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Foreward

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The publication of this third volume of the *Journal of Faith and Science Exchange* comes at a time when the Boston Theological Institute (BTI) celebrates its first recipients of the Certificate in Science and Religion. These topics were of central interest in the founding ethos of the fourth university, or college, in the New World, Harvard College. Following the founding of the University of San Marcos in Lima and Universidad Real y Pontificia of Mexico, both in 1551, and the University of (New) Córdoba in Argentina under the Jesuits in 1609, Harvard College (1636) would reflect the deep theological division that existed in early seventeenth-century European thought.

Harvard represented a form of established Reformed polity, in distinction from other Catholic and Anglican divisions, where foundational epistemological ideas would be worked out in dependence upon Covenantal theology. The surprising thing about this theology, when viewed from the perspective of the twenty-first century, is the remarkable way in which it sought to find, through the developing sciences, a way of understanding the wisdom and ways of God beyond the smoke of theological controversy or the raging wars of religion.

Not surprisingly, this may be seen in the desire to live under God's law. For early New England, this desire was worked out for society by Nathaniel Ward, a pastor in Ipswich who also had legal training. His *Laws* would be adopted provisionally in 1641, and would receive their definitive form in 1648 as the *Book of the Laws and Liberties Concerning the Inhabitants of Massachusetts*. This work would constitute the civil counterpart of the colonial *Cambridge Platform of Church Discipline* of the same year, which adopted the catechism and formularies of the Westminster Assembly in all but polity.

How this practice was perceived was subject to much earlier debate, as the "heart" of New England was "rent" by the Antinomian Controversy (1636-38), pointedly centered on the question of the perception and practices of God's laws as expressed in God's covenants. The Antinomian Controversy was relevant to the early shaping of Harvard College. Finding the grace of law more foundational to the early colony than that of Spirit, colonial leaders followed the path charted by Thomas Shephard, rather than that of John Cotton or Anne Hutchinson. The traumatic experience that was a part of this controversy brought about New England's first pan-colonial synod and in the end would inoculate Massachusetts Puritanism for a century to come against "fanaticism" and would consequently also inhibit the successors of the Bay Colonists from letting go their acquired society-protective rationalist disposition at the time of the Great Awakening. In effect, this inoculation would protect the College from emotional extremes but also inhibit Harvard from participating in the fresh vitalities of the eighteenth-century revivals of religion, secure in its self-confident "provincial" latitudinarian rationalism.

However, apart from these debates, so formative of colony and college, the ways in which God's regular ordering of nature were to inform theological expression finds pointed visibility in the third president of Harvard College, the Reverend Dr. Leonard Hoar (1630-75). Committed to, among other things, a kind of Puritan *orare et laborare*, seen in William Law's *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life* (1728), Hoar shaped his theology through the methodical logic of French humanist and Calvinist Peter Ramus (1515-72), Alexander

Richardson's "Tables", i.e., *The Logicians School-Master or, A Comment upon Ramus Logic...Comments on grammar, notes on physics, ethics, astronomy, medicine, and optics* (London 1629; 1657), and William Ames' *Medulla theologica* (1628). In a letter to a young protégé, Hoar counsels the fixing of some form of index to knowledge incrementally gained, alluding to his own *Index Biblicus* (1668). Hoar had been able to broaden his own knowledge of the developing sciences in England, having struck up a friendship with Sir Robert Boyle (1627-91), a leading figure in the newly chartered Royal Society of London for Improving Natural Knowledge (1662). The Society included such other luminaries as Sir Isaac Newton, all of them embraced in the first scientific society in Latin Christendom, and Hoar became part of the new world of science and scholarship. He may well have surmised that if the God of the "covenant of grace" (Anne Hutchinson and the Antinomians) was increasingly difficult to discern, then perhaps the God of the "covenant of works" (Thomas Shephard and early Harvard College) might be verified in the realms of orderly nature (natural religion). In Hoar this new knowledge was integral to the transposition of his own focus of epistemology from revelation to empiricism. There was now a tradition of Reformed scholasticism of scientific inquiry with laboratory experimentation, accompanied by "utmost ratiocination," defined by René Descartes (1596-1650), in his preface to the *Discourse on Method* (1637), as the new laws of the methodologically purified mind, as a "new Bible."

Hoar was abreast of the new empiricism pioneered in his time by John Locke (1632-1704). In epistolary exchanges, he had become familiar with chemist and physician Robert Hooke (1635-1703), with botanist Robert Morison (d. 1683), who was senior physician to Charles II and the first professor of botany at Oxford, and with botanist Alexander Balaam, British resident in Tangiers. Botany, chemistry, physics, and the world of medicine were opened up to Hoar by these scientists, on whose recommendation, and then on royal command, the College of Physicians in London, on 20 January 1671, granted him the M.D. degree of Cambridge University. When the Reverend Dr. Hoar returned to New England, late in the winter of 1671/72, to take up a call to serve at the Third Church in Boston (Old South), and then to serve as President of Harvard College, his dedication to a learned ministry certainly included the kinds of instruction we celebrate with the scholarship represented in this *Journal* and with the BTI Certificate in Science and Religion.

With the publication of this volume and with the successful launching of this Certificate Program, we do well to note that the engagement between science and religion is as old as theological reflection itself. The contemporary work of Arthur Peacocke, Ian Barbour, and John Polkinghorne, to name but a few, stands in a long line of reflection on the mysteries of God and the ways of understanding and practice.