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ADAM DROZDEK
Duquesne University (USA)
ORCiD ID: 0000-0001-8639-2727

THE PHYSICO-THEOLOGY OF SAMUEL PARKER

Samuel Parker (1640–1688) was a seventeenth-century Anglican clergyman very well known for his polemics against dissenters from the Anglican Church. In 1660, he received a bachelor's degree from Wadham College, Oxford, and in 1663, a master's degree from Trinity College. In 1665, he was ordained as a minister of the Anglican church. In 1667, he became the rector of the parish of Chartham in Kent, and in 1672, of the neighboring parish of Ickham. He became archdeacon of Canterbury in 1670, bishop of Oxford in 1686, and president of Magdalen College, Oxford, in 1687. In 1666–1685, he was also a member of the Royal Society (Wood 1820, 4.226–231; Jewell 2004, chs. 1, 6).

Parker was a staunch defender of the rights of the Anglican Church, but he was also considered sympathetic to the Roman Catholic Church, particularly during his tenure at Magdalen College. He also defended the rights of the state. As an opponent of religious tolerance, he wrote several books on the subject, which – considering the then-fairly recent memory of the beheading of King Charles I (1649) and the following eleven-year interregnum – led to very heated polemics, particularly with Presbyterians and nonconformists. Although primarily interested in issues related to the affairs of the church, he also ventured into broader theological themes to provide a theological foundation for the arguments used in his polemics. One such fundamental element was his emphasis on physico-theology as a way of proving the existence of God, placing him at the

forefront of the emerging theological paradigm that became very popular in the second half of the 17th and the 18th centuries.

Parker announced his theological approach in the title of his first book, *Tentamina physico-theologica de Deo* (1665), which was the only time he used the phrase "physico-theology." His physico-theological argument is clearly present in the *Tentamina*, but it is argued more strongly and more extensively in *Disputationes de Deo et providentia divina* (1678), which was later reissued as *Cogitationes de Deo et providentia divina* (1704). A follow-up to the *Disputationes* was *A demonstration of the divine authority of the law of nature and of the Christian religion* (1681), where he best explained why he was even interested in physico-theology.

WHY PHYSICO-THEOLOGY?

Parker was concerned about the growing popularity of atheism and irreligion during his time, to the extent that he viewed this era as the first in which atheism openly appeared in public (Parker 1681, ii), so that even "The Plebeans and Mechanicks have philosophised themselves into Principles of Impiety, and read their Lectures of Atheism in the Streets and the High-ways. And they are able to demonstrate out of the *Leviathan*, that there is no God nor Providence, but that all things come to pass by an eternal Chain of natural Causes: That there are no Principles of Good and Evil but onely every Man's Self-interest, nor any Self--interest but onely of this present Life: That humane Nature is a meer Machine, and that all the contrivances of the minds of Men are nothing but the mechanical Results of Matter and Motion" (iii).[1] To counter this tide, Parker wanted to discuss fundamental aspects of religion, namely the obligation of natural law and the divine authority of the Christian religion (v). His aim was "to give some stop to the contagion, or at least to keep the Disease from descending to Posterity" (vii). According to Parker, natural law "depends upon the suppositions of an Author of Nature"; otherwise, nothing can be said about it (ix). He criticized "Mechanick Philosophers" who wanted to build a world without a builder, in which "alone lies all their folly" attributing the mechanism to "blind and stupid Matter" while ignoring divine wisdom (xvii). However, laws of nature can be discussed only when the supposition of the Author of nature is made (ix). Laws of

[1] No doubt that by statements like this Parker "gives a woeful picture of the viciousness and profanity, infidelity and atheism, of his age" (Hunt 1870, 1:405). This fragment also points to the "*Leviathan* as a source of strictly mechanistic atheism" (Pocock 1990, 742). Parker devoted an untold number of pages in his books to fighting Hobbes, his enemy number one, Descartes being the close second.

nature mean that there is an orderliness in nature enforced by these laws and that there is harmony in them. Since the things in nature are harmonized (xviii), if the Author of this harmony gives any laws of life, these laws should also be followed. This leads to the ultimate goal of morality: love, kindness, and benevolence, expressed in the lives of all rational creatures. These virtues are the way to achieve happiness for which the nature of things was designed (xix). Furthermore, following laws requires rewards and punishments (xx), also in the future world (xxi), since happiness may not be possible in this world (xxii).

Irreligion meant that there are no objective rules by which people can and should live, that egoism prevails and that social life turns into chaos. Therefore, Parker wanted to show that there are objective laws of conduct to guide both individual and social life. However, such rules exist only if the Legislator exists. Therefore, theological discussion should begin with the existence of God. How can we know this?

There is another motivation to pursue this issue: happiness. There is no true happiness in this life, despite all its pleasures (Parker 1704, i). People live under constant fear of death (ii) and are oppressed by the despair of their lives. Seeing all of this, Parker concluded that happiness cannot be found on earth (iii), so he decided to examine everything by reason. "If the Opinion is fixed and established, that there is a certain supreme Lord and Ruler of all men, [then] justice, faith, the society of the human race, and every Virtue that asserts the benefit either to me or to you or to the Republic, are established at the same time with adamantine roots […] if there is a God, it is permissible for us also to be blessed. To this one work, therefore, I put all my strength, all my energy, all my vigilance" (iv).

There have been many proofs of the existence of God, some from revelation, which surely will not convince atheists, and some from reason, from natural light. Parker chose the latter path, as he believed that atheists may find rational arguments convincing. Some say that the idea of God is innate, as it represents a perfect being that could not be invented by an imperfect human mind (Parker 1704, 541), in which Parker referred to the ontological proof proposed by Descartes, which Parker rejected, questioning how Descartes could know that the idea of God as an infinite being in his mind was genuine and not fictional, distorted, or outright false (Parker 1665, 164; 1666b, 56)?[2] Moreover, "from the fact that there is a notion or idea of a supremely perfect being, in which the notion of necessary existence is included, it does not follow that such a thing actually exists" (Parker 1665, 179). Parker argued that the word "existence" in

[2] Parker "demonstrated a tremendous hostility towards the use of innatist metaphors in philosophical prose, seeing this speculative thought as clouding over clear reasoning and argument" (Mills 2021, 61).

the idea denotes only the nature of existence, not the actual execution of it or actual bringing something into being, since "the notion of a thing, which cannot be separated from existence, does not establish its real existence, but only that this thing should not be contemplated as separated from existence" (180).

Some argue that the idea of God can be found in all nations; some maintain that the voice of conscience affirms it (Parker 1704, 541). "And indeed it is always customary for all men of all nations to firmly convince themselves that the mores of Country, in which they happened to be inculcated from their earliest years, had been taken from Nature itself" (545). A similar argument can be made about the ontological proof: the idea may not be drawn from oneself but could have come from books, conversations, or education (Parker 1665, 164). As Parker remarked, "to no one should such an authority as that of Nature be attributed by law or decree, unless it is demonstrated by a clear reason that it was instituted by Nature and adapted to it. So much so that if God had instilled in us any knowledge/idea either of himself or of his laws, this could have no sure and approved authority, unless he had also established it by reason" (Parker 1704, 546).

Parker did not discuss his epistemology in any depth, but he did subscribe to the Peripatetic adage that there is nothing in the intellect that was not first in the senses (Parker 1665, 295). Cognition, he argued, is based on sensory data: someone born deaf does not have the idea of sound, just as someone born blind cannot have an idea of color, because the gates of the senses are blocked (161). Parker also expressed a preference for mechanical and experimental philosophy, as it offered a reliable method for discovering truth. Experiments and observations are the best means to understand the history of nature and to form the foundations for building hypotheses. "And, therefore, we may rationally expect a greater Improvement of Natural Philosophie from the *Royal Society* (if they pursue their design) than it has had in all former ages" (Parker 1666b, 45). Only through experience could it be known whether connate principles are true since "Experimental knowledge is of all others the safest and most unquestionable […] At least when our knowledge proceeds in an Empirical way 'tis solid and palpable, and made so undoubtedly certain from the plain and most undoubted Testimony of Sense and Experience, as undeniably to convince Scepticism of a pitiful and ridiculous Obstinacy." Following Bacon, the starting point should be an empirical approach, not abstract concepts (57). Given this, the opinion about God "which is obtained from a moderate contemplation of nature is much more reliable than that which can be obtained from the trust put in the best (as they say) tradition" (Parker 1704, 103). This is an avenue leading to what characterizes physico-theology: the observation of nature can lead to theological conclusions, and the investigation of the makeup and orderliness of nature does lead to the conclusion that there is a Maker of nature and of all that is in it. What is another viable option? That the world is eternal. However, since there are

constantly observable changes in it, all its elements had to emerge at some time. How? By chance, through the orderliness emerging from the random motion of the basic material components, atoms. Parker devoted scores of pages to refuting ancient and contemporary atomism. In its place, he referred to the science of his times which revealed astonishing harmony in nature in general and in its various areas in particular. Without trying to be comprehensive, Parker spoke in some detail about astronomy, the makeup of the earth, the world of animals, and human anatomy.

THE SOLAR SYSTEM

The entire cosmos is the testimony of the creative power of God. However, little is known about the stars even after the use of the telescope which was invented at the beginning of the 17th century. There may be inhabited worlds outside our own, but this is purely a matter of speculation. "Although certainly if anyone looks at this wonderful order of innumerable stars, no matter how ignorant he may be of its reason, he cannot but marvel at this immense wisdom and power, which has arrayed so many and so many worlds in that order, so that they all protect themselves from all disorder for so long" (Parker 1704, 115). We do not know why stars and planets exist, or why they were arranged as they were, but we certainly can admire the skill that preserves their order (117). However, due to the limited knowledge regarding the stars, Parker limited himself to the solar system where he found ample evidence of the creative power of God.

The solar system exhibits an orderliness that is impossible to explain by the random motion of atoms. The sun is a point in comparison to the space occupied by all the planets; all the planets are a point in comparison to the heavens; and the heavens are but a point in comparison to the entire cosmic immensity. How could randomly moving atoms have formed all the celestial bodies in exactly the place they now occupy (Parker 1665, 46; 1704, 117)? As to the earth, "there is certainly no physical reason why it should occupy this place rather than any other from the beginning" (Parker 1704, 118). Aristotle did not explain through his mechanical laws why the earth is in the middle of the universe. It is there because it is the heaviest element, but how can it support itself there? Is there some force in the middle of space that draws the earth there? How? (Parker 1704, 402). God decided to place the earth in this particular place. Writing before Newton, Parker stated that there was some faculty in the universe that determined the position of all parts; whether it is a magnetic force or something else, it may be discovered in the future; "whatever indeed takes place, we understand it to be done by the best counsel of God, so that the solid framework of the whole mass is clearly preserved, and safe from the dissolution of the parts" (403).

The sun occupies an excellent position in the solar system. If it were closer to the earth or further away from it, it would be useless for everything that it is supposed to maintain, or even harmful. Vegetation on Earth could not fully grow if the sun were too distant, or the Earth would be endangered by conflagration if the sun were too close. Also, why are the sun and the earth not at rest, and why does the sun revolve around the earth or the earth around the sun (Parker 1665, 47; 1704, 123–24)? As to the earth not being at rest, Parker addressed the problem stating that the proper distance between the sun and the earth is not sufficient because if the earth were at rest, then the constant exposure of the same areas to the sun would harm them, and the areas never exposed to the sun would be barren. That is why the sun and the earth rotate. The changes between night and day allow for sleep and thus rest, for the maintenance of amoderate temperature of the air. Furthermore, the rotation is of the proper speed to ensure beneficial lengths of day and night: "for inasmuch as we could not live without labor, and the alternation of rest, it is most suitable to our strength, that the opportunity of resting should return in the space of twenty-four hours" (Parker 1704, 144).

The motion of celestial bodies must have been imparted by a superior cause. The fact that planets move is the work of Providence. If the sun and the earth were somehow accidentally propelled into space, how did they come together? Is not any other movement simpler for the sun than a circular or elliptical orbit (Parker 1665, 48)? "Finally, to sum up (for I am almost overwhelmed by the abundance of arguments which are piling up), while the Sun alternately dispenses its rays, it takes care of the Universe in the best way, and even when it is absent it is still abundantly beneficial, for while it animates other regions with a favorable heat, it departs from others, so that they are not exhausted by too much heat, but let the forces be restored with rains and cold weather following the retreat of the sun. Finally, *what is the middle border between that contains Phoebus*? [Claudian, *De IV consulatu honorii* 286–87] where does it run up to here, and no further? Why does it not cross the lines set for it?" (51). Only providential care ensures that all of this works properly.

THE EARTH

When looking at the earth itself, Parker discovered numerous entities and phenomena that could only be explained as the work of Providence. To shorten his presentation, he concentrated on water.

If there were fewer earth particles and more water particles, their mixture would produce mud and watery plains on the surface of the earth. It is providential that this mixture does not produce a muddy chasm and that waters do not cover the entire surface of the earth. A natural tendency is for what is heavy to

sink in water, yet it is providential that earth particles, although heavy, can rise above waters (Parker 1665, 54). "What prevented the whole surface of the earth from being perfectly even and leveled, since, by the laws of nature, wherever weight increased, any portion of the earth should sink below water?" Providence arranged it so, since "it is more wonderful that the earth should not endure a perpetual flood than that it once did" (55). For example, "if (as they argue) the bed of the sea is gradually filled up with small portions of the earth brought into it, and thus completely filled up all cavities, it would eventually happen that the surface of the earth would be completely leveled, and the waters of the sea would be pushed out of the bed and flow over the whole earth" (56).

Another example: "Just as we find that stagnant waters in ponds and marshes turn sour and exhale noxious humors/vapors, so the waters accumulated in a single reservoir would become fetid. But this evil is addressed with a double precaution": constant tides in the seas and the presence of salt, which prevent bodies from putrefaction (57; cf. Parker 1704, 159, 161). However, salt would destroy life if it was everywhere on Earth. Therefore, by the then-recognized mechanisms, 1. water is filtered through transudation in sand and clay in subterranean channels when it passes from the sea to cisterns under mountains; 2. finer particles of water are drawn upwards by sunrays and separated from salt particles and, when the sun ceases to shine (58), these particles coalesce into drops which fall as rain to water fields and protect them from drought (59). However, how is it that particles of water can rise into the air being heavier than air? If temperature caused thinning vapors, it would cause thinning air as well (Parker 1704, 165). Why does water in the air form clouds instead of spreading itself or falling to the ground? How is so much water suspended in the air? Why do clouds not fall at once to the ground but do that in the form of raindrops? Providentially, it is because if it came down as vapor, it would not water the land; if it came down at once, it would destroy crops (166). In any event, unknown as the details of this mechanism are, these two processes of separating salt from water are so good that chemists were not able to replicate them: the separation by boiling water is not completely effective. In all this, "the Providence of the Supreme Worker is most evident in the mutual harmony (*conspiratio*) of things and their dependence on each other" (Parker 1665, 59).

Peripatetics asked why God created the world at that particular time, rather than earlier or later. However, the same question would be asked regardless of what time He would do it. Seeing immense wisdom behind the design of the world, we can be assured that there was a good reason why the world was created at a particular time even if we do not know this reason (Parker 1704, 192), since, if it pleased God, the beginning of the world could have been earlier or later; in fact, the world could have been eternal (352, misnumbered as 452, 413). God was free when He created the world. Similarly, He could have made more or fewer

stars, the earth could have been a bit larger or smaller, etc.; "there are many things which cannot be understood by any reason, except by the will of the creator alone, why they are so" (193).

ANIMALS

The animal kingdom is no less plentiful in traces of the divine action than the earth itself. The animal instinct is "the document/proof of the Providence" (Parker 1665, 112). Some derived instincts from pain and pleasure, also from imitation (113). However, much of this behavior cannot be explained that way; e.g., the care animals provide for the young. Also, although some animal actions can be prompted by pleasure and pain, the way they are executed is not (114). For example, "if a viscous material is given in the intestines of spiders, which makes them heavier, to incite them to act, yet how is it, if not by instinct, that they not only spit it out but guide the threads so skillfully and weave the web with such admirable skill" (115; cf. Parker 1704, 484). Are the skills learned from parents? Strangely, no offspring deviates from parents' ways; parents must have learned by imitation from their parents; when did it all start (116)? Providence, "at the beginning of the world planted in every animal suitable instincts, and saw that their Ideas were transmitted from the parent to the offspring; for since the female animal is a part of the parent and has individual parts analogous to the parts of [its] parent, it happens that the brain of the offspring is imbued with the same habits and Ideas which are impressed by the necessity of nature on the parent Imagination" (117; cf. Parker 1704, 487). The iron fly of Regiomontanus was celebrated, and yet the natural fly, a much more complicated and completely autonomous living being, was considered by many the work of mere chance (Parker 1665, 123). All the parts of the body in each creature could be fitted together only by a supreme intelligence. There is to much ingenuity in the body of a tiny bee that has similar parts and functions as those of an enormous elephant, and there are hardly fewer parts in the smallest fish than in the whale (119; cf. Parker 1704, 233–34). Or "take an ant and contemplate a little what a variety of parts is contained in its cuticle, what an apparatus [made out] of organs, what a convenient size, connection, and position that each part obtains, how ready it is to fulfill its task and function, how wonderful is the structure of the limbs, how useful is the disposition of the intestines," etc.; no human skill can build anything like it (Parker 1704, 430).

If, in particular, insects are the result of an accident, was it just one insect or a pair of them that emerged that way? How about a large number of them? How could insects with their intricate makeup and innumerable number be created by accident always the same way? "For what is more difficult than preserving

constancy in the multitude of cases? […] For what more does postulate the Providence than the constancy of phenomena, in which [is seen] the utmost elegance, the innumerable multiplicity of parts and organs, the incomprehensible subtlety, the most elegant cohesion of all things with one another, and six hundred other such things?" (Parker 1665, 120). No, said Parker, insects germinate from seeds when there are proper conditions for seminal power to act. Different kinds of insects deposit their seeds in different kinds of places or kinds of plants (125). Incidentally, are insects a nuisance created by God? All insects have their uses, but most of these uses are unknown to us since they are difficult to see or we have not tried to find them. God created all, including insects, to declare His power, wisdom, mercy, justice, etc. So, for example, He used locusts as punishment (Joel 2:25, 1:4, Amos 4:9; Parker 1665, 128), but insects also serve as food for birds and fish, and they indirectly serve humans who use animals (129).

THE HUMAN BODY

The divine wisdom is manifested in every part of the human body (Parker 1665, 65), and with somewhat similar wording the same admiration can be expressed about the human body as about the ant's: "so excellent and admirable is the structure of the human body, that it could not have been made in any other way, but only by the Providence. […] For even if we imagine that some mass of flesh had been formed randomly and by chance within the earth, could such a wonderful machine of the human body have been built around it? And if one looks at it seriously and considers how skillfully it is formed, how innumerable is the multitude and variety of parts in it, how great is the apparatus of organs, how appropriate is the disposition of each [part], the size, shape, proportion, position, how orderly and useful is the connection with one another, how suitably is each one made to perform its functions, how great is the variety of provided functions, how excellently they are performed in all parts, how amazing they all are in them; for there is nothing more astonishing than what is revealed in the human body, whether it be elegance, or utility, or variety, or symmetry, or subtlety, or anything else; there is nothing that praises [better] the skill, energy, art, and wisdom of the Craftsman" (75). To show it, Parker presented in some detail the anatomy and physiology of the human body, drawing on ancient and contemporary sources, in particular, Galen, Willis, and Harvey.[3] So, Parker presented descriptions of the stomach and intestines (Parker 1665, 82; 1704, 445), the liver, pancreas, and

[3] "The specifically physico-theological argument from the design of the human body was initiated by Samuel Parker" (Greyerz 2022, 91); well, it was initiated by Galen and repeated after him before Parker at least by Stillingfleet and Henry More.

spleen (452), the circulation of the blood (Parker 1665, 84; 1704, 455) including arteries (460) and veins (462), and the "Mechanics of the Blood Vessels" (464), the heart (Parker 1665, 84; 1704, 457), the organs of respiration including the larynx (467) and the lungs along with the muscles of the chest (469), also kidneys (Parker 1665, 89), the eye (95), the brain (Parker 1665, 92; 1704, 474), and the nervous system (477).[4]

After describing the male and female sexual organs (Parker 1665, 100–103), Parker concluded, "Finally, why should these things be so, when could it have been a clearer testimony of design and Providence than it is, that the female parts in a thousand ways so opportunely agree with the male parts, and differ in almost as many ways? Surely if we admit the chance, who will believe that it always chooses what is better and rejects what is worse; so that similar chances occur there, where the expediency of the matter demands similarity, but where disparity is more convenient, there only and always disparity?" (103).

GOD

What theological lessons can be derived from natural philosophy, that is, the science of Parker's time?

There must be a Creator. "The reasoning which leads from the works of Art to the works of Nature is the most invincible/undisputed: namely, that if the works of art are accomplished by reason alone, so much more what nature accomplishes." Since the works of nature are much more excellent, more complex, and more elaborate on any level of detail than any works of human ingenuity, then just as there is an artist behind the work of art, so there is an Artist behind the works of nature. Incidentally, this also indicates that art and craft are just an imitation of nature. For instance, "the recently invented exquisite telescopes of Galileo, which met with such an admiration of the world, have hardly anything to admire in them, except that they are formed according to the shape of the eyes: and, indeed, what else is in optics but some observations taken from the use and skill of the eyes?" (Parker 1665, 144).

The harmonious complexity of nature not only indicates that God exists, but also points to His wisdom which surpasses human ability to grasp its depth, and to the divine power which brought such an immensity into being. Other attributes? This is where Parker gets into scholastic theology and adjusts to new

[4] In particular, he briefly discussed intercostal nerves that connect the brain with the heart, among others (Parker 1665, 97; 1704, 478), which are the nerves that could be used to control passions, thereby lifting a person to "a pure and intellectual Being" (Parker 1666, 67; cf. Knoeff 2004, 432–40).

norms, as stated in the subtitle of the *Tentamina*.[5] "We can form no concepts of the innumerable Attributes of God as they are in themselves, but only from their simulacra scattered throughout the creatures we can form none, of which, no simulacra exist (*prostant*). […] everything, the knowledge of which can be arrived at by Natural Light, is known only from the effects; therefore, we must look to the effects, so that by contemplating their perfections we may somehow reach the Divine Perfections" (Parker 1665, 324). Pseudo-Dionysius and the Scholastics, in particular, Aquinas, spoke about a threefold way of presenting divine attributes: *via causalitatis*, *via eminentiae*, and *via remotionis* (or: *negationis*); "in the first place, it must be demonstrated by the way of causality (*via causalitatis*) that all the perfections which God communicated to creatures are in God" (324–25). Everything has been created by God, directly or indirectly. The secondary causes get all their force from the Primary Cause. "The divine perfections are therefore reached, as far as we are allowed, by ascending the steps of created perfection like stairs and this is called the way of causality. In fact, since created perfections are insignificant (*tenues*) and have defects always mixed in, we must be careful not to attribute to God either perfections that are incomplete, or defects at the same time as perfections. It is therefore necessary, before they become worthy of God, to cut off all defects, and raise the perfections to an eminent state" (325). This cutting off of defects is the *via remontionis* which requires that nothing associated with matter – including material perfections – should be attributed to God (327). This leads, in turn, to the *via eminentiae* when what was purified from all imperfections can be raised to the eminent, divine level. In particular, human mental capabilities are hampered by the body, but when freed from the corporeal aspects of their operation, these mental abilities can be also found on the divine level when eminently elevated to that level. For example, God has a vision in an eminent way (*eminenter oculatum esse*), not because He has a more precise organ of vision, but because He can see everything without any organ of sight. And so, the faculties free of matter that are in creatures are eminently in God and they are of the same kind and nature. Incidentally, some want the names of attributes ascribed to God to be qualified as hyper or super: hypervision, supervision, etc. (330). Virtues can also be eminently found in God, but not all of them: Parker saw temperance as a virtue applicable only to the body, so, not to God, and thus, they should be spiritual virtues, but not all of them: "goodness, truthfulness, holiness, justice, and all others of this kind: with the exception of those which are based on a condition subject to God, such as obedience and religion or piety towards God. Indeed, it would very improperly be

[5] Cf. Levitin 2014, 66. The adjustment to the new norms leads to the idea that "metaphysics was not the study of being *qua* being, but only the study of God's attributes as they were deducible from his creation (i.e. from natural philosophy)," (68).

said that God obeys himself, or that he worships himself" (333). Moreover, to remain at the level of the *via eminentiae*: human affections are the motions of the soul, passions involve also the motions of the body and since affections are operations of the will and God has the will, He also has affections (337–38, 340). This is theologically a bit perilous issue since some affections do not appear to be very divine. For example, "sorrow, much less repentance properly so-called, is to be ascribed to God." So, a reinterpretation is in order: "when Genesis 6:6 mentions that God regretted the creation of men, it should not be taken as if he were sorry that he had created men, but that he himself was in some way displeased with the event of creation, which was followed by [an act of] the free impiety of men" (349).

The divine power, Parker warned, must not be limited by human imagination. In his theodicy, Leibniz explained that the world is the best possible, and whatever inconveniencies are in the world, they could not have been eliminated without undermining the coherence of the whole. However, considering this world to be the best possible means that "God had spent all the treasures of wisdom in building this machine, and had produced in it the ultimate example of power"; but God could have created a better world, although humans can hardly envision what it would be, for instance what a better solar system would look like (Parker 1665, 147–48). So, God could have endowed the earth with such fertility, that it would always bring useful crops; there could have been no poisonous plants; humans could have been stronger and live longer, not been prone to so many deceases (147). After all, "who can say that God is supremely powerful, if in the creation of the world he exercised/exhausted all his powers so that he could not accomplish anything more excellent?" (Parker 1665, 412); "how small God would have been if he had poured out all his resources long ago, and had worked out the Best that he could! Indeed, if he had pleased, he could have subdued many of the evils that afflict the world, and [could have] provided other far more or more valuable advantages." The beauty and the size of the world should be admired, but "it would be very perverse to acknowledge the virtues of God from His works, if I were to confine the immensity of Himself to their measure" (412).

MORAL LESSONS

God created two images of Himself: the sun and man. "By endowing man with reason, he is said to have created him in the image of his own wisdom. In the Sun, He exhibited the ideal of his Benevolence, Power, and Activity, inasmuch as the Sun, by its own rule, spreads with a kind of prodigious benevolence its power and favors everywhere, presides over the generation and change of things, and stirs up the particles of matter with some kind of divine activity, and arranges them in the

most excellent works" (Parker 1665, 64). So, just looking at the sun and the earth, as already presented, the precisely calibrated relation between them shows plentifully how beneficial the sun's position and influence are to the earth. If we realize that this calibration is not the result of atoms swirling to and fro, but the result of the creative power of God, then this correlation between the sun and the earth alone points to the way people should view their human interrelations, that is, the message for the social behavior is encoded in nature by divine Providence. And this is just one example seen in nature. Whatever impressions people receive from objects through their senses, it is as though God Himself stamped these impressions on these senses, since God "on purpose so contrived them as to make it necessary for us to take notice of that Information that is given to us by their being so contrived." Through the laws of nature, God indicates His designs for humankind to be pursued. The "Rules of Life" are signified by "the very Order and Frame of Nature" (Parker 1681, 3–4). However, it is uncertain if any information about the laws of nature is imprinted on the human mind (5). These laws should be demonstrated "from Reason and Experience, from the Observations of Nature and the Necessities of Life" (7), but they are also confirmed by "the Consent of Nations" (11–12). And so, universally found are "the belief of a Deity, the obligation of Oaths, love to Parents and gratitude to Benefactors, and to doe to all Men as we would be done to our selves" (12). Universal justice obligates every person to seek the welfare and happiness of the entire community just as much as to seek one's own wellbeing, all the more that one's own wellbeing depends on the wellbeing of others; nature itself declares that much which can easily be observed (17–18); stronger yet, the order of nature will indicate that the happiness of each person depends on "mutual Benevolence, and nothing else" (25). Society is necessary to the support and comfort of human life (26). "This then is the proper end and usefulness of Society, to institute a common Amity and Friendship amongst men, to unite multitudes together into combinations of Friendship, to endear them to each other by mutuall Offices of love and kindness, and by a joynt defence of their common welfare against all foreign Injuries and Invasions" (27). No person can assure his security; it can only be accomplished in a state of peace (28). From here onwards develops Parker's most heartfelt presentation and polemic concerning the problem of authority, the discipline in the state and in the church, the problem of tolerance, church hierarchy, church rites, and the like, the problems which consumed him the most.

CONCLUSION

Parker was widely known in his times for his views on church politics, structure, and the relationship between the state and the church. He stirred emotions in his polemicists about these issues, which was understandable, since these

were not just theoretical discussions, but they could have and did have very severe consequences, such as losing one's position, excommunication, or imprisonment. Given the immediate importance of these issues, problems like the kind of proof of the existence of God which would be the most convincing appeared to be of secondary importance from the practical perspective of church policies. This is rather regrettable, since with his presentation, Parker positioned himself prominently at the forefront of physico-theology.[6] In a way, this was a theological atmosphere of the times. It is not quite clear if Parker was influenced in his choice of physico-theology by any particular author. Interestingly, in his battle against Descartes, he listed three authors who followed Descartes, thereby criticizing them: Walter Charleton, Henry More, and Edward Stillingfleet (Parker 1665, 157). True, all three of them embraced the ontological proof of the existence of God and the innateness of the idea of God, the views which Parker strenuously criticized, but all three of them had also something to say about physico-theology, which Parker did not mention. In his *Origines sacrae* (1662), bk. 3, ch. 1, secs. 15–16 (10 pages), Stillingfleet included some quotations from Cicero and Galen to show that the makeup of the human body clearly indicates the divine power of God at work. In his *Darknes (!) of atheism dispelled by the light of nature: a physico-theologicall treatise* (1652), notwithstanding the subtitle, Charleton presented a rather weak physico-theological argument, mainly in ch. 2, sec. 3 (some 20 pages) with some remarks scattered throughout the book. Bk. 2 of Mores' *An antidote against atheism* (1653) presents on almost 100 pages a variety of examples, similar to Parker, but on a much smaller scale, indicating the divine design of God's creation. It also seems that Parker took over the phrase "physico-theology" from the subtitle of Charleton's book; More and Stillingfleet did not use it.

Parker's presentation of physico-theology is very strong, mature, and fully developed, indicating that he should be considered one of the strongest, if not the strongest, progenitors of physico-theology. However, his reputation as an intolerant ecclesiastical authoritarian marred his reputation so the physico-theological aspect of his scholarly activity is seldom mentioned.[7] This is unfortunate. When examining his views, we find that not much changed in the work of physico-theologians who followed. The emphasis on an empirical approach to theology,

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[6] It can also be mentioned that Parker was at the forefront of the criticism of innatism, which soon came out more strongly in the work of Locke (cf. Hertling 1892, 291).

[7] According to one assessment of Parker, "the spirit of the author is not without philosophical subtlety"; "his intelligence is penetrating and his argument is strong. If he were wiser, less pressed to produce, less eager to fight, if he applied his talent less to make noise and fortune, he could have left works which would have given him an honorable place in philosophy" (Rémusat 1875, 2:133, 145–46).

using the investigation of nature as a way to show that randomness cannot explain the workings of nature with its marvelous complexity on every level, from the stars to microscopic creatures, led to the inevitable conclusion that there is a Creator. A major development in physico-theology was the subdivision of the field, and so, the concentration on astronomy became astro-theology (William Derham) or cosmo-theology (Johann Gottlieb Walpurger), the investigation of waters on earth became hydro-theology (Johann Albert Fabricius), the focus on human anatomy became anthropo-theology (Johann Heinrich Schütte), and then there were many more such subdivisions. This not only invigorated theology but also stirred the development of science since the investigation of nature led to new discoveries of the wonders of nature, whereby the power and wisdom of God were appreciated even more, whereby the divine moral precepts were treated more seriously, which had consequences extending beyond the grave.

FIZYKOTEOLOGIA SAMUELA PARKERA

Abstrakt

Samuel Parker, siedemnastowieczny duchowny anglikański, jest dziś znany głównie ze swoich polemik na temat polityki kościelnej, relacji państwo–kościół i problemu tolerancji. Niniejszy artykuł koncentruje się na jego mniej znanym, ale znaczącym wkładzie w powstającą dziedzinę fizykoteologii, która wykorzystywała porządek przyrody jako dowód na istnienia Boga i Jego atrybutów. Parker zaproponował taki dowód, wykorzystując starożytną naukę i naukę swoich czasów, koncentrując się na regularnościach w Układzie Słonecznym, budowie Ziemi, w szczególności jej wód, różnorodności i złożoności królestwa zwierząt oraz skomplikowanej budowie ludzkiego ciała. Uważał te badania za niezbędne tło dla teologii, wzmacniające jego polemiki. Miały one konsekwencje moralne i eschatologiczne: uznanie wszechmocnego i sprawiedliwego Boga powinno inspirować ludzi do przestrzegania Bożych zasad postępowania zarówno w kontekście osobistym, jak i społecznym, z perspektywą odpowiedniej nagrody w życiu pozagrobowym. Mimo iż jego spuścizna pozostaje w dużej mierze przyćmiona przez kontrowersyjne poglądy polityczne, znaczący i fundamentalny wkład Parkera w fizykoteologię powinien zostać uznany i doceniony.

S ł o w a k l u c z o w e : Samuel Parker, dowód na istnienie Boga, fizykoteologia.

THE PHYSICO-THEOLOGY OF SAMUEL PARKER

Abstract

Samuel Parker, a seventeenth-century Anglican clergyman, is known today mainly for his polemics on church policies, church-state relations, and the problem of tolerance. This article concentrates on his lesser-known but considerable contribution to the emerging field of physico-theology, which used the orderliness of nature as proof of God's existence and His attributes. Parker proposed such a proof using ancient science and the science of his times, concentrating on the regularities in the solar system, the makeup of the earth, particularly its waters, the variety and complexity of the animal kingdom, and the intricate makeup of the human body. He considered these investigations as a necessary theological background to bolster his polemics. This included the moral and eschatological consequences: the recognition of an omnipotent and just God should inspire people to follow God's rules of conduct in both personal and social settings, with the expectation of a fitting reward in the afterlife. Nevertheless, although his legacy remains largely overshadowed by his controversial political stances, Parker's substantial and foundational contributions to physico-theology should be acknowledged and appreciated.

K e y w o r d s : Samuel Parker, proof for the existence of God, physico-theology.

DIE PHYSIKO-THEOLOGIE VON SAMUEL PARKER

Abstrakt

Samuel Parker, ein anglikanischer Geistlicher des siebzehnten Jahrhunderts, ist heute hauptsächlich für seine Polemiken über Kirchenpolitik, Staat-Kirche-Beziehungen und das Problem der Toleranz bekannt. Dieser Artikel konzentriert sich auf seinen weniger bekannten, aber bedeutenden Beitrag zum entstehenden Bereich der Physiko-Theologie, die die Ordnung der Natur als Beweis für die Existenz Gottes und seine Attribute nutzte. Parker schlug einen solchen Beweis vor, indem er antike Wissenschaft und die Wissenschaft seiner Zeit nutzte und sich auf Regelmäßigkeiten im Sonnensystem, den Aufbau der Erde, insbesondere ihrer Gewässer, die Vielfalt und Komplexität des Tierreichs und den komplizierten Aufbau des menschlichen Körpers konzentrierte. Er betrachtete diese Studien als notwendigen Hintergrund für die Theologie, der seine Polemiken stärkte. Sie hatten moralische und eschatologische Konsequenzen: Die Anerkennung eines allmächtigen und gerechten Gottes sollte die Menschen inspirieren, Gottes Verhaltensregeln sowohl im persönlichen als auch im sozialen Kontext zu befolgen, mit der Aussicht auf eine angemessene Belohnung im Leben nach dem Tod. Obwohl sein Erbe weitgehend durch kontroverse politische Ansichten überschattet bleibt, sollte Parkers bedeutender und grundlegender Beitrag zur Physiko-Theologie anerkannt und gewürdigt werden.

S c h l ü s s e l w ö r t e r : Samuel Parker, Existenz Gottes, Physiko-Theologie.

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Adam Drozdek – Doctor of Philosophy (Jagiellonian University 1977), Associate Professor at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, PA, USA. He authored numerous articles and several books on the history of philosophy and theology, including *Greek Philosophers as Theologians: The Divine Arche* (2007, translated into Greek and Polish) and *Theological Reflection in Eighteenth-Century Russia* (2021).
Address for correspondence: drozdek@duq.edu.