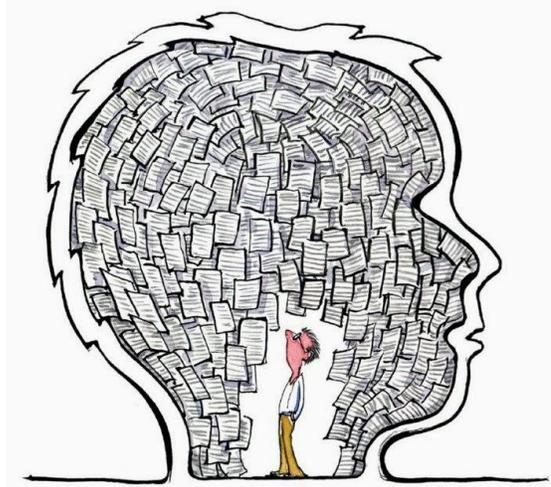


Daily Life with Christ. Love-9: Understanding the objective, universal, unchanging, eternal nature of love—Leaving the subjective world of the Idealism of the Linguistic Turn so one can return to the objective reality of the Realism of the metaphysics of beings as such.



The Idealist starts with words and ideas and then proceeds to beings—he clothes words with beings (e.g., Rene Descartes). He starts with words, thoughts, ideas, concepts, and *then* attaches them to beings. Note the above illustration: the Idealist begins in his mind with thoughts rather than with beings in the extra-mental world. He takes these thoughts and then applies them to extra-mental beings. Idealism is rampant today, especially in our polarized American politics—but more on that at another time.

In stark contrast, the Realist starts with beings, which then he clothes with words. His foundation is in beings in the external world. Language is merely a description of the beings that he is in direct contact with. The Realist knows beings directly and objectively. His direct knowledge of extra-mental beings is unmediated by words—words are used only to describe and develop what he already knows directly in his soul.

In the last two articles I discussed what is known as the Linguistic Turn in philosophy, which signaled the rejection of metaphysics of Realism and the turn to using language as a means to obtain objective extra-mental reality, reality as such. I also noted a similar turn took place in certain exegetical movements in Christianity, which claimed that they had finally gained objective interpretation of the Bible through the study of the original languages. However, these linguistic turns are unmitigated disasters in both philosophy and Bible studies because they both attempt to ground objective reality in words rather than beings as such. This is not to deny that there is a crucial place for the original languages in obtaining the objective form of any biblical text through the study of syntax in the original. However, it is to assert that the practice of establishing objectivity on Greek and Hebrew words in the Bible rather than beings as such is a fool's errand in the land of idealism—oftentimes without the person even realizing the fallaciousness of it all.

In the last two articles, I attempted to demonstrate the fallaciousness of establishing reality on the basis of the original languages of Scripture by noting the original words for love in the Bible. How could one establish the objective meaning of 'love' in the Old Testament by studying the Hebrew word *'ahab*, given the fact that this word is used of God's love for man, man's love for God, love for food, illicit sexual lust, love for truth, and love for evil? How could one establish the objective meaning of 'love' in the New Testament by studying the Greek word *agape* given the fact that *agape* is used of God's love for man, man's love for God, man's illicit love for materialism and the world, and man's licit love for others and self? Obviously, these words in the original are not univocal. As a matter of fact, the words for love in the Old Testament and New Testament carry much of the same broad range as our English word 'love.' Why is this? This is easy to understand in Realism; it is impossible to explain or defend in the idealism of building reality on words.

Clearly, we need to abjure all idealistic approaches to biblical interpretation. We need Realism if we want to gain objective interpretation of the Word of God. We need to start with the beings of reality rather than the contents of our minds or feelings. There are at least four fundamental principles in Realism: (1) we start with direct connection with beings as such, (2) we understand those natures through abstraction of the form, (3) we understand that those natures never change, and (4) we understand that the law of contradiction is the basic law of reality. To take a simple example: when Scripture says that Christ is the Door, we do not look up the word door in the Greek to establish what this passage means. We start with (1) direct connection with door in extra-mental reality, (2) understanding the nature of door, (3) understanding that the nature/form of door does not change, and (4) understanding the law of contradiction: that Christ cannot be the God-man and a literal door at the same time. This Realist orientation also applies to all beings of reality, from the being/nature of love, to the being/nature of God, man, government, or any being/nature. Again, for the Realist, it is always about the being first and foremost—what is!—which then we clothe with words to describe its nature and its various relations.

On the Glory Road,

Pastor Don