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THE WOUNDS THAT REMAIN  
ESCHATOLOGICAL MEMORY AND THE WOUNDS  
OF THE RISEN CHRIST

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1. INTRODUCTION: “I WILL NEVER BELIEVE”

Thomas was in the upper room eight days after the resurrection. The other disciples had told him the news, to which he responded with the strongest possible negation: *I will never believe* (*ou mē pisteusō*) (John 20:25). It is the language of someone protecting himself from being hurt again. Whatever else Thomas’s refusal conveyed, it bore the weight of his memory: memory of pain, loss, and trauma that he had witnessed at the cross. When Jesus finally appeared to Thomas, he held out his wounds.

That gesture—the risen Lord still bearing the marks of crucifixion—names the question this essay will pursue. What is the eschatological future of painful memory? When the new creation comes and “He will wipe away every tear from their eyes” (Rev. 21:4), what becomes of the memory of the tears themselves?

In *The End of Memory*, Miroslav Volf has offered what is perhaps the most theologically rigorous answer in recent literature: such memories must finally be relinquished. After right remembering has done its work, after injustice has been named and forgiveness offered, Volf argues that an eschatological non-remembrance awaits even the most grievous memories of harm, and indeed the memory of the cross itself will be remembered no more.<sup>1</sup> This essay contests that conclusion.

I will argue that the eschatological *telos* of memory is not its erasure but its transformation. Divine forgiveness, on the account I will defend, does not consign painful memories to oblivion. It summons them, calls them, and grafts them into the story of Christ’s death and resurrection, where they are given a new context within which they bear different meaning. The ontological foundation for this is union with Christ: because the believer is incorporated into Christ, the believer’s life, including her memory, is genuinely emplotted within his. The biblical warrant is the body of the risen Lord, who returned to his disciples not unmarked but bearing wounds. The view is also supported by the testimony of the

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<sup>1</sup> Miroslav Volf, *The End of Memory: Remembering Rightly in a Violent World* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006).

patristic and medieval tradition concerning the bodies of the martyrs in glory.

The argument proceeds in four stages. Section 2 establishes a working account of memory, drawing Herman Bavinck and Paul Ricoeur into conversation in order to show that memory is neither mechanical reproduction nor free invention but narrative reconstruction with a debt to the past. Section 3 surveys three Christian models of the healing of painful memory, arguing that the Volf-Tran debate maps a real fork in the road. Section 4 develops the *yobi-tsugi* model and shows how union with Christ supplies its metaphysical anchor, answering Volf's worry that mere re-narration is insufficiently Christological. Section 5 argues from the wounds of the risen Christ to a positive account of resurrected memory.

## 2. MEMORY AS NARRATIVE RECONSTRUCTION: BAVINCK AND RICOEUR

Any theology of forgiveness worthy of the name must rest on an account of memory more careful than the popular slogan “forgive and forget” can supply. The phrase implies that memory is a discrete deposit which the will, properly disciplined, can simply discard. That picture is mistaken about both memory and forgiveness.

Herman Bavinck's *Foundations of Psychology* offers a useful place to begin. Bavinck wrote against the materialism of his day, which held that “all psychic life” could be explained “in terms of metabolism in the brain,” with representations leaving “traces” that resurfaced under various stimuli.<sup>2</sup> Against this, he treated memory as an activity of the soul: not the passive storage of impressions but a set of activities undertaken “for the purpose of preserving the representations, forming them anew, reproducing them in changed form, ordering them logically.”<sup>3</sup> He distinguished memory proper from *recollection*. Memory is the soul's continuing consciousness of earlier representations; recollection is the intentional act of retrieving and reproducing them. Animals, he thought, possess memory in an involuntary sense, but only humans recollect. “By means of pondering, reflecting, and meditating,” he wrote, we are able “by means of our will to guide our thoughts.”<sup>4</sup> This distinction maps closely onto Aquinas's earlier distinction between *memoria* and *reminiscentia*.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Herman Bavinck, *Foundations of Psychology*, trans. Jack Vanden Born, ed. John Bolt (Grand Rapids: Christian's Library Press, 2018), 138.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 139.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 140.

<sup>5</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* I, q. 78, a. 4.

Bavinck's account is right where it matters: memory is not mechanism. But his contrast between *recollection*, which he describes as the bringing forth of "unaltered" memory, and *imagination*, which alters, is too sharp. Bavinck himself acknowledges, almost in the same breath, that memory often fails to be a "truthful representation," especially under the pressures of stress or age. The deeper truth is that recollection is *seldom* simple reproduction. Even in mental health, the act of bringing a memory to consciousness is an act of selection, framing, and narration.

This is the insight Paul Ricoeur develops in *Memory, History, Forgetting*. For Ricoeur, memory is both selective (we recall some things and not others) and interpretive (we connect what we recall into a coherent story). To remember is inevitably an act of narration. But this does not collapse memory into fiction. Memory, Ricoeur argues, owes a "debt" to the past—what he calls an "unavoidable correspondence between the narrative and what really happened."<sup>6</sup> Memory can either be a faithful witness or a false one, and we are answerable for which. Volf's appropriation of Ricoeur, in the early chapters of *The End of Memory*, makes this point a moral demand: we owe the dead, and the living wronged, a remembering that is truthful as an act of justice.<sup>7</sup>

This conjunction of narrative and debt is what makes memory a theologically intriguing category. Memory is not raw data to be stored or deleted; it is a story *being told* in the present, with fidelity owed. Hence, to a certain extent, memory is a story open in principle to being told differently, to being re-emplotted within a larger narrative without ceasing to be a faithful witness to what occurred.

### 3. MEMORY AND HEALING: FORGETFULNESS, NON-REMEMBRANCE, AND TRANSPOSITION

If memory concerns the narration of the self, what does it mean for painful and traumatic memories to be 'healed'? One way is to view healing in terms of forgetting—the erasure of painful memories. Such thinking is sometimes seen in the popular but morally bankrupt phrase "forgive and forget." This view has obvious problems pastorally, as it can easily resort to whitewashing of injustice and toleration of evil.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, trans. Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004); see also Ricoeur, "The Reality of the Historical Past," Aquinas Lecture 48 (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1984), 25–26.

<sup>7</sup> Volf, *End of Memory*, 55.

<sup>8</sup> Gregory Jones names such "forgive and forget" mentality as modes of therapeutic forgiveness, which he considers to be an unchristian mode of forgive-

Against such a simplistic view, Volf's *End of Memory* articulates a sophisticated view of how painful memories are healed. Volf separates non-remembrance from forgetfulness and conditions both on a long process of 'right remembering.' The first half of *The End of Memory* is a sustained defence of remembering: of the moral debt of truthful witness, of memory as a form of justice. Only after injustice has been named, forgiveness offered, and the perpetrator's repentance received does Volf turn to the question, "How long must we remember?"<sup>9</sup> His answer is that there comes a moment at which the memory of harm need no longer occupy the foreground of consciousness. This is *non-remembrance*, not amnesia: not the loss of capacity but the cessation of memory's haunting of one's identity. Volf grounds the move in the divine economy. When God promises a new covenant in Jeremiah 31:34—"I will remember their sins no more"—he is not confessing ignorance but committing to a posture: a determination not to recall the fault.<sup>10</sup> Hence Volf's model can be said to be a combination of 'right remembering' (hence not mere forgetfulness) with the hope of eschatological non-remembrance, where the memory of pain will no longer be recalled.

Here, I wish to explore another model, a view that treats the healing of memory as eschatological transposition rather than non-remembrance. Rowan Williams gives it an early articulation in *Resurrection*: "If forgiveness is liberation, it is also a recovery of past in hope, a return of memory, in which what is potentially threatening and destructive, despairing is transformed into the ground for hope."<sup>11</sup> What memory teaches us, irreducibly, is the irreversibility of the past. No amount of reframing can make a thing not have happened. If we are to remember faithfully, we cannot alter the past. But memory can still be redeemed: its meaning can be transposed into a new key. This is what happened to the disciples' memory of Good Friday. Before Easter, the cross was a memory of catastrophic failure; after Easter, the same event has become the hinge of cosmic redemption. The traumatic memory of Christ's death is not forgotten but transposed into an eschatological horizon of new creation. The Gospels themselves can be said to be products of this transposition—what Richard Hays has described as a retrospective re-reading, the reading of the Old Testament, and hence Israel's collective memory of pain, "back-

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ness. See L. Gregory Jones, *Embodying Forgiveness: A Theological Analysis* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 35–69.

<sup>9</sup> Volf, *End of Memory*, 131–151.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 134.

<sup>11</sup> Rowan Williams, *Resurrection: Interpreting the Easter Gospel*, rev. ed. (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 2002), 32.

wards” through the resurrection.<sup>12</sup> Jones puts the conclusion theologically: “the vision of the kingdom is a vision of wounds and brokenness fully healed rather than erased.”<sup>13</sup>

Jonathan Tran’s essay “Emplotting Forgiveness” gives this model its sharpest philosophical articulation. Drawing on Ricoeur, Tran argues that divine forgiveness operates by re-narration. “Forgiveness,” he writes, “presages eschatological destiny as it engrafts sinners into the larger story of God’s redemption of all things, giving new stories.” In that engrafting, “memories of horror become parts of a grander narrative called ‘the memory of redemption.’”<sup>14</sup> According to Tran, the healing of memory consists in our narratives being ‘re-emplotted’ by being integrated into an eschatological *telos* of Christ making all things new.

Volf has objected to such an account on serious theological grounds. Re-narration, he worries, does too little.<sup>15</sup> To say to a victim “your memory of horror is not all that you are” or to a perpetrator “you are better than your sins” stops short of what Christian forgiveness has classically claimed. For Volf, Christian forgiveness involves *remission*—the actual driving out of sin, the de-coupling of the sinner from the deed.<sup>16</sup> This means that the eschatological hope, for Volf, does not lie in memory’s re-narration but in its non-remembrance.

#### 4. UNION WITH CHRIST AND *YOBI-TSUGI*

Volf’s objection has force. A theology of memory that consisted only in helpful re-description would be vulnerable to the charge of narrative therapy in pious dress. But the charge holds only if re-narration is just that—a re-framing without anchor in reality. Christian re-emplotment of memory, however, speaks not merely of re-narration but of a deeper truth, a reality Paul names with his most characteristic phrase: the believer is “in Christ.”

The phrase, or its close variants (“in the Lord,” “in him”), occurs over one hundred and fifty times across the undisputed Pauline let-

<sup>12</sup> Richard B. Hays, *Reading Backwards: Figural Theology and the Fourfold Gospel Witness* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2014), 1–17.

<sup>13</sup> L. Gregory Jones and Célestin Musekura, *Forgiving As We’ve Been Forgiven: Community Practices for Making Peace* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2010), 98.

<sup>14</sup> Jonathan Tran, “Emplotting Forgiveness: Narrative, Forgetting and Memory,” *Literature and Theology* 23, no. 2 (2009): 228, 231.

<sup>15</sup> In the revised edition, Volf directly objects to Tran’s account along the same lines. See Volf, *End of Memory*, 256–257.

<sup>16</sup> Volf, *End of Memory*, 188–191.

ters.<sup>17</sup> Its meaning is plainly more than locative shorthand. The believer is described as having been “baptized into Christ Jesus” and so “baptized into his death” (Rom. 6:3); as having been “buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead... we too might walk in newness of life” (Rom. 6:4); as one whose “old self was crucified with him” (Rom. 6:6). The grammar is consistently participatory rather than imitative. Paul does not say that the believer *emulates* Christ’s death and resurrection, or *benefits from* them at a distance. He says she has been *united with* them; she has been buried *with* him, raised *with* him, crucified *with* him. The same logic governs the wider epistolary corpus: “I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me” (Gal. 2:20); “you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God” (Col. 3:3); “if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation” (2 Cor. 5:17).

Pauline participation language has been considered the linchpin for soteriology. For instance, Calvin states the relevant claim plainly at the head of Book III of the *Institutes*: “as long as Christ remains outside of us, and we are separated from him, all that he has suffered and done for the salvation of the human race remains useless and of no value for us.”<sup>18</sup> Calvin’s purpose in context is soteriological—he is explaining how the benefits of Christ become the believer’s—but the underlying observation is simple: what is true of Christ becomes, in some real and not merely fictitious sense, true of those who are in him.

Union with Christ and Paul’s participation language have been at the centre of debate in much recent biblical scholarship and modern theology.<sup>19</sup> Those debates are not the concern of this essay. The argument here borrows from Paul’s “in Christ” language a single, modest entailment:

<sup>17</sup> The standard count of “in Christ” and cognate phrases in Paul is given by Constantine R. Campbell, *Paul and Union with Christ: An Exegetical and Theological Study* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), who argues that the constellation of expressions is structurally central to Pauline theology rather than a stylistic tic.

<sup>18</sup> John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960), III.1.1.

<sup>19</sup> For a biblical-theological argument, see Michael J. Gorman, *Participating in Christ: Explorations in Paul’s Theology and Spirituality* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2019). For an alternative view, see Grant Macaskill, *Union with Christ in the New Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013). For a retrieval of Calvin’s grammar of participation in Christ, see J. Todd Billings, *Calvin, Participation, and the Gift: The Activity of Believers in Union with Christ* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007). For a recent analytic participatory account of the atonement, see Oliver D. Crisp, *Participation*

that to be in Christ is to be incorporated into a particular life, and so into the embodied history of that life. And this minimum is what is needed to answer Volf, because it is enough to underwrite the claim that re-employment of memory in Christ is more than mere re-narration: it tracks a real participation in Christ's history.

Two consequences for memory follow. First, if the believer's life has been drawn into Christ's in the way Paul's language indicates, then the self that remembers is now a self that remembers 'in Christ.' As §2 above traced, to remember is to narrate the past in a first-person register. When the soul's centre of gravity has been displaced into Christ ("your life is hidden with Christ in God," Col. 3:3), what is recollected is recollected by a self that has been re-located. The fragments are still remembered, but by someone newly placed. Second, because the body of Christ is itself a body that bears memory—a body that returned from the grave with its wounds intact—participation in *that* body is participation in a memory-bearing whole. The life into which the believer is incorporated is not an immaterial story; it is the lived history of a particular person whose own resurrected body keeps the marks of his past. To share in *that* life is to remember our own wounds in accordance with the wounds of Christ, with the eschatological expectation that what has happened to Christ will happen to us—that the wounds of the cross will become the hallmarks of the resurrected body.

The Japanese craft of *kintsugi* repairs broken ceramics with seams of gold or silver lacquer, illuminating rather than concealing the breaks. The technique has become a familiar metaphor for reconciliation in recent theology, not least through the work of Makoto Fujimura.<sup>20</sup> But it is a particular variant of this craft, *yobi-tsugi* ("calling-into mending"), that I want to use here as an illustration of what it means for our memories to be re-emplotted in Christ. In *yobi-tsugi*, when the original fragments of a broken vessel cannot be recovered or are missing entirely, fragments from another vessel—often from a later period and a quite different design—are summoned to fill the gaps.<sup>21</sup> The mended piece is no longer self-identical with the original, the foreign fragments visibly foreign in their seams of gold; and yet it is no longer two pieces but one—a new artifact in which fragments that did not begin together now belong together.

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*and Atonement: An Analytic and Constructive Account* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2022).

<sup>20</sup> Makoto Fujimura, *Art and Faith: A Theology of Making* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2020).

<sup>21</sup> See *Ibid.*, 49.

Several features of the technique make it apt as an illustration of memory transformed in Christ. First, the breaks are not denied; the cracks remain, traced now in gold. The memories of the painful events are not erased but kept, the wound visible. Yet, the missing fragments are not recreated *as if* they had been there all along—they come, openly, from elsewhere. So with memory: what redeems the meaning of the painful event is a story that comes from outside the self, the story of Christ's death and resurrection, into which the believer has been drawn. And finally, the resulting piece is genuinely a single artifact; the foreign fragments now constitute part of the self, becoming what the vessel now is. So, with our identity in Christ. We are, in some real way, truly incorporated into a life of Christ. If memory inevitably involves re-narration, the new context in which the painful memory now stands is Christ's resurrected body, the firstfruits of our own resurrection.

## 5. THE WOUNDS THAT REMAIN

This still leaves Volf's strongest argument, which is eschatological rather than ethical. Even granting that, this side of the *eschaton*, transformation rather than oblivion is the right account of what divine forgiveness does to memory, Volf can still maintain that the *final* state is non-remembrance. Some memories, on his account, are too atrocious to be redeemed; their only fitting eschatological resolution is forgetting. To articulate this point, he cites Augustine as corroborating evidence.

In *City of God* XXII.30, Augustine describes the saints in the heavenly city as "freed from all evil and filled with all good, enjoying unflinchingly the delight of eternal joys, forgetting all offences, forgetting all punishments."<sup>22</sup> They will have, in his memorable phrase, "no sensible recollection of past evils."<sup>23</sup> Volf takes this as warrant for his own position and presses it with characteristic boldness: even the memory of the cross, he argues, must finally be relinquished, "swallowed in [Christ's] own divine life as one of the Holy Three who are the Holy One."<sup>24</sup> On Volf's logic, since redemption is real and final, even the memory of what was redeemed *from* falls away.

Yet, there is one important factor to consider: the fact that the resurrected Christ bore physically visible wounds, wounds that carried the traumatically painful memory of the cross. This is significant because scripture portrays Christ's resurrected body as the first fruits of our res-

<sup>22</sup> Augustine, *City of God* XXII.30.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Volf, *End of Memory*, 177.

urrection. When Paul declares in 1 Corinthians 15:20 that Christ is risen as “the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep,” he is making a claim about more than the fact that Christ was numerically the first one to be raised. The resurrection of Christ is both the ground and revelation of our own resurrection to come. The resurrection of believers constitutes an organic whole—a single harvest separated only in time. Bavinck saw this clearly. “The physical resurrection of Christ,” he wrote in *The Wonderful Works of God*, “is not an isolated historical fact. It is inexhaustibly rich in meaning for Christ himself, the church, and for the whole world.”<sup>25</sup> In the *Reformed Dogmatics*, he insists that “in this resurrection the identity of the resurrection body with the body that has died will be preserved,” and that “Jesus arose with the same body in which he suffered on the cross and which was laid in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea.”<sup>26</sup> What is true of Christ’s resurrection is, *mutatis mutandis*, true of ours.

This means that the manner of Christ’s risen body is theologically diagnostic. And the manner is unambiguous: he returned bearing wounds. “Put your finger here, and see my hands,” he says to Thomas, “and put out your hand, and place it in my side” (John 20:27). This is not, I want to suggest, an incidental detail. Wounds are bodily memories. They are the past inscribed on the present. When Christ tells Thomas to place his finger in the marks, he is offering him his own memory of the cross. He knows what those marks mean because they are precisely what they appear to be: the lasting register of Friday on a body that has come through Sunday.

Some, of course, have read the wounds otherwise. John Calvin, in his commentary on John, argued that Christ’s wounds were merely temporary and pedagogical. They were retained “until the apostles were fully convinced that he was risen from the dead”; to suppose that Christ’s glorified body still bears wounds, Calvin says, would be “absurd.”<sup>27</sup> On Calvin’s view, the wounds belong to the era of the post-resurrection appearances, not to the body of glory.

But Calvin’s reading is the minority report. Peter Widdicombe has documented at length how the patristic and medieval tradition arrived at a different conclusion.<sup>28</sup> Augustine, in his *Tractates on John XXXVI.12*,

<sup>25</sup> Herman Bavinck, *The Wonderful Works of God*, trans. Henry Zylstra (Glenside, PA: Westminster Seminary Press, 2019), 367.

<sup>26</sup> Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, vol. 4, Holy Spirit, Church, and New Creation, trans. John Vriend (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 695–696.

<sup>27</sup> John Calvin, *Commentary on the Gospel According to John*, trans. William Pringle, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1949), 265 (on John 20:20).

<sup>28</sup> Peter Widdicombe, “The Wounds and the Ascended Body: The Marks of Crucifixion in the Glorified Christ from Justin Martyr to John Calvin,” *Laval*

says that the Son will judge “in the form in which he suffered, and rose again, and ascended into heaven,” for “He shall come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.”<sup>29</sup> Widdicombe rightly observes that, for Augustine, the wounds are not a temporary teaching device but the visible warrant for the justice of the judge: the marks on the body of the slain are themselves the basis for the right of the slain to render verdict on his slayers.<sup>30</sup>

Aquinas is more explicit still. In the *Summa Theologiae* III, q. 54, a. 4, he directly addresses the question whether Christ’s body in glory continues to bear its wounds. The objection he answers is exactly the one Calvin would later voice: wounds belong to corruption and imperfection, and so must surely have been removed when Christ assumed his glorified state. Aquinas replies that the scars belong “neither to corruption nor defect, but to the greater increase of glory, inasmuch as they are the trophies of His power.”<sup>31</sup> His conclusion is unequivocal: “the scars which Christ showed on His body after His Resurrection, have never since been removed from His body.”<sup>32</sup>

This patristic and medieval reading is not arbitrary. It coheres with the picture in the book of Revelation, in which the figure on the throne is “a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain” (Rev. 5:6). The angelic acclamation is “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain” (Rev. 5:12). The book of life is the book “of the Lamb that was slain” (Rev. 13:8). The slainness is not erased in glory; it is, on the contrary, the title of glory. The memory of the slaughter is not absent from the new creation. It is, rather, transposed into the very content of its joy.

The most striking witness, however, comes from Augustine himself. The same author Volz cites for eschatological non-remembrance writes, in the same book of *City of God*, that “the love we bear for the blessed martyrs makes us desire to see in the kingdom of heaven the marks of the wounds which they received for Christ’s name; and it may be that we shall indeed see them. For this will not be a deformity, but a badge of honour, and the beauty of their virtue.”<sup>33</sup> This passage is striking because

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*théologique et philosophique* 59, no. 1 (2003): 137–154.

<sup>29</sup> Augustine, *Tractates on the Gospel of John* XXXVI.12, trans. John W. Rettig, *Fathers of the Church* 88 (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1993), 96.

<sup>30</sup> Widdicombe, “The Wounds and the Ascended Body,” 147.

<sup>31</sup> Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* III, q. 54, a. 4, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province, 2nd rev. ed. (London: Burns, Oates & Washbourne, 1920).

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, ad 3.

<sup>33</sup> Augustine, *City of God* XXII.19, trans. Dyson, 1153.

Augustine speaks not of the resurrected Christ, but of the visibility of the wounds of the martyrs in heaven. The hope Augustine confesses presupposes exactly what Volf denies. If the martyrs in glory bear visible marks of their martyrdom, and if those marks function as honour rather than as shame, then memory of the martyrdom is preserved in the new creation, but transformed: not remembered as wound but as glory.

While there are tensions between Augustine's two passages, they are not ultimately in contradiction. The reconciliation lies in the preposition 'as.' The saints will have "no sensible recollection of past evils" *as evils*; what was wound will not be remembered as wound. But the events themselves are not erased from the heavenly memory—they are recontextualized. The cross is remembered, but as victory. The martyrdom is remembered, but as honour. The wound is seen, but as beauty. This is precisely the *yobi-tsugi* logic at the eschatological scale: the fragments are not discarded but summoned into a larger whole in which their meaning is reset.

If this reading is correct, the resurrection of the body, on the testimony of Christ's own body and of the tradition's reading of it, includes the persistence of memory's marks. What changes is not whether they are there but what they mean.

#### CONCLUSION: MY LORD AND MY GOD

The doctrine of the resurrection is sometimes treated in tandem with the eschatological promise that all tears will be wiped away (Rev. 21:4), as though all memories of pain are likewise to be wiped clean. Yet this essay has argued that the glory of the resurrection lies not in the erasure of memory but in its transposition. The proper Christian hope for memory is neither the cheap forgetting of "forgive and forget" nor the eschatological non-remembrance Volf has proposed, but the transformation of memory within the story of Christ. Painful memories are summoned into a larger story than the one in which they were broken. They are not erased; they are recontextualized. Such recontextualization rests on the ontological reality of the believer's union with Christ, in which her life can now be re-narrated from this new identity.

A note of epistemic honesty is owed in conclusion. To say that memories of pain will be transformed is not to say that we now know how. Makoto Fujimura has put it well: "our brokenness, in light of the wounds of Christ still visible after the resurrection, can also mean that through making, by honouring the brokenness, the broken shapes can somehow be a necessary component of the New World to come."<sup>34</sup> *Somehow* is the

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<sup>34</sup> Fujimura, *Art and Faith*, 51.

right word. We do not know how the memory of atrocity is to be transposed into joy. Volf is correct, against any glib triumphalism, that some memories are at present irredeemable. The temptation to premature meaning-making, to telling sufferers some version of what Kate Bowler has named the lie of “everything happens for a reason,” must be refused.<sup>35</sup> The responsible theological reply would be to refuse both the cheap closure of false meaning and the cheap closure of mere forgetting, and to wait on a transformation that has been promised in the resurrection of one wounded saviour and is not yet visible in our histories.

Thomas, in the upper room, was held there by Christ’s memory. He had refused his fellow disciples’ news—*I will never believe*—with the absolute-ness of a man who had already lost too much to risk losing more. When Jesus came and held out his hands, he gave him his own wounds, evoking the painful memory of the cross. The fragments of Thomas’s traumatic memory were summoned in that moment, into the larger story without his knowing it. He had remembered the cross as ending; he had now to remember it as beginning. The single confession he answered with—*my Lord and my God*—is what the transformation of memory sounds like, on the lips of someone who has been present to it. It is the language of a memory not erased but resurrected.

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<sup>35</sup> Kate Bowler, *Everything Happens for a Reason: And Other Lies I’ve Loved* (New York: Random House, 2018), xv–xx.