

Metaphysics, Meaning, and the Fourfold Sense: Assessing the Christian Platonist Hermeneutic

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INTRODUCTION

Among those advocating for a return to premodern hermeneutics, two of the most vocal scholars are Hans Boersma and Craig Carter, both of whom advocate for spiritual interpretation grounded in a Christian Platonist metaphysic.¹ In particular, both Boersma and Carter argue for a form of Christian Platonism which they call “sacramental ontology,” according to which all of creation participates in God sacramentally. Because Scripture participates in God sacramentally, it must be read spiritually. Thus, Boersma and Carter both argue that we ought to read Scripture according to the fourfold sense, though they differ in how to do so. Carter emphasizes that all spiritual senses derive from, depend on, and deepen the literal, while Boersma focuses on meditatively seeking the sacramental presence of Christ in *lectio divina*, which results in a fourfold reading. Though Boersma and Carter are cobelligerents in the Christian Platonist cause, both their metaphysics and their hermeneutics differ at significant points. I will first examine each author’s metaphysic and hermeneutic, demonstrating that

each, in his own way, practices the kind of metaphysically grounded reading he commends. The Christian Platonist use of the fourfold sense stands or falls on metaphysical grounds. After evaluating each position, I conclude that while both proposals helpfully resist naturalistic reductionism, neither fully resolves the tension between spiritual interpretation and determinate meaning — and that “Christian Platonism” itself may be too broad a category to bear the hermeneutical weight placed upon it.

HANS BOERSMA

Sacramental Ontology

Let’s begin with Hans Boersma’s Christian Platonist hermeneutic, for the simple reason that Craig Carter himself states that Boersma’s sacramental ontology is “essentially the same” as his (Carter’s) Christian Platonism.² Additionally, Boersma develops his sacramental ontology with greater precision and detail than Carter does, making his work a more natural starting point.

Both Boersma and Carter begin their definitions of Christian Platonism by describing what its opposite is. Thus, Christian Platonism is understood by its opposition to naturalism, mechanism, nominalism, relativism, and skepticism.³ Thus, the world exists by participation in God.⁴ For Boersma, this means that God’s relationship to the world is one of real sacramental presence. Most recently, he has articulated this as God’s being “embodied” in creation⁵ by means of the divine energies (i.e., according to the Palamite essence-energies distinction).⁶ Boersma thus argues that creation is not only *ex nihilo* but also *ex deo*.⁷ Creation does not possess its own independent being, but is a “theophanic manifestation” of God’s own being in an “inferior mode.”⁸ Indeed, creation is simply God appearing in a creaturely mode.⁹ The Christian Platonist metaphysic is therefore “a kind of pan-en-theism”¹⁰ in which God provides the form and immaterial substance for all created being.¹¹ Yet this does not eliminate the Creator-creature distinction, for God does so only by means of the divine energies, and even then, the participatory relationship is analogical.¹² Nonetheless, it is still right to speak of creation as a divine embodiment since the energies are “God himself” yet are distinct from the essence.¹³ Because of this, every

interaction with the created world is a supernaturally charged event: it is an encounter with God's own transcendent being and sacramental presence.¹⁴

Boersma distinguishes his sacramental view of creation from one which would see the created world merely as a sign pointing away from itself toward the creator. A sign, Boersma argues, does not possess the reality to which it points.¹⁵ The yellow diamond with an image of a deer warning me that such creatures might cross the road is not imbued with "deer-ness," nor is the reality of deer (whether a particular deer or the universal) in any sense present in the sign.¹⁶ Creation, Boersma argues, is not like this. Instead, it is a sacrament in which the reality to which it points (God) really *inheres* it.¹⁷ Indeed, God and creation "co-inhere" and are "mystically entwined" with one another, as do all sacraments and the realities to which they point.¹⁸ Thus, the world is suffused with God's real sacramental presence.

In his earlier work (through at least 2018's *Seeing God*), Boersma denied the essence-energies distinction,¹⁹ and he did not begin employing the specific language of "panentheism" until 2023.²⁰ However, Boersma has long held that God inheres creation sacramentally, which, apart from the essence-energies distinction, would result in a *stronger* panentheism than that which he now espouses. By employing the essence-energies distinction, Boersma is now able to maintain his doctrine of God's sacramental presence in its strongest sense (panentheism) without entwining God's essence itself with creation. Whether the essence-energies distinction itself holds or is compatible with divine simplicity and other doctrines of classical theism is another question. Yet it provides his Christian Platonist metaphysic with an anchor in tradition and allows him to affirm the maximal poles of God's transcendence (in essence) and immanence (in energies).

Scripture as Real Presence: Boersma's Sacramental Hermeneutic

Boersma's doctrine of Scripture is fundamentally informed by his understanding of the God-world relationship.²¹ For Boersma, Scripture is a place of Christ's sacramental presence. In fact, it is just Christ's sacramental presence that makes Scripture God's Word.²² This means that Scripture is another embodiment of the Logos, like the rest of creation.²³ However, Scripture is a more intense locus of Christ's sacramental presence, since it participates in him more perfectly than does creation generally.²⁴ To say that Christ's sacramental presence is in all of creation implies that Christ's

sacramental presence is in every book, but Boersma could not be clearer that Scripture is “unlike any other book”—“the Scriptures are holy, set aside for a unique purpose.”²⁵ Moreover, Boersma repeatedly gives Scripture its own category as an embodiment of the Logos, implying that Christ’s presence in Scripture is more than a mere extension of his general presence in creation.²⁶

Boersma has become popular today as a proponent of “premodern” allegorical exegesis.²⁷ Boersma grounds such interpretation in the sacramental nature of Scripture, which is grounded in his broader sacramental ontology. The task of the interpreter is thus not primarily to understand the intended message of the text’s human author (what Boersma calls the “literal” or “historical” meaning of the text), but rather to spiritually encounter the presence of Christ himself who is mystically and sacramentally present in the text.²⁸ Interpretation is therefore not a matter of understanding authorial intent but of mystical communion or “encounter.”²⁹ The most important “meaning”³⁰ the text has for Christians is thus whatever leads to a spiritual sight of him. Such a mystical encounter with Christ is always beyond the literal/historical meaning, since “the real presence of the new Christ-reality [is] *hidden* within the *outward* sacrament of the biblical text.”³¹ Therefore, “biblical texts have multiple, even innumerable, meanings.”³² Nonetheless, these meanings must accord with the church’s creeds and overall tradition, since the same Logos who is sacramentally embodied in the Scripture and in the believer is embodied in the church as well.³³ In this way, a sacramental encounter between the believer and Christ in Scripture is mediated by Christ’s sacramental presence in the church.³⁴

The reader arrives at the mystical encounter with Christ in Scripture by means of *lectio divina* (divine reading). The process of *lectio divina* involves four steps: reading (*lectio*), meditation (*meditatio*), prayer (*oratio*), and contemplation (*contemplatio*). Each of these four steps corresponds to one of the four senses found in the *quadriga*, or fourfold sense: in reading, we discern the literal; in meditation, the allegorical; in prayer, the moral (tropological); and in contemplation, the anagogical.³⁵ Thus, Boersma argues, the good reader of Scripture first pays attention to its words, that is, the external trappings of the literal sense in which the deeper Christological meaning is hidden. Here, the reader confronts their slothfulness, disciplines themselves to pay close attention to each word of the text, and seeks the

historical meaning.³⁶ But a good reader will move beyond this in meditation, memorizing and repeating the Scriptures they read in order to engage their imagination to picture Christ in the words of the text, thereby discovering the allegorical sense.³⁷ Meditation is “the process of picturing the crucifixion (or some other biblical event) in our minds” so that we can ascend “from Scripture to contemplation.”³⁸ True meditation “aims beyond the words of the Bible,” making the text a vehicle for picturing Christ, especially Christ crucified.³⁹ After meditation, the reader ascends to the truly supernatural levels of interpretation: prayer and contemplation. In prayer, our whole selves are brought before God (the object of our meditation) and are painfully confronted with our sin and weakness.⁴⁰ This gives us the tropological sense, or the moral imperative of the text. Yet in this agonizing struggle to see the face of God, we are brought not only to grief, but also to joy and comfort as we arrive at the goal of our reading, contemplation of God himself. Here, the soul is caught up in ecstasy as it moves beyond a meditation on Christ’s humanity to a contemplation of his divinity itself. The full experience of contemplation is rare, but it is an encounter that transcends sense perception and brings the subject out of time and into eternity.⁴¹ Here, the contemplator encounters the anagogical sense of Scripture: the beatific vision itself.⁴²

For Boersma, the process of *lectio divina* is not a “method” but a “spiritual discipline.”⁴³ Thus, while one reads Scripture for all four of its senses, one cannot do so simply by applying steps in an interpretive formula. Instead, the four senses naturally arise out of the spiritual and mystical practices of reading, meditation, prayer, and contemplation. For this reason, the interpretive process does not yield merely one meaning, nor only four meanings (one for each sense), but several. “Meaning is not a static object that is ours to figure out, rather, meaning occurs in an encounter.”⁴⁴ A given text will therefore have infinite possible meanings, since there are an infinite number of potential encounters with the infinite God. Yet Boersma reminds us that while *lectio divina* is “inherently subjective and experiential,” it is not a purely subjective enterprise because it is “shaped by the church’s prior reading” of Scripture which “has safeguarded the truth of biblical witness to the living God.”⁴⁵ In this way, tradition mediates and safeguards the exegete’s sacramental encounter with Christ. The exegete must therefore submit themselves to the authorities of Scripture, tradition, the church,

and Christ, each of which is sacramentally present in the others (by means of their shared participation in Christ), such that all these authorities are in harmony.⁴⁶

CRAIG CARTER

Christian Platonism as Reformed Thomism

Craig Carter's thesis is bold: "Christian Platonism is the theological metaphysic of the Great Tradition," and recovering it is key to reclaiming and preserving Nicene Orthodoxy.⁴⁷ So what is Christian Platonism? Carter begins by defining Platonism, before moving to the distinctly Christian character of "Christian Platonism." Like Boersma, Carter first provides a negative definition of Platonism: it is the opposite of naturalism. That is, all forms of Platonism "believe that true explanation always a top down, never a bottom-up, process and that the true explanatory framework will converge on the smallest possible number of principles."⁴⁸ Finally, Platonism is teleological, since all things participate in greater (purposeful) realities. So much is true of Platonism. But what of Christian Platonism? Christian Platonism's uniqueness lies in the fact that rather than being merely "sacramental" (like Platonism), it is "sacramental-historical."⁴⁹ That is, Christianity affirms not only that this world participates in greater eternal realities, but also that *in history* God created the world *ex nihilo* (marking the beginning of history) and then *entered* history by becoming incarnate in Jesus Christ. Now, God is gathering a people to himself (the church), and soon Christ will return to bring history to its final end.⁵⁰ If one denies the sacramental character of Christianity, Carter argues, they will end up a materialist. But if one denies Christianity's historicity, they will fall into Gnosticism. Theological liberals have already found themselves in one of these ditches (materialism), while Roman Catholics are continually tempted to veer into the other (Gnosticism). It is Reformed Christianity—specifically, "Reformed Thomism," that, according to Carter, best maintains the Christian Platonism of the Great Tradition.⁵¹

So just how does Carter's Christian Platonism work? Is his version of sacramental participation merely anti-naturalism, or is it a fuller proposal like Boersma's panentheism? Though Carter states that his Christian Platonism mirrors Boersma's sacramental ontology,⁵² his metaphysical claims

are much more modest. For Carter, Christianity “is sacramental because it holds to the reality of universals, which Thomas Aquinas understood to be ideas in the mind of God.” Thus, creation participates in God both by way of participation in created universals (in God’s mind), and by way of *being created*, participating in God as its source and ground of existence.⁵³ In particular, Carter defends a version of Christian Platonism which he calls “scholastic realism” or “Reformed Thomism.”⁵⁴ Because Reformed Thomism locates universals in the mind of God, it is able to solve the impasse between Plato and Aristotle: universals are outside creation, in God’s mind (Plato), but particular objects, designed as they are by the same God, really do participate in and correspond to those universals.⁵⁵

Before we turn to Carter’s hermeneutic, it is worth noting that Boersma criticizes Aquinas for limiting participation merely to causality and correspondence (the two features stressed by Carter), indicating that Carter’s Christian Platonism is more circumscribed than Boersma’s sacramental ontology.⁵⁶ Nonetheless, Carter’s Christian Platonism also results in a fourfold reading of Scripture, and to that we now turn.

Craig Carter and the Fourfold Sense

In many ways, Craig Carter’s Christian Platonism exists for the goal of hermeneutics. The twin aims of his project are (1) to recover the Classical Theism of Nicene Orthodoxy, and (2) to bring academic hermeneutical theory in line with the best of evangelical (and Great Tradition) preaching.⁵⁷ Each of these, Carter argues, requires some kind of Christian Platonist metaphysic, whether the Reformed Thomism he holds or a comparable variation that can still maintain the principles of Ur-Platonism.⁵⁸ The focus of this essay is Carter’s attempt to revise modern hermeneutics, particularly by the employment of the fourfold sense. The first issue, therefore, is how Carter’s metaphysic affects his doctrine of Scripture.

The first thesis in Carter’s doctrine of Scripture is that the Bible is divinely inspired. This means that in interpreting Scripture, we must consider not only the human authorial intent, but the divine authorial intent as well.⁵⁹ Carter emphasizes that such a doctrine of Scripture is only possible thanks to Christian Platonism’s denial of naturalism. According to Carter, texts of Scripture may be either by miracle, providence, or both. In the miraculous category, Carter places those texts in which the human author

saw a vision, or heard the voice of the Lord directly. These texts fall under a “dictation” theory of inspiration.⁶⁰ Those Scriptures in which the human author did research, interviewed eyewitnesses, and then wrote, or those parts of the text that were compiled, redacted, and supplemented by editors fall under providential inspiration. Nonetheless, all the texts of Scripture, whether inspired by providence or miracle, are fully inspired and result in a text that is exactly as intended by God.⁶¹

The miraculous aspect of inspiration prevents reducing the biblical message to only what its human authors could have known or consciously intended based on their historical milieu. Not only that, but both kinds of inspiration prevent identifying the meaning of Scripture exclusively with what its human author(s) intended: dictation (miracle) only requires that God intended the message of the text (not the human author), while editorial revision prevents identifying the meaning of the text with a single human author, and therefore with a single human author’s intent.⁶² In other words, a “single meaning” approach to Scripture fails, because such an approach cannot help but identify the meaning with the human author.⁶³ Thus, a richer hermeneutic which seeks the divine authorial intent, rather than merely the human, is necessary.

To discover the divine intent of the text, Carter proposes that we seek Christ in the OT in a number of ways, ranging from identifying direct fulfillment of messianic prophecies, to fourfold interpretation, to prosopological exegesis.⁶⁴ Though fourfold interpretation is listed as one option among five for seeing Christ, it seems to function more as an umbrella term for the other four, since these others all involve Christological reading (allegory), as well as moral application (tropology), and an orientation to future hope (anagogy).⁶⁵ Each of these five approaches must be rooted in the “literal sense,” which Carter defines as “the divine author’s intended meaning as communicated through the human author’s words.”⁶⁶ This is a little confusing, since Carter frequently states that the fuller or spiritual sense (which seems to be the sense intended by the divine author) is “an extension or expansion of the literal sense.”⁶⁷ Despite this inconsistency, Carter ultimately concludes that the “plain sense” of the text (both its literal and spiritual meaning) is the divine authorial intent, which is “the meaning of the text as embedded in the chapter, book, testament and canon as a whole.”⁶⁸ Each of the five methods for finding Christ, then, is legitimate

whenever it can defensibly be linked to the “literal sense,” (as an expansion or otherwise) within the context of the canon as a whole, regardless of human authorial intent.⁶⁹ Yet in one way or another, every text in Scripture has a spiritual sense (or four senses), which are objectively in the text and just need to be rightly discerned.⁷⁰

Carter recognizes that the hermeneutic he proposes could be twisted to make Scripture’s meaning indeterminate. Therefore, in addition to a grounding in the literal sense, proper interpretation must be connected to “the ontological reality of Jesus Christ” who as the fulfillment of the Scriptures provides “the basis of the objectivity of the literal sense.”⁷¹ Christ, as he is revealed in the whole canon of Scripture by the Holy Spirit, is the ultimate subject (*skopos*) of Scripture, and the control on its meaning.⁷² Therefore, discerning Scripture’s Christological sense (the divine intent) requires not a neutral method employed upon the text, but a humble faith that submits itself to the text as an answerable subject. In other words, proper reading is a spiritual discipline. In this way, Scripture is able to correct our reading, our understanding of God, and our presuppositions, even while it is informed by them.⁷³

EVALUATION AND CRITIQUE

Thus far, I have surveyed two self-avowed Christian Platonists and their use of the fourfold sense. What are we to make of the results? I’ll begin by drawing some initial conclusions that apply to both authors, before evaluating each in more detail. First, it must be said that at least in their own approaches, both Boersma and Carter demonstrate their claims that hermeneutics is downstream from metaphysics. Whatever else one might say about their systems, it seems clear that Boersma’s hermeneutic is consistent with his metaphysic, as is Carter’s. Additionally, both men see God as the Bible’s ultimate author, and are thus most concerned with his intent. Though they perhaps differ on their definition of divine intent — Carter emphasizes divine *authorial* intent in canonical context, whereas Boersma focuses on God’s intent to make himself sacramentally present — both see God’s intent as ultimately determinative for Scripture’s meaning. This means that for both Carter and Boersma, Scripture is really about Christ. The spiritual sense(s) is not a tack-on to a more fundamental meaning, but the primary sense. In an

age when many academics either deny authorial intent entirely or struggle to integrate it into their hermeneutic, these emphases ought to be commended.

However, even the quick survey of the Christian Platonist positions presented here raises some issues. For one, it is readily apparent that Christian Platonism is a very broad concept. While there are some similarities in their aim and general outlook, Boersma and Carter appear to be doing radically different things, both in their metaphysics and their hermeneutics. If Christian Platonism encompasses both immaterial panentheism and Reformed Thomism, it is not clear to me that it is a meaningful metaphysical concept. It is true that both Boersma's panentheism and Carter's Reformed Thomism are opposed to naturalism, but beyond that the similarities are not obvious. Divine embodiment in creation (Boersma) is a far cry from correspondence between particular creatures and ideas in the mind of God (Carter). When it comes to hermeneutics, this situation repeats itself. Though both approaches seek Christ, Boersma's does so via a mystical encounter with his sacramental presence in one of Scripture's infinite possible meanings, whereas Carter seeks Christ via a limited number of objective, intended meanings—those of the divine author, revealed in the canon as a whole. Additionally, Boersma makes the Great Tradition's communal experience of Christ the guardrail against improper interpretation, which Carter explicitly rejects as heretical.⁷⁴ It seems to me that it might be better to define the similarities between Boersma and Carter's metaphysics negatively (e.g., "anti-naturalism" or "anti-nominalism") or generically (e.g., "supernaturalism," "realism," or "spiritual interpretation") rather than with a technical term ("Christian Platonism") that suggests more affinity than the positions within it actually share. In the end, I fear that "Christian Platonism" is a label that obscures more than it illumines, both in metaphysics and in hermeneutics.

With Boersma's proposal specifically, there are yet more serious problems. First and foremost, it seems that his sacramental ontology reduces Scripture's uniqueness to one of degree, not of kind. Boersma states that Scripture is God's Word, precisely because Christ, the Word, is sacramentally present in it. Yet Boersma also claims that Christ is sacramentally present everywhere. In other words, that which makes Scripture unique is not divine inspiration, but a common metaphysical feature of the whole cosmos. Of course, Boersma does believe that Scripture is unique—but he repeatedly states

that the uniqueness of Christ's embodiment in various places is merely one of degree, not one of kind.⁷⁵ Thus, Scripture's uniqueness would have to be reduced to its being a sort of hotbed of sacramental presence, meaning that the encounters with the reality of Christ possible in its pages are clearer and more intense. But in theory, the same kind of sacramental encounter is possible anywhere—even other books—because the same Christ who is embodied in Scripture is sacramentally present everywhere.⁷⁶

Secondly, Boersma's assertion that biblical texts have infinite possible meanings threatens to bring about interpretive chaos where any interpretation is legitimate. The literal sense cannot provide the necessary guardrail, since the spiritual sense must go beyond it.⁷⁷ Boersma recognizes this issue, and so he limits legitimate meanings to those which are mediated by the experience of the church throughout history—the tradition. But this simply raises the question: which tradition? The history of the church is filled with vehement controversies from the patristic era to our own, and Boersma's proposal would leave us without a way to adjudicate between them. A living voice of the tradition—a magisterium⁷⁸—is therefore necessary. Boersma is familiar with this implication—it is the very conclusion he finds in Yves Congar, one of his major influences, when Congar was advocating for a similar position to the one Boersma now espouses.⁷⁹ Though Boersma notes that Congar opposed an “active magisterium,” he nonetheless maintained that a magisterium was necessary to receive and adjudicate what belongs in the tradition and what does not.⁸⁰ Short of such a living and authoritative voice speaking on behalf of the tradition, the guardrail Boersma proposes collapses, bringing us crashing back into subjectivism. Those who do not desire either postmodern reader-response interpretation and will not accept a magisterial authority therefore cannot embrace Boersma's hermeneutic.⁸¹

Finally, Boersma's panentheistic metaphysic threatens to blur the Creator-creature distinction by collapsing all created being into God. Though Boersma believes that the essence-energies distinction sufficiently wards against this, I am unconvinced. Here, I am simply raising the issue, as I hope to provide more substantial engagement with Boersma's pantheism in future articles.

Carter's Christian Platonism differs from Boersma's substantially, and in very welcome ways. Metaphysically, Carter follows Thomas Aquinas in identifying participation as correspondence to ideas in the mind

of God, thereby refusing to equate God's being with the being of the world. And hermeneutically, Carter insists that all Scripture's spiritual senses develop from, and must be grounded in, its literal sense. I am thankful for Carter's insistence on these issues, and in the main, I agree with his overall claim that the Bible is spiritual and must be read as the Word of God, according to his authorial intent. However, two issues give me pause: his handling of the miraculous/providential distinction in inspiration, and his underdeveloped account of how the restricted literal sense controls the spiritual.

To begin with, I worry that the division Carter draws between miraculous and providential inspiration is overdrawn. This would be a minor point, if it did not have downstream effects on Carter's hermeneutic. When he comes to texts that are "miraculously inspired" (e.g., by dictation or vision), Carter seems to set the human authorial intent aside. This is especially a problem when Carter employs prosopological exegesis. If Christ is the one speaking, in say, Psalm 40, then it is irrelevant whether David meant anything by the Psalm—he simply overheard and reported the voice of Christ. One only needs to turn to the NT, identify Christ as the proper speaker, and listen to his voice in canonical context.⁸² In my view, this opens too wide a gap between human authorial intent and divine authorial intent, which opens the door to the same kind of "anything goes" atmosphere Boersma's hermeneutic falls into. If the NT sets the pattern for our reading of the OT (as Carter agrees it does), then a hermeneutical method which divorces certain texts from their literary and historical contexts by presenting them as eternal divine speech opens a fairly wide door for modern interpreters to smuggle their own meanings into the text. This is not to say that God does not speak miraculously or directly in the Bible—far from it! Yet it is important to recognize that even when the Bible's human authors received supernatural revelation, they still made intentional choices regarding the presentation, structure, and delivery of that material for their own audience and future generations. Thus, every biblical text—no matter how "ordinary" or "supernatural" the mode of revelation seems—is concursively inspired, such that both human and divine authorial intentions are fully operative in the communicative act. While the meaning the divine author intends may go further than the human author's (which it certainly does, since God's speech to us is the full canon)—it is nonetheless

rooted in, and a flowering of, the human intent. This means we cannot ever brush past the text's original intent in its immediate and epochal contexts, even as we press on toward its full meaning in the canonical context.⁸³

Related to this, I found myself both appreciative of and yet unsatisfied with Carter's articulation of the relationship between the literal and spiritual senses. Part of this is due to some inconsistency in Carter's use of the terms (especially literal sense). As noted earlier, sometimes Carter defines the literal sense as the divine author's intent in the context of the full canon of Scripture, while elsewhere he uses it to mean the historical sense (or perhaps human author's intent) out of which the spiritual sense must develop. Yet in reality, this inconsistency reflects a commendable effort to keep literal and spiritual sense united. Carter appears to hold to two literal senses: the restricted literal sense, identifiable with the text's historical meaning, and the "extended literal sense," identifiable with the "spiritual sense" or the divine author's intended meaning as revealed by the whole canon.⁸⁴ However, it is not clear what relationship the restricted/historical sense has with the extended literal sense in Carter's work. Carter repeatedly discounts human authorial intent as insufficient for establishing Scripture's meaning. Insofar as Carter simply means that human authorial intent cannot establish Scripture's *full* meaning, it is a point well taken. But Carter also claims that the human author's intent is not determinative for the text's historical meaning, and he never rehabilitates the relationship between human authorial intent and historical meaning such that the restricted literal sense can control the spiritual sense.⁸⁵ Perhaps this was beyond his project.

Nonetheless, I believe it is essential to demonstrate that even in the text's historical meaning there is an open-endedness toward future revelation. In other words, I believe it is possible, using textual evidence, to demonstrate that the human authors of Scripture *intended* for their message to be developed further by the divine author, as he brought redemptive history to its culmination.⁸⁶ One cannot simply say that the spiritual sense is grounded in the literal while laying human authorial intent aside. Though a given human author's intent may not be exhaustive (e.g., because of inspired editors or compilers who arranged the text later), it is nonetheless vitally connected to the text's historical meaning, such that the full meaning brought about by the divine author must be a development of and expansion

upon that which the human author intended. This doesn't make God a servant of the human author, because the original human author wrote under inspiration—the human intent is subsumed into the divine intent, since the human being intended exactly what God wanted them to intend (including openness to or even foreshadowing of future development by God). Apart from at least some grounding in the intent of the OT's human authors, the apostolic hermeneutic could be guilty of turning the OT into a wax nose, thereby licensing us to do the same. And once this occurs, we are not far from the dilemma Boersma's hermeneutic entails, in which either subjectivism or a magisterium must reign.

CONCLUSION

There is much to affirm in the Christian Platonist retrieval of the fourfold sense. Both Hans Boersma and Craig Carter rightly insist that the Scriptures are written by God, about Jesus Christ, and addressed to his people. In this way, Christian Platonism rightly pushes against the naturalistic tendencies of modern hermeneutics. Yet general resistance to naturalism is not sufficient to establish either a metaphysic or a hermeneutic. Adopting a "Christian Platonist" use of the fourfold sense can mean anything from a mystical reading of Christ's sacramental presence in Scripture based in pantheism (Boersma), to Carter's Reformed approach which sees the literal and spiritual senses as nearly one, such that spiritual reading is simply an extension of literal reading. Moreover, both proposals undermine Scripture's objectivity, and therefore its authority. Boersma does this openly, granting Scripture as many meanings as there are possible encounters with Christ—that is to say, infinite meanings—so long as these encounters are mediated by the traditional experience of the church. Carter, by contrast, labors to avoid this pitfall yet still leaves the door open due to an impoverished account of inspiration and a lack of clarity regarding the relationship between human and divine authorial intent. Scripture must have a determinative meaning if it is to lay claim on us and draw us to repentance. When the meaning of Scripture is made subjective, it must surrender its authority either to each interpreter, or to a magisterium adjudicating between competing subjective interpretations. A truly Christian metaphysic and a right Christian hermeneutic must build on the anti-naturalism of Christian Platonism while

pressing toward greater specificity normed by Scripture. In particular, a right hermeneutic requires a strong doctrine of concursive inspiration, accounting for the ways in which both human and divine authors intended all that they wrote, toward a single objective meaning that would only reach its fullness with the completion of the sending of the Son and Spirit and the closing of the canon. Such a hermeneutic requires both an asymmetrical account of authorial intent in which the divine author intends all that the human author intends and more, while the human author intends their work to be part of a greater unfolding story, such that all the fullness the divine author brings expands and develops the human author's open-ended eschatological intent.⁸⁷ This article alone cannot settle the question of whether evangelical Christians ought to recover the fourfold sense. Nor can a brief survey of Christian Platonism address all the questions necessary for a Christian metaphysic. Yet whatever answers we bring to these questions, we must refuse both the naturalism that flattens Scripture into merely human words and the subjectivism that dissolves its meaning into ours. The God who spoke concursively through human authors intends to be heard — and can be.

¹ Though others have adopted the term “Christian Platonism” both in academic work and the blogosphere, Boersma and Carter are two of the leading proponents of rooting theological hermeneutics in a Christian Platonist metaphysic. See, e.g., Paul M. Gould, “Christian Metaphysics and Platonism,” in *Four Views on Christian Metaphysics*, ed. Timothy M. Mosteller (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2022); James Matthew Wilson, *The Vision of the Soul: Truth, Goodness, and Beauty in the Western Tradition* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2017), 97–107; James Bryson, “A Vision of Christian Platonism,” *The North American Anglican*, September 29, 2020, <https://northamanglican.com/a-vision-of-christian-platonism/>; *Christian Platonism: A History*, ed. Alexander J. B. Hampton and John Peter Kenney (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2021). Gould proposes that a “Christian Platonic metaphysic [is] the best overall metaphysical theory,” in contrast to other forms of Platonism and articulations of Christianity according to other metaphysical theories. For Gould, the fundamental insight of Christian Platonism is its account of the relationship between abstract objects (understood as divine ideas) and the physical world. Wilson, by contrast, focuses his book on Christian Platonism's role in western culture (particularly in its teaching on the soul's natural desire for transcendental beauty and truth), and the need to reclaim it for political and social conservatism. Bryson's work is a review of Wilson's book, but he spends as much of his time articulating his own forthcoming view (which emphasizes the sacramental character of Christian Platonism), as he does reviewing Wilson. Hampton and Kenney provide a monumental, edited volume, which though made up primarily of historical description, is also intended for prescriptive ressourcement in the present day. These are only examples, to say nothing of the Cambridge Platonists and others. None of these four approaches need to be at odds with each other — though they are not necessarily fully compatible either. I only intend to demonstrate that proposals of “Christian Platonism” are wide-ranging, occurring in various disciplines (historical, philosophical, theological, political, cultural, and artistic), and may or may not be related to one another. It is therefore necessary to delimit the conversation to one form or articulation of Christian Platonism. Other authors, such as Matthew Levering, also advocate a return to exegesis based on premodern participatory metaphysics. However, Levering does not refer to his project as “Christian Platonism” in any publication that I am aware of, and for that reason I have excluded him from this study. Nonetheless, both Boersma and Carter cite his work favorably as

a project that parallels their own. See Matthew Levering, *Participatory Biblical Exegesis: A Theology of Biblical Interpretation* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2008).

- 2 Craig A. Carter, *Contemplating God with the Great Tradition: Recovering Trinitarian Classical Theism* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2021), 8n19. It is worth noting that Carter wrote this in 2021, prior to many of Boersma's publications which I reference in this article.
- 3 This negative definition of Christian Platonism is drawn from Lloyd P. Gerson, *From Plato to Platonism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013), 9–19. For its use by both Carter and Boersma, see Craig A. Carter, *Interpreting Scripture with the Great Tradition: Recovering the Genius of Premodern Exegesis* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2018), 79–84; Hans Boersma, *Five Things Theologians Wish Biblical Scholars Knew* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2021), 43; cf. Robert Lyon, "What Is Christian Platonism? (Part 1): An Introduction in Three Steps," *Christ Over All*, August 5, 2024.
- 4 Hans Boersma, *Heavenly Participation: The Weaving of a Sacramental Tapestry* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011), passim; Carter, *Interpreting Scripture with the Great Tradition*, 61–91.
- 5 Hans Boersma, "God as Embodied: Christology and Participation in Maximus the Confessor," *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 67, no. 1–2 (2023): 147–175; "Participatory Metaphysics and Creation Out of God," *Heythrop Journal* 66 (2025): 273.
- 6 Hans Boersma, "Modernity and God-Talk," *First Things*, October 21, 2025, <https://firstthings.com/modernity-and-god-talk/>.
- 7 Boersma, "Participatory Metaphysics and Creation Out of God."
- 8 Boersma, "Participatory Metaphysics and Creation Out of God," 271, 274.
- 9 Hans Boersma, "A Metaphysic of Love: God Beyond Being," *New Ressourcement* 3, no. 1 (2026): 216–40.
- 10 Boersma, "God as Embodied," 174.
- 11 Boersma, "A Metaphysic of Love," 218, 220. Boersma states that particulars do not have their own substances, rather, they exist merely as relative manifestations of God's own substance. At the same time, Boersma denies substance metaphysics entirely, preferring to speak of love as more fundamental than being. Nonetheless, God's sacramental is that which makes the creature what it is. Cf. Boersma, "Participatory Metaphysics and Creation Out of God," 266–74, in which Boersma criticizes Thomas Aquinas for being unwilling to admit that God is the formal cause of created beings, indicating that he ought to have accepted that "God himself [is] the real presence that makes the creature what it is" (267). Likewise, Boersma criticizes materialism as such, that is, the idea that matter exists or that things have potentiality in themselves, apart from the direct agency of God (268–274). Combined with Boersma's claim that the immaterial substance of creation emanates from God by an act of the divine will (269), it appears that Boersma's claim is that God, in His energies, is in some sense the form and the substance of created being. He not only provides the creature form and substance as an efficient cause—Boersma criticizes Aquinas for limiting participation to this (266)—but in some sense provides them out of Himself (*ex deo*).
- 12 Boersma, "Participatory Metaphysics and Creation Out of God," 274.
- 13 Boersma, "Modernity and God-Talk"; "God as Embodied"; cf. John Meyendorff, introduction to *The Triads*, by Gregory Palamas (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1983), 7, 19.
- 14 Thus, in "Modernity and God-Talk," Boersma argues that without a sacramental pantheism grounded in the essence-energies distinction, we will be tempted to live *etsi Deus non daretur*—as if God did not exist. Boersma charges both traditional articulations of divine simplicity (i.e., that God is identical to his attributes) and a view of creation as a mere sign with reinforcing the modernist tendency to live as if God did not exist. Boersma, "Modernity and God-Talk." Boersma reiterates this on the about page of his personal website, stating "In modernity, we have come to see the world around us as nothing but symbols: material objects separate from each other and separate from their origin in God," Hans Boersma, "About," accessed March 28, 2026, <https://hansboersma.org/about>.
- 15 Hans Boersma, *Nouvelle Théologie and Sacramental Ontology: A Return to Mystery* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 141–143; *Heavenly Participation*, 22.
- 16 This is precisely the illustration Boersma uses in *Heavenly Participation*, 22–23.
- 17 Boersma, *Heavenly Participation*, 22–25. Here, Boersma first defines sacraments as signs which co-inhere, and are co-inherited by, the reality to which they point, and then claims that the whole world is a sacrament of God. Boersma reiterates this in several places, including the about page of his website. Hans Boersma, "About," accessed March 28, 2026, hansboersma.org/about; cf. Hans Boersma, "10 Questions with Hans Boersma: A Conversation about Metaphysics, Ressourcement, and the Local Church," *Credo Magazine* 12, no. 3 (December 5, 2022); Boersma, "Participatory Metaphysics and Creation Out of God," 265.

- 18 Boersma, *Heavenly Participation*, 22–23; *Seeing God: The Beatific Vision in the Christian Tradition* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2018), 99.
- 19 Boersma, *Seeing God*, 413. Boersma acknowledges this shift in his thinking in “Modernity and God-Talk.”
- 20 Boersma’s first use of the term, that I am aware of, is in “God as Embodied,” 174.
- 21 Boersma explicitly states that his understanding of the “relationship between God and the world” is a sacramental ontology. Boersma, *Heavenly Participation*, 21.
- 22 Boersma, *Five Things*, 38.
- 23 Hans Boersma, *Scripture as Real Presence: Sacramental Exegesis in the Early Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017), 115–116. Cf. also Boersma, “God as Embodied,” 153.
- 24 I have been unable to find a place where Boersma states this directly. However, it is everywhere implied in his writing.
- 25 Boersma, *Five Things*, 65; *Pierced by Love: Divine Reading with the Christian Tradition* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2023), 1. Boersma further notes that the terms “holy” and “divine” are interchangeable. Thus, in saying that Scripture is holy, Boersma is also saying that it is divine, ostensibly in a unique sense (*Pierced by Love*, 2).
- 26 Boersma, *Scripture as Real Presence*, 114, 116; “God as Embodied,” 153, etc.
- 27 Boersma, *Scripture as Real Presence; Sacramental Preaching: Sermons on the Hidden Presence of Christ* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2016); *Pierced by Love*.
- 28 Boersma, *Scripture as Real Presence*, 12–13, 42, 201, etc.
- 29 Boersma, *Pierced by Love*, 3–5.
- 30 I have put meaning in scare-quotes because while Boersma would define subjective spiritual encounters with the text as meaning, I am not convinced that this is a valid use of the term. Following Kevin Vanhoozer, E. D. Hirsch, Richard Lints, and many others I hold that texts have a single objective meaning, which is closely related to, if not identical with, that which the author(s) intended. This single meaning may have multiple layers, but it remains an objective meaning. Scripture, as a dually authored text complicates this picture, in that there are multiple authorial intents. Yet as I argue below, these are connected such that meaning remains dependent on authorial intent. Cf. Richard Lints, *The Fabric of Theology: A Prolegomenon to Evangelical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993); Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning in This Text? The Bible, the Reader, and the Morality of Literary Knowledge* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009); *Mere Christian Hermeneutics: Transfiguring What It Means to Read the Bible Theologically* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2024); E. D. Hirsch, *Validity in Interpretation* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1967); Michael J. Pereira, “‘The Lord God Has Sent Me and His Spirit’: The Divine Missions, the Literal Sense, and Reading the Old Testament,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 68, no. 4 (2025): 639–61.
- 31 Boersma, *Scripture as Real Presence*, 12, emphasis added; cf. *Pierced by Love*, 2–4, 44–46, 96–113, 204–206. In emphasizing the hiddenness of the text’s (many) spiritual meanings, Boersma seeks to demonstrate that these are separate and different from the text’s literal meaning.
- 32 Hans Boersma, “No Method but Christ: An Overview of Spiritual Interpretation and Biblical Exegesis,” *First Things*, February 2025, 11; cf. *Scripture as Real Presence*, 114–115, 128; *Pierced by Love*, 4.
- 33 Boersma, “God as Embodied,” *Scripture as Real Presence*, 116.
- 34 Boersma, *Scripture as Real Presence*, 116–118, 159–186.
- 35 Boersma, *Pierced by Love*, 43–47.
- 36 Boersma, *Pierced by Love*, 43, 51–69. Boersma states in one line that lectio is concerned to discover “the historical meaning of the text” (43), but his chapter on doing lectio has nothing to say about pursuit of the historical meaning, focusing instead almost entirely on the rigorous attentiveness required in lectio as an antidote to sloth and therefore as a preparatory step for the higher levels. It seems unlikely that Boersma would identify even the text’s literal/historical meaning as that meaning which its human author intended, though in any case, he spends little time dealing with the literal sense. In his chapter on the literal sense in *Scripture as Real Presence*, Boersma likewise focuses on attentiveness to the words of the text, interpreted through theological-metaphysical convictions, more than on attentiveness to the human author’s original intent (Boersma, *Scripture as Real Presence*, 27–55).
- 37 Boersma, *Pierced by Love*, 5–6, 46, 71–89, 107–113, 115–139. Boersma states that “imagination is the key faculty which enables the encounter [with Christ] to happen” (*Pierced by Love*, 5–6).
- 38 Boersma, *Pierced by Love*, 27–28.
- 39 Boersma, *Pierced by Love*, 111–113, 115–139.
- 40 Boersma, *Pierced by Love*, 46, 141–160.
- 41 Boersma, *Pierced by Love*, 187–188.

- 42 Boersma, *Scripture as Real Presence*, 258.
- 43 Boersma, *Pierced by Love*, 4–5, 15–16, 209.
- 44 Boersma, *Pierced by Love*, 211.
- 45 Boersma, *Pierced by Love*, 211.
- 46 Boersma, *Scripture as Real Presence*, 111–120; *Nouvelle Théologie and Sacramental Ontology*, 231–241.
- 47 Carter, *Interpreting Scripture with the Great Tradition*, 66.
- 48 Carter, *Interpreting Scripture with the Great Tradition*, 81, citing Gerson, *From Plato to Platonism*, 15. Just before this, Carter also summarizes Gerson's five principles of Ur-Platonism cited earlier; cf. Carter, *Contemplating God with the Great Tradition*, 291–292.
- 49 Carter, *Interpreting Scripture with the Great Tradition*, 83.
- 50 Carter, *Interpreting Scripture with the Great Tradition*, 83–84.
- 51 Carter, *Contemplating God with the Great Tradition*, 7–9; cf. *Interpreting Scripture with the Great Tradition*, 82; "The Superiority of Pre-Critical Metaphysics: Why We Need to Recover Christian Platonism," *Journal of the Institute of Reformed Baptist Studies* 6, no. 1 (2019): 5–25. Carter also states that it is the Reformer John Calvin who brings the exegetical tradition of the Great Tradition to its peak, *Interpreting Scripture*, 165, 170.
- 52 Carter, *Contemplating God with the Great Tradition with the Great Tradition*, 8n19; cf. *Interpreting Scripture with the Great Tradition*, 57.
- 53 Carter, *Interpreting Scripture with the Great Tradition*, 57, 83.
- 54 Carter, *Contemplating God with the Great Tradition*, 7–9, 42n36, 291–293. Though his discussion of Reformed Thomism is brief, Carter provides several principles which it maintains: 1) "Reformed Thomism holds to the doctrine of God outlined by Thomas Aquinas in the first forty-three questions of the *Summa Theologiae*," 2) it "affirms the Reformation *solus*," 3) it affirms creation ex nihilo as the foundation of all things' relation to God, and 4) "Reformed Thomism distinguishes conceptually between the immanent and economic Trinity." Carter also notes that Reformed Thomism affirms the historic reformed confessions but given the disagreements between those confessions it does not seem right to identify the entire Reformed confessional heritage as a feature of the metaphysic itself. I believe on that final point Carter simply means to state that one cannot identify oneself as part of the Reformed tradition without ascribing to at least one of the statements which define what the Reformed tradition is.
- 55 Carter, *Contemplating God with the Great Tradition*, 292. Carter identifies this as a feature of all scholastic realism, not only Reformed Thomism.
- 56 Boersma, "Participatory Metaphysics and Creation Out of God," 265–266.
- 57 For the first, see Carter, "The Superiority of Pre-Critical Metaphysics"; *Contemplating God with the Great Tradition*. For the second, see Carter, "Preaching Christ from the Old Testament: A Response to Daniel Block, Elliott Johnson and Vern Poythress," *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 22, no. 3 (2018): 129–141; *Interpreting Scripture with the Great Tradition*; "Premodern Approach," in *Five Views of Christ in the Old Testament*, ed. Brian J. Tabb and Andrew M. King (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2022), 239–266.
- 58 Carter, "The Superiority of Pre-Critical Metaphysics," 6.
- 59 Carter, "Preaching Christ from the Old Testament," 131–132.
- 60 Note, Carter conflates the terms "verbal plenary inspiration" and "dictation theory," *Interpreting Scripture with the Great Tradition*, 38.
- 61 Carter, *Interpreting Scripture with the Great Tradition*, 37–42; "Premodern Approach," 249–250.
- 62 Carter, *Interpreting Scripture with the Great Tradition*, 42–45.
- 63 Carter, *Interpreting Scripture with the Great Tradition*, 57; "Premodern Approach," 241–242.
- 64 These five are 1) as the direct fulfillment of certain messianic prophecies, 2) as the antitype of Old Testament types, 3) according to the fourfold sense, 4) as the new Israel who recapitulates Israel's story, and 5) as the speaker of certain Old Testament texts, which can be interpreted prosopologically (Carter, "Premodern Approach," 239–240).
- 65 Though one could infer this from his discussion in "Premodern Approach," it becomes more evident in Carter's responses to his fellow authors in *Five Views*. See Craig A. Carter, "Rejoinder," in *Five Views of Christ in the Old Testament*, ed. Brian J. Tabb and Andrew M. King (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2022), 290–292.
- 66 Carter, "Premodern Approach," 243.
- 67 Carter, "Premodern Approach," 251, 253, 258, 259; *Interpreting Scripture with the Great Tradition*, 165.
- 68 Carter, *Interpreting Scripture with the Great Tradition*, 165; "Preaching Christ from the Old Testament," 137.

- 69 Carter, *Interpreting Scripture with the Great Tradition*, 165. Carter seems to imply that not all methods will be reasonably connected to the literal sense in a given text, so the interpreter should have all five tools of Christological exegesis at their disposal.
- 70 Carter, "Rejoinder," 292.
- 71 Carter, "Premodern Approach," 255.
- 72 Carter, *Interpreting Scripture with the Great Tradition*, 253–254. Carter also considers the positions that the Bishop of Rome, "the communal sense of the community of faith," or "individual experience" provide the control on meaning, but rejects them. He considers the last two positions heretical, and though he does not agree that the magisterial office of the Pope bears the responsibility to adjudicate meanings, he considers it a legitimate position worthy of debate.
- 73 Carter, *Interpreting Scripture with the Great Tradition*, 33. For Carter, the interpretive process is circular—we must understand God to understand Scripture, but we come to understand God by understanding Scripture—yet it is not a vicious circle, since God's Word ultimately always retains the ability and authority to correct us.
- 74 Boersma, *Pierced by Love*, 211; cf. Zach Kendrick, "Reading the Bible Sacramentally," interview with Hans Boersma, *Reading for the Glory* (podcast), March 10, 2026, YouTube video, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N8AUhLtAJVl>; Carter, *Interpreting Scripture with the Great Tradition*, 254; "Premodern Approach," 290.
- 75 Boersma, "God as Embodied," 165. In many ways, this parallels Rusty Reno's assertion that "proper interpretation proves itself to be such when our reading of Scripture accords with what the church teaches" (R. R. Reno, *The End of Interpretation: Reclaiming the Priority of Ecclesial Exegesis* [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2022], xv).
- 76 Portions of the above paragraph are adapted from Knox Brown, "Christian Platonism or Christian Panentheism? A Critique of Hans Boersma's Sacramental Ontology" (paper presented at the 77th Annual Meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society, Boston MA, November 18, 2025).
- 77 In fact, it seems Boersma is even willing to let the spiritual sense cut against the literal sense, as evidenced by his interaction with Origen's exegesis of Joshua. Based on Origen's reading, Boersma argues those who read the book of Joshua literally and identify its meaning with its human author's intent are forced either "to justify the violence inherent in the Old Testament or to abandon the Old Testament as Christian Scripture." Thus, a spiritual meaning must be found to sanitize the literal meaning of the text (Boersma, *Scripture as Real Presence*, 111, 123).
- 78 E.g., the pope in Roman Catholicism.
- 79 Boersma, *Nouvelle Théologie and Sacramental Ontology*, 234–239; cf. 209ff where Boersma finds Marie-Dominique Chenu making similar claims, though Boersma is less enthusiastic in his endorsement there; cf. Yves M. J. Congar, *Tradition and Traditions: The Biblical, Historical, and Theological Evidence for Catholic Teaching on Tradition*, trans. Michael Naseby and Thomas Rainborough (San Diego: Basilica, 1966), 188, 205, 269–70; *The Meaning of Tradition*, trans. A. N. Woodrow (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2004), 70–72, 81, 152. Both Congar sources are as cited in Boersma, *Nouvelle Théologie and Sacramental Ontology*, 234–235n244–246.
- 80 Boersma, *Nouvelle Théologie and Sacramental Ontology*, 234–236.
- 81 For an earlier version of this argument, see Knox Brown, "The Wild, Wild West, the Sirens of Rome, and the Hermeneutics of Christian Platonism," *Christ Over All*, August 7, 2024, <https://christoverall.com/article/concise/the-wild-wild-west-the-sirens-of-rome-and-hermeneutics-of-christian-platonism/>.
- 82 Carter deals with prosopological exegesis and Psalm 40 in *Interpreting Scripture with the Great Tradition*, 192–201.
- 83 For these three contexts, see Lints, *The Fabric of Theology*.
- 84 Carter uses the phrase "extended literal sense" in "Preaching Christ from the Old Testament," 134; cf. "Premodern Approach," 265.
- 85 Carter, *Interpreting Scripture with the Great Tradition*, 38–45.
- 86 In some ways, this parallels Jason DeRouchie's critique of Carter's premodern approach (Jason S. DeRouchie, "Response to Craig A. Carter (The Redemptive-Historical, Christocentric Approach)," in *Five Views of Christ in the Old Testament*, ed. Brian J. Tabb and Andrew M. King [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2022], 284–289).
- 87 For an example of this hermeneutic, see Michael J. Pereira, "The Lord Has Sent Me and His Spirit." Vanhoozer articulates something similar, though not in this language, in *Mere Christian Hermeneutics*.