William C. Davis puts it, and not only bad reasons, “why open theism is flourishing now.”¹⁰

Roger is not fair to me, but, if one were fair, the truth is that open theism is Arminian in direction and holds to only one distinctive tenet (its view of a partly open future, with implications for divine omniscience). At the ETS, we discuss things exactly like this. People study every nuance of the divine perfections and papers are read on such topics as the nature of immutability, impassability, sovereignty, etc, and members come down on different sides. How is it “out of order” to want to discuss divine omniscience and to take positions on it? Bruce Ware and John Feinberg have both admitted that open theism offers the most coherent version of free will theism they have seen and both agree that it is a logical (and we think, a biblical) extension of it.¹¹ So why, in a society dedicated to open discussion around the Scriptures, are we resorting to expulsion, a political move? My “offense” does not rise to this level does it? It was one thing to have shown by a vote at the Society in 2001 that the majority of members do not approve of open theism. It is another thing, and a much graver thing, to vote in 2003 to expel the holders of the minority viewpoint. Why is our presence so threatening? I don't see us making a lot of converts. Besides, that is not what we are there for.

We are not going to settle the question of theological boundaries in a coalition as diverse as evangelicalism in the ETS, though some may wish it. But we can be fair to one another and we can put the emphasis on central convictions and core values. We know basically who the “evangelicals” are. There's a family resemblance among us. We are a Christ-centred, Bible-centred, and mission-oriented folk. Like me for example (I speak as a fool) - am I not respectful of the Bible, am I not passionate about Jesus Christ, and am I not a witness to his resurrection? What is the ETS? Is it a confessional organisation, charged with policing the membership, or an inclusive meeting place for all evangelicals for their mutual benefit? From this kind of society you do not expel people if you don't have to.¹²

In contrast to Roger's way of doing it, mine is a mediating kind of theology which entertains differences and attempts to bridge unnecessary gulfs between perspectives such as these. Open theism is not “a cancer” (I submit) - it is a stimulus to our growing as

hearers of the Word. If Roger does not want to grow as a hearer, that is his decision, but we must not let him impose an ideological clamp upon everybody else.¹³

As I said, there may be a time and a topic for a motion like this but this is not the time or the topic. Calm reflection should lead us to permit open theism as a topic of discussion and even an option for members, an issue not (yet) ruled out of the question. Let me add that I understand why Roger thinks it is out of order. Augustine held the opinion that a Being who was not completely prescient is just not God. It is a deep and old conviction even, if not well thought out. On this matter I would expect to be one of a small minority holding to it.

Roger's indirect case for expulsion

What we are seeing here is a struggle over the interpretation of the biblical doctrine of God - a truly worthy subject and a great tussle. Unfortunately, one party to the debate is trying to disqualify the other party by making it into an issue of biblical inerrancy and kick them out of the ETS. This is awkward (however) because of the way the Society was set up, in part (ironically) by Roger himself. An interpretation cannot be the basis for expulsion according to the rules. Indeed, we welcome fresh interpretations and the light they may possibly shed. Any such charge then would have to be framed circuitously such that it involves biblical inerrancy somehow. Roger has to show that I, as an open theist, violated biblical inerrancy in the course of my work. It puts him in an awkward position. His charge is weak in being indirect but it's the only way it can be done. It's even a little deceitful but what choice is there? When you get right down to it, I don't think it is a question of the interpretation of individual biblical verses and who has gotten it right. I think it's something larger - namely, the possible implications of reading them in one way rather than another. Antipathy toward my doctrine of God itself, which is Roger's real beef, is an important subject but sadly for him, it cannot as things stand be the grounds for expulsion from ETS.¹⁴

Let me begin by saying something about biblical inerrancy. Like every member, I sign the doctrinal basis of the Society. Since the category "inerrancy" is not defined and its meaning is not spelled out, it signifies pretty much what a member thinks of it. (The ETS allows remarkable interpretive liberty even here!) But, in case anyone wonders, to me, inerrancy means that the Bible, in the original autographs and when properly interpreted, is truthful in all it affirms. The locus of inerrancy is the author's original intention which means we must observe genres of the literature and the culture within which the author is working, etc.¹⁵ The reason for invoking inerrancy is that it commits us to listening for the word of the Lord even if it is inconvenient. One is not supposed to invoke it as a cover for one's own presuppositions, as if inerrancy entails five point Calvinism or hierarchicalism or such like when it does no such thing.

1. Among his charges, Roger detects "an attack" on biblical inspiration in my work. Following Wellum, he reasons that, in the absence of compatibilistic freedom, an Arminian like me could not as easily explain the existence of an inerrant Bible as a theological determinist like him could.¹⁶ The point is valid. Determinism (total control)

can get any result very easily. For example, a determinist like Roger can explain the inerrancy of the New York Times, if he wants to, since there are no significant human agents to stand in the way. It's true that God in the open view has to be more resourceful than the Calvinist (or Muslim) God. But, as John Frame observes: "If open theists believe in an authoritative, inspired Bible, that belief would seem to be a happy inconsistency within their overall system."¹⁷ I accept that. So it's not impossible for God to produce an inerrant Bible in this way, just harder. In any case, my trust is in the text, not in a theory about how God inspired it. Roger also seems to be forgetting that his charge applies equally to any member of the ETS who holds to libertarian freedom, not just to open theists. It sounds like all Arminians will have to go eventually if his argument holds and we will surely lose some of our best members (Bill Craig, Francis Beckwith, J. P. Moreland, etc)

2. For some reason, not at first obvious, Roger is concerned about my interpretation of texts of divine repentance. My "offense" apparently is that I take them at face value, while he does not. I wonder why Roger puts himself on such dangerous ground, because these texts seem to prove me right by indicating that God changes his mind when dealing with people. Open theists are comfortable with these texts, while Roger is vulnerable. We take the texts seriously, while he wants to be rid of them. I can't blame him for that but where is his belief in inerrancy now?

These verses are very difficult for his total control system of interpretation: "The Lord was sorry that he made humankind on the earth and it grieved him to his heart." (Gen 6:6) "The Lord changed his mind about the disaster that he planned to bring on his people." (Exodus 32:14) "The Lord was sorry that he had made Saul king over Israel." (1 Sam 15:35) Regarding Saul, it seems clear that God repents having made him king. He had originally planned to work through Saul but changed his mind. "When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil ways, God changed his mind about the calamity that he had said he would bring upon them and he did not do it." (Jonah 3:10) In Jonah's case, the prophet announces the destruction of Ninevah in categorical terms. But their repentance made the difference. It activated God's mercy which was precisely what Jonah worried would happen. Concerning Hezekiah, the prophet announced his soon coming death (2 Kings 20:1) but the king prayed in the hope that God would change his mind. Which is what happened, because of his prayer (20:5). Evidently God changes and adapts. As Jeremiah says, clay which is spoiled on the potter's wheel can always be reworked (Jer 18:4). Evidently God responds to what is happening in history and is open to changing course, as he relates to people. Is Roger closed to the truth of these Scriptures? Does he worry that they (and their Author) mislead us?

Ironically, Roger charges me with violating inerrancy, when it is more natural to ask whether he believes the Scriptures. Does he believe that God is affected by creatures and sometimes surprised by what they do? (e.g. Gen 6:6) Does he believe that God tests people to discover what they will do? (eg Gen 22:12) Does he believe that God changes his mind and alters his plans as he relates to his creatures? (1 Sam 2:30) The meaning of such texts has been debated for centuries and I know what trouble they cause interpreters like him. He worries that, if he were to repent, it might not be possible to trust God. But,

Roger, God is faithful to his plan, even when he alters it, as when he offers to start afresh with Moses and give up on the Israelites. God's faithfulness to his promises is flexible not rigid. I want people to see the biblical truth and not resist it. The texts which he appeals to, in order to unseat me, do more damage to him than to me. The tables have turned on him.

What is the point Roger hopes to make? It is not easy to detect. He appears to think that for some reason our interpretation of these verses which seems so plausible "cannot (in his words) be anything but false." Why is that? Because it depicts God making "false" statements. My reply is, "No it does not." God is free to say what he will do under plan A and then what he will do under plan B, should it arise. Roger is bringing alien assumptions to these texts. He is forcing them to pass through the sieve of his system. My interpretation is a sincere and plausible response to the texts and not (as he would charge) a violation of them.

One can see the bias in Roger's saying that (contrary to Genesis 18) "it is preposterous to imagine that God's administration of justice in the case of Sodom was dependent on the number of righteous people in the city." Yet this is exactly what the text says, or seems to say. Who is violating inerrancy here? He seems to be telling us not to trust Genesis because he knows better. The Bible tells us that God tested Abraham to see what he would do, but (lo and behold) according to Roger, God did not need to do this because he knew that already. Whereas Exodus says that God changed his mind in response to Moses' prayers, Roger says "no! We cannot believe that (for other extra textual reasons). In the very texts intended to show my unfaithfulness to Scripture, Roger exposes the unbiblical character of his own thought. What irony!

In a strange section of his report, Roger makes fun of taking Scripture seriously and resorts to ridicule. He lists the terrible things that have happened on account of the God's taking the risk of giving creatures significant freedom. Tragedies have arisen from man's refusal to respond to God's call: the fall into sin, murder in the second generation, evil in the time of Noah, confusing the tongues at Babel, etc. Roger goes on to ridicule the God of open theism who is pained by all these things. "What a poor record this risk taking God has," Roger sneers. Then he says: "I would sooner say this was God's plan from the start." Rather than recognising the tragic character of history, Roger says he would rather believe that God ordained every tragedy to his glory, in spite of the way the Bible views these things. In place of the bumbler God of open theism (as he sees it), he would rather have a monster God.

Such mysteries deserve (do they not?) greater humility and respect of the other. I wish that Roger would see that we are both struggling to handle challenging biblical material and that neither of us is "violating" biblical inerrancy. Both of us are seeking to understand biblical texts. The main difference is that Roger, though he has no reason to be, is much more dogmatic than I am about being right, even to the point of expelling me on the strength of it, whereas I do not rule his interpretations out altogether as possible. His views have a history, they have a certain logic. I do not rule them out but he does rule mine out. The fact is that I hold no views in my open theism which are knowingly

incompatible with biblical inerrancy. Roger thinks that I do, but that is only his opinion. It is no better or worse than my opinion that his Calvinism denies text after text and no more relevant to his or to my membership.

3. Roger hopes that predictive prophetic passages of Scripture and how I handle them will prove to be my downfall. As a theological determinist, Roger has an easy time of it. He can wield the assumption of divine exhaustive definite foreknowledge, based on the further assumption of an all-controlling divine sovereignty, in his interpretation of such predictions. Roger's deity needs to fore-know nothing - he only has to consult his pre-temporal decree. For my part, I cannot interpret the Bible's predictive prophecies in this way because I do not find the Bible teaching either of his assumptions - either that divine sovereignty is meticulous or that divine foreknowledge is exhaustive and definite.¹⁸

But that does not mean that I, as a free will theist, have no exegetical options. The situation is far from (what Roger calls it) "catastrophic." Predictions can be understood in several ways. They may be statements of what God intends to do, unconditionally. They may be conditional declarations of what God will (or will not do) depending on the circumstances. They may be inferences based on God's knowledge of the past and present. Such principles as these allow me to interpret biblical predictions without denying that aspects of the future remain indefinite. I am not saying it is always easy determining how to handle a text, only that we do our best.

In a section dealing with these matters, Roger calls attention to a page in Most Moved Mover where I say that prophecies sometimes go "unfulfilled." God is free in the matter of fulfilment. We should not make predictions more precise than they are. I quote myself in my defence: "God is free in the manner of fulfilling prophecy and is not bound to a script, even his own. The world is a project and God works on it creatively; he is free to strike out in new directions. We cannot pin the free God down."¹⁹

Roger mentions a prediction in Daniel chapter 11, which he thinks is so detailed in his forecasting that it presupposes God's possession of exhaustive definite foreknowledge. I suppose he is saying that an open theist cannot revere this oracle because his presuppositions prevent it. So I must be violating the doctrinal statement of the ETS in this case (this is typical of his line of arguments - anything will do!) First, I do respect the inerrancy of Daniel chapter 11, whether he thinks I can or not. Second, the problem is reduced if one assumes a late date for the book (like my professor, F. F. Bruce did and most scholars do). In that case, the events forecasted are much nearer at hand. Though presented as if given in the distant future, many scholars agree that the writer is using an accepted literary form which would have deceived no one. The temporal standpoint of the writer is revealed by the increasing detail in the account from vv 21-35. If the passage were composed nearer to the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, around 165 BC, then the prediction is not as remarkable, as Roger (and Ware) are suggesting. It may even beg the question. Roger dates the book early in order to find "evidence" for a detailed prediction to use against me, while I date it late to avoid it. In any event, this uncertainty regarding the date undercuts any confident appeal to it in this context.

This operation is an attempt to pass off what is a hermeneutical difference as if it were a violation of biblical inerrancy. It is a category mistake and Roger's effort to make it stick is weak at best. His arguments are mostly indirect, contrived, and unnatural. If this were an ETS paper, it would embarrass the Society and, as the basis of a charge, it will not do. Both Roger and I believe that we have compelling biblical interpretations but we both have to negotiate the proof texts put forward by the other. This is because the Bible (from the Greek "books") presents diverse perspectives and does not readily line up on one side. This means (I think) that God is inviting us to think things through as his grown up sons and daughters. It is not, as it can be in the fundamentalist mindset, that there is only one way to look at issues like these. It is more like what Paul says: "Think over what I say and the Lord will give you understanding in all things."²⁰

Conclusion

Expulsion is one thing, but an unfair expulsion is another. I detect unfairness in Roger's pretense that this is an issue of biblical inerrancy, when it is an issue of biblical interpretation. I object to his exaggerating the threat which the open view is supposed to pose to evangelical thought, as if it were a heretical novelty, when it is in fact, a legitimate variant of Wesleyan thought. I take exception to his allegations that my interpretations are illegitimate, when they are every bit as good as his own and maybe better. It will be a sad day if I am expelled from the ETS on these charges. I am on trial here, but in a way, so is the ETS itself. I hope that we may yet step back from the brink to which Roger's motion has taken us. The easiest way to step back would be for Roger to withdraw his unconsidered motion. He has placed the Society in a no-win situation. If I am ejected, some members will bolt and if I am not ejected others will bolt. The blame lies on Roger - he is ruining the ETS. What a sad climax to his career. I could resign myself (I suppose) since I know when I am not wanted. But I find it difficult to resign in face of an ill considered charge. Roger has made it hard for me. Were his charge convincing, it would be different. Asking me to resign (as Grudem once did and others) tends to confirm my suspicion that critics know that their case against me is weak.

Perhaps Timothy George can help: "In the course of his long and sometimes bitter dispute with his former fellow-traveller Rudolf Bultmann, Karl Barth once said that the best answer to a bad theology is a better one. Perhaps a better theology of God will emerge from this present debate. In the meantime, Thomas Oden, an Arminian theologian who has encouraged free discussion of openness ideas while showing no sympathy for them, has said that those given to the fantasy of divine ignorance of the future should be resisted with charity. Charitable resistance is a hard thing to come by among evangelicals for whom the more usual expedients in theological controversy are either uncritical toleration or raucous denunciation. But charitable resistance is just what we need right now."²¹

¹ Darrell Bock, Purpose Driven Theology: Getting our Priorities Right in Evangelical Controversies (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 7-8.

² Grudem in Beyond the Bounds: Open Theism and the Undermining of Biblical Christianity, edited by John Piper, Justin Taylor, and Paul Helseth (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2003), 340.

³ Grudem in Beyond the Bounds, 359,

⁴ Glenn Scorgie, “When we differ sharply: Pursuing truth and preserving community” ETS paper, 2001.

⁵ Grudem in Piper et al 352. Nicole should take note that biblical feminism is another matter on which Grudem desires a new boundary. Grudem in Piper et al 359.

⁶ Roger E. Olson, Mosaic of Christian Belief: Twenty Centuries of Unity and Diversity (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 194-96.

⁷ In John Frame, No Other God.

⁸ Randy Maddox, “Seeking a Response-able God: The Wesleyan Tradition and Process Theology,” Thy Nature and Thy Name is Love: Wesleyan and Process Theologies in Dialogue, edited by Bryan P. Stone and Thomas J. Oord (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 2001), ch 5.

⁹ The irony with Socinus is that, had he not denied the trinity but stuck to his views of divine foreknowledge, he might now have been widely credited instead of being mostly maligned. His denial of the trinity nullified what could have been a real contribution.

¹⁰ Davis in Piper et al ch 4.

¹¹ Bruce A. Ware, God's Lesser Glory: The Diminished God of Open Theism (Crossway Books, 2000), ch 2 and John S. Feinberg, No One Like Him: The Doctrine of God (Crossway, 2001), ch 15.

¹² Chris Hall and John Sanders show us a rather better way to deal with our differences over open theism. They practice dialogical virtues. Does God have a future? A debate on Divine Providence (Baker Academic, 2003), ch 36-37.

¹³ In the spirit of Roger E. Olson, The Mosaic of Christian Belief: Twenty Centuries of Unity and Diversity, 11-27. He seeks a both-and rather than an either-or theology.

¹⁴ Noted by Grudem in Beyond the Bounds, 349.

¹⁵ The Chicago Statement goes into much more detail on these matters.

¹⁶ Wellum, "The Inerrancy of Scripture" in Beyond the Bounds, ch 7.

¹⁷ Frame, No Other God: A Response to Open Theism (P & R Publishing, 2001), 205-7.

¹⁸ All Arminians reject meticulous divine sovereignty because it rules out a moral universe and open theists also reject exhaustive definite foreknowledge because of texts which present God as facing a future not altogether settled. Everyone knows that the Bible often presents God as uncertain about the future but only open theists pay attention to this fact. Is it not a violation of inerrancy to pass over such texts and not to hear them? Eg Num 14:11, Hos 8:5, Is 5:4, Jer 3:6-7, etc.

¹⁹ I was leaning on Stephen Travis here - I Believe in the Second Coming of Christ (Eerdmans, 1982), ch 4.

²⁰ Roger is more of a modernist in his epistemology than I. He thinks he can come up with absolute truths unaffected by his own subjectivity. Whereas I am much more modest in what I can conclude. Nancey Murphy shows how modern and postmodern philosophy affect such altercations as this one. Beyond Liberalism and Fundamentalism (Trinity Press International, 1996), 2, 15, 28.

²¹ Timothy George in First Things June/July 2003 p. 8. I recall Mouw calling for a hermeneutic of charity. Usually there is a reason why positions are advanced.