

Clear



James C. Peterson

When dat Aprille with its shoures soote, the droghte of Marche hath perced to the roote, and bathed every veyne in swich licour of which vertu engendred is the flour.

The previous sentence is English, granted it is the Middle English that begins *Canterbury Tales*. It is beautifully put for the thirteenth-century Londoner. Chaucer has much that is entertaining and insightful to say, but he is almost indecipherable to contemporary English readers. Our English is present in that quotation, but “the droghte of Marche hath perced to the roote,” would be much more likely to be recognized today as “the drought of March has pierced to the roots.”

An essay submitted to *PSCF* may be on task, new, and true (as described in the last few editorials), but there is no point in its publication if it is not also clear. It is not enough that an article may eventually be decipherable. Our readers are erudite, but they have to choose how to apportion their time, and they cannot be expert in the jargon of every specialty. Articles in *PSCF* can be demanding, but they need to be readable across a wide range of scientific and theological disciplines.

The point of each article is not just to present material. It is to evoke understanding. That requires authors to go out of their way to write in a way that eliminates as many byways and dead ends as possible. When the precise terminology of a discipline is useful, it is welcome, but it should be defined, not assumed. If an insider consensus is relevant, the not-yet-initiated reader will gain from that being noted. When knowledge of a field’s context helps to reveal the importance or force of an argument, it warrants explanation. The author needs to think ahead and provide what the esteemed reader of *PSCF* might find helpful to recognize the article’s contribution.

That clarity of thought should also be evident in the clarity of presentation. The outline should be evident in the headings. Short sentences. Short paragraphs. There is room for nuance, but it should be presented directly. The content may be challenging, but the communication should not be more complex than it has to be.

Being clear does require more work for the author. Clarity of expression takes greater skill and mastery of one’s topic than presenting a lump of great worth that is not yet mined and refined. But the work presented in this journal is too valuable to be left inchoate. The author’s task is not only to present new, relevant, and insightful ideas. It is to present them in a way that the reader can readily understand the contribution. The essays that we publish are ones that are accurate, fitting, new, and clear.

James C. Peterson, *Editor*



In This Issue

One year ago, Heather Looy agreed to post on the ASA and CSCA web sites, an analysis of some of the current interactions between psychology and the Christian tradition. That triggered many thoughtful essays in response. Four of the best follow here. As co-editor for the articles in this psychology-themed issue, Looy ably organized the rigorous peer review to recognize and develop them.

The first is by Duane Kauffmann and counterbalances part of Looy’s initial essay. He argues that the striving of psychological science for an empirical

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approach should remain central to sorting through the tangle of human self-perception. Next, Russell Kosits calls for scholarship in psychology that is distinctively Christian in its perspective, and yet so compelling in its insight that it engages and challenges those outside the Christian tradition. Noreen Herzfeld warns that the expanding power of machine memory will never replace truly human memory, and Gareth Jones describes and tests proposals to use technology to shape our brains to higher moral achievement.

In Communications, Denis Lamoureux shares a story of healing through medications that repair brain chemistry. Kevin Reimer then writes of his

experience and research with the differently abled core members and their assistants at L'Arche.

Our book review section goes beyond psychology, ranging across the latest conversation between science and the Christian tradition. Then, in a letter, Kenell Touryan draws from his extensive experience of dialogue with scientists who are atheists, to extend the analysis of a June issue article on science and atheism. A letter follows from Charles Austerberry that challenges the June essay that advocated uniformitarianism. The author, Bruce Gordon, replies.

James C. Peterson, *Editor*



FROM COSMOS TO
PSYCHE
"All things hold together in Christ"
Colossians 1:17

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