

My Recollections of Thomas F. Torrance
Excerpted from our family chronicle (begun in 2010)
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Fall 1970 [my 3rd year at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary]:

One of the major turning points of our lives came when Chris finally discovered a theologian who was genuinely interested in the relation of theology to science. It began one day when I was looking through the current periodicals at Gordon College's library (Winn Library), and I found that the *Evangelical Quarterly* had a review of two very promising books about science and theology. One was entitled *Space, Time and Incarnation*, and the other was *Theological Science*, and the author of the books was someone named Thomas F. Torrance [previously unknown to me]. Naturally I tried to learn more about him in order to determine whether he might be a mentor for post graduate study.

Torrance was the Professor of Christian Dogmatics at New College, which was the divinity school at the University of Edinburgh and was affiliated with the Church of Scotland (Presbyterian). He attracted my interest because he was extremely knowledgeable in the historic Reformed tradition (and its patristic and medieval antecedents) and at the same time fairly well read in the philosophical side of scientific literature (Einstein, Gödel, Polanyi, etc.)....

Here is where the Lord started "opening doors" for my going on to graduate study. It so happened that the Dean of New College, John McIntyre, was on an American tour and would be visiting Gordon-Conwell (to give a lecture and recruit students, as I recall). I found out that he was staying at Prof. Gwynn Walters' home and made an appointment to meet with him on the evening of 4 November. After I had explained my interests and ambitions, he kindly encouraged me to write to Prof. Torrance (Notepage and letter to Henry Baay, both dated 8 Nov. 1970). Wow, was I ever excited by that!

I immediately wrote a letter to Prof. Torrance (8 Nov.), explaining my background and asking if I was on the right track—would study in this area be an option at New College? He wrote back encouraging me to apply for admission and recommending that I read three authors in order to prepare: Einstein's epistemological essays (*The World as I See It*), Michael Polanyi (*The Tacit Dimension*), and Walter Elsasser (*Atom and Organism*, based on the ideas of Niels Bohr).¹

Spring 1971 Martha and I did not have to wait long to meet Professor Torrance. He wrote me that he would be lecturing at Yale Divinity School that April. So Martha and I drove down to New Haven on 22 April and heard his lecture on "The Perils of Scientific Theology."² I remember three things from this lecture: (1) the professor who introduced Torrance quipped that folks at Yale did not know there was such a thing as "scientific theology," much less that it had perils; (2) when Torrance stepped into the pulpit, his beaming face looked to us like an angel from heaven and (3) in his lecture, he made an important distinction between the medieval methods of *quaestio* and *interrogatio*. *Quaestio* only tried to give better reasons for particular answers to standard questions and to question the answers that others gave. *Interrogatio*, on the other hand, would probe the frontiers of knowledge by questioning the questions themselves. Torrance argued that a "scientific theology" would do the latter.

¹ Unfortunately, I have lost Torrance's first letter, but I distinctly remember this part of the content.

² This was actually the 3rd of a series of Taylor Lectures that year. The first two (which we missed) were: "Classical and Modern Attitudes of Mind" (20 April) and "The Social Coefficient of Knowledge" (21 April). See the Yale Divinity School Spring Convocation program in the folder labeled 1970-72.

There was no doubt in either of our minds from this point on. We had to go to Edinburgh. I applied and was admitted as a post-grad student (a one-year probation period toward becoming a doctoral candidate).

Fall 1971

I remember my first conversation with Prof. Torrance in his office at New College. Even though he had recommended Elsasser's book to me (based, I think, on its rejection of reductionism and its emphasis on "open systems"), he did not much like Niels Bohr or the "orthodox" versions of quantum theory that Bohr had inspired (although I argued that they were quite different from Bohr). Torrance was more of an Einsteinian, and he told me that complementarity was only a "halfway house" toward a more complete theory, as envisioned (but never fully realized) by Einstein.

Just for the record, I would later return to the epistemological writings of Einstein in the late 1980s, when I wrote the last chapter of *Creation and the History of Science* and came to appreciate that aspect of Torrance's interest. In the late 1990s, I wrote a paper on "Torrance and Einstein," in which I explored the issue of the comprehensibility of the natural world (what I had by then identified as a dilemma; Fall semester 1999). So, it took me 25 years or so to "come around."

The only time, I recall taking exception to anything my professor said was when he stated that time as we know it is fallen time (perhaps from Barth). I saw time as a dimension of space-time creation itself, so how could it be fallen? Presumably, TF had the transience of time in mind, in contrast to the coexistence of the three dimensions of space. Even here, I eventually came to see an important point in my professor's thinking.³

I was somewhat disheartened, but I went ahead and wrote up a thesis proposal (Thesis Proposal: The Logic of Complementarity in Science and Theology⁴). Both TF and John McIntyre accepted it.

The Autumn Term at the University of Edinburgh began on Monday, 11 Oct.⁵ (Martha's letter dated 8 Oct. 1971) and lasted through December. Chris attended lectures by both Professors Torrance and McIntyre—the two of them would together supervise my dissertation (no examinations). Martha listed my courses for her parents in a letter dated 11 Nov. 1971:⁶

General Theology—Profs Torrance & McIntyre.
Dogmatics II (Christology)—Prof. Torrance.

³ It took forty years, but I eventually came to think of the redeemed "future life" as the totality of our current lives cohering in the meaningful connectedness—inwardly, upwardly, and interpersonally—that we strive for each day of our lives.

⁴ I have no record of exactly when I wrote this Thesis Proposal, other than the fact that it refers to Hilary's *On the Trinity* (p. 2), which we read in Torrance's tutorial during the Winter Term of early 1972. The proposal also refers to Torrance's book, *Space, Time and Incarnation* (p. 4), which had been one of the inspirations behind my work (Fall 1970). At the end of his book, Prof. Torrance alluded heuristically to several developments in 20th-cent. maths and physics (esp. Gödel's incompleteness theorem and Polanyi's hierarchy of levels). I remember thinking that I should work through just one of these developments in detail.

⁵ A "Term" at New College was the equivalent of an academic quarter, not a full semester.

⁶ We do not have an official schedule of New College courses to check this list against, and it seems that an awful lot of classes were taught at the same time. But Martha clearly stated that Chris was happy with these particular courses and that he was keeping up with them all (same letter to M's folks dated 11 Nov. 1971). So, I will assume that Dogmatics II and III were both taught in the Autumn Term as stated, and Dogmatics I must have been taught in either the Winter or Spring Term.

Dogmatics IIIa (Doctrine of the Holy Spirit)—John Zizioulas.

Dogmatics IIIb (Eschatology)—James B. Torrance.

Post Graduate Seminar in Cosmology—Prof. Torrance.

Divinity III (Doctrine of the Trinity)—Prof. McIntyre.

Early 1972

During the Winter Term (Jan.-March 1972), I only audited a few classes. Most impressive among my learning experiences was a tutorial seminar (for honors and postgraduate students) that Prof. Torrance led on Hilary's treatise, *On the Trinity* (using the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers translation).⁷ About a dozen of us met in the John Baillie reading room (on the top floor) and took turns presenting papers on the reading for each week—a discipline that would shape me as much as had my work on interplanetary dust models with Dr Newkirk in Boulder (except that, rather than critiquing the student presentations, Torrance simply told us how he understood the text). I found the thinking of Hilary so profound and incisive that I did further reading in the patristics studies by G.L. Prestige and J.N.D. Kelly and made the Nicene and post-Nicene fathers the main focus of the theological part of my dissertation on complementarity.

One of my most important learnings was that some of the dichotomies that had given me so much trouble (e.g., natural vs supernatural and reason vs revelation) were virtually unknown to the Church fathers like Hilary (also Athanasius and Basil). They were working with a different semantic field—one in which the dichotomies of modern thought did not even arise (though they had dichotomies of their own). In other words, many modern dichotomies are constructs, not necessary truths. As Professor Torrance aptly phrased it in a later reference letter:

“...the great theologians of the first eight centuries...led him [Christopher] to look at basic concepts through different conceptual spectacles.” (My copy of Torrance's Fulbright Reference Letter dated 28 June 1993).⁸

Spring 1972

In the second week of spring break, Chris drove to Oxford with Prof. Torrance and his brother James for the annual meeting of the Society for the Study of Theology (SST; M's letter dated 26 Feb. and our joint letter to Henry dated 9 April 1972). Once a year theological scholars came from all over Britain to discuss papers on a topic chosen for the occasion. It was a chance for me to experience British theologians as a community. Even though they were often at odds with others on particular issues—particularly philosophical methods over against confessional ones—most of the members had known each other since their university days and treated each other with respect (largely men, but not exclusively). Perhaps this would be the community of Christian scholars I had been looking for (1968-70).

One year Professor Torrance let me drive his car the last stretch of the way back to Edinburgh. As I was swerving around some parked cars on a narrow village street, he remarked that I was “like a horse trying to get back home to the barn.”

May 1973 As Chris was nearing completion of my doctoral programme (British spelling), Prof. Torrance said he wanted to keep him at Edinburgh. He planned to add a new position in theology and

⁷ I am not sure which term the tutorial seminar on Hilary was offered. I place it in the Winter term because, if I recall correctly, it was associated with Dogmatics I, which was offered in either the Winter or Spring Term.

⁸ I penciled the date 28 June 1993 on Torrance's Fulbright Reference Letter, so it must be the date of the accompanying letter in which he asked me if it met my approval. The “OK?” in the upper left corner is in Tom's own hand.

science, for which I would be a top candidate (the only one, as it would turn out). In the meantime, he was able to offer me a one-year appointment as Lecturer in the Christian Dogmatics Department (Letter dated appointment from the Secretary of the University dated 3 July 1973).⁹ This temporary position would help prepare me for a later hire and, at the same time, let the New College faculty see how well I got on with the students.

After some discussion, it was decided that I would give lectures the following year in the history of Christian doctrine (in Dogmatics I, using James Orr, *The Progress of Dogma*), “scientific & theological method” (in Dogmatics II), “resurrection & miracle in the light of modern science” (also part of Dogmatics II) and seminar on the Theology of Religion (then a brand-new field).

Working with Prof. Torrance gave me the opportunity to know him better. I always found him to be gracious and appreciative. I also remember some of the proverbs he used over the years, not all of which were biblical:

“Higgledy piggedly.” (Describing any disorganized process)

“Like a cow staring at a barn door.” (Referring to someone who does not understand a new idea)

“From strength to strength.” (Commenting on my progress, using Ps. 84:5-7, “Happy are those whose strength is in you.... They go from strength to strength....”)

“Your quiver is full.” (Upon hearing of our having a 3rd son in 1985, using Ps. 127:4-5, “Like the arrows in the hand of a warrior are the sons of one’s youth. Happy is the man who has his quiver full of them.”)

Early 1974

As an extension of Dogmatics I, Prof. Torrance also turned over to me his tutorial seminar on Hilary’s treatise *On the Trinity* (reading notes on *De Trinitate* Part I). Teaching this seminar was my most profitable experience because it gave me the opportunity to work with students on the texts themselves (rather than lecturing about them). It would provide the model for what would be my longest-running class at Western Theological Seminary—seminars that I would lead on the Early Christian Theologians, Post-Nicene Theologians, Augustine, Luther, and the Early Reformers.

Meanwhile, Prof. Torrance had petitioned the University to hire two people in the Department of Christian Dogmatics: one to replace Canon Walls and a new one in theology and science. However, the positions had first to be advertised in all parts of the British world and there was some delay in getting those advertisements out. That delay would cost us dearly. It all depended on the formal approval of the University bureaucracy (which was beholden, in turn, to the Home Office in London).

April 1974

Finally, the Department of Christian Dogmatics received permission to hire from the University. Because the process had been delayed more than usual, however, new austerity measures [occasioned by the Arab oil boycott and the coal miners’ strike] were now in place, and they were only allowed to hire one person, rather than the two originally planned. As Martha’s letter goes on to say:

The interview was held on 16 April. The two candidates were myself (Chris) and Alasdair Heron, a former PhD student under Torrance who had been teaching at the Ecumenical Institute in Dublin (see below). Under the circumstances, Dr Heron was the obvious choice (Scots nationality, British citizenship, doctorate in pure patristics, more than a year of teaching experience).... As I went into

⁹ Prof. Torrance had previously recommended Christopher for an open position in the religion department at the University of Texas at Austin (letter to Martha’s parents dated 10 January 1973).

the interview, however, I had no intention of backing down. When Prof. McIntyre alluded to the dire economic circumstances, presumably as a way of justifying a difficult decision, I responded by boldly restating the vision I shared with Prof. Torrance: there was a real need for ministers and theologians to address the world of science and this was a time to build up, not to cut back.

Prof. Torrance was able to offer me a part-time position for the coming year as a “visiting lecturer” at New College.

June-July 1975

Later in July, I drove to Oxford with Professor Torrance to help him catalog the papers of Michael Polanyi (24-27 July according to M’s letter to David dated 27 July 1975¹⁰). Polanyi was in failing health at the time and near death in hospital (we weren’t able to visit him). Torrance had been a longtime friend, both Michael (and Magda) had invited him to collect all of his professional papers from his office at home (on Upland Park Rd) and ship them to Regenstein Library in Chicago for archival purposes.¹¹

August 1975

On 5 Aug., Prof. Torrance advised me of an up-coming opening at Western Theological Seminary in Holland, MI. He had just received a letter from the president, I. John Hesselink, about a plan to endow a new “chair” in the “historical-theological field.” At that time, WTS had one person (Donald Bruggink) teaching all of Church history and one (Eugene Osterhaven) teaching systematic theology. They needed a 3rd person to bridge the two fields (Hesselink’s “Dear Friends” letter dated 2 April 1975¹² and his undated Proposal to Establish the “John R. Mulder Professor of Theology” Faculty Chair).

TF immediately wrote to Hesselink to recommend my name for the new position, suggesting that he find me “some odd jobs” until the position would become vacant (Torrance’s memo to me from his summer home at Canty Bay, North Berwick, dated 6 Aug. 1975).¹³ At Torrance’s recommendation, I sent in my *curriculum vitae*....

Oct.-Nov. 1975

In mid-October, Chris received a letter from Dr John Hesselink, president of Western Theological Seminary (Hesselink’s letter dated 14 Oct. 1975, over two months after his initial correspondence

¹⁰ I first mentioned this up-coming opportunity in a letter to Martha, then in Beverly, dated 17 June 1975.

¹¹ Prof. Torrance later wrote up the entire story of his relationship to Polanyi and the collection of his papers. It was published under the title “Michael Polanyi and the Christian Faith—A Personal Report” in *Tradition and Discovery* 27, no. 2 (2000-2001), 26-32 (<https://www.missouriwestern.edu/orgs/polanyi/tad%20web%20archive/tad27-2/tad27-2-pg26-33-pdf.pdf>). See p. 31 for mention of our role in the project.

¹² The copy of this “Dear Friends” letter was given to me years later by Prof. Hesselink with a note saying that he had also sent out a “PR sheet” that he could not locate.

¹³ John Hesselink would later quote from Torrance’s commendatory letter as follows “I have just the man for you. Until recently he was my colleague here at New College, but because of a budget cutback I had to reduce my staff. I let him go with tears.” (Cited in Hesselink’s letter of appreciation on the occasion of occasion of my retirement from Western Theological Seminary in May 2012).

with Prof. Torrance¹⁴). He explained that a new chair in history and theology would be open for the fall of 1977 (“within two years”). In the meantime, Hesselink wanted me to come to Holland to give a lecture related to my dissertation—“providing you could make it understandable enough for the average student.”¹⁵ Martha and I were both excited about this unexpected lead.... The connection was an indirect one—through Prof. Torrance, whom Hesselink said he knew “rather well.” In fact, they had known each other as fellow students of Karl Barth. As I was learning (the hard way): it’s not what you know....

Sept. 1979

[Among the many good friends we had made at Gordon Divinity School] was Claude Décrevel, a wonderful francophone who had studied mathematics as an undergrad in Switzerland. Claude was engaged to a young lady named Anne-Marie, and the two were soon married....

After 6 years of mission work in francophone Africa, the Décrevels moved back to Switzerland. Claude taught high-school math in order to fulfill an obligation to the Swiss government and, at the same time, managed to resume his theological studies and earn a Master’s degree (letter dated 22 Sept. 1979). He wrote a dissertation on Edinburgh theologian, Thomas Torrance (with whom I had studied), in which he concluded by discussing the possibility that Torrance’s work would be carried on by a continuing circle of Torrancian theologians. After consulting me on this question, Claude cited a letter in which I expressed concern that Torrance’s students were too scattered to form a coherent group. (Many years later such a circle would be formalized as the T.F. Torrance Theological Fellowship—I may have been a good historian, but clearly not much of a prophet).

Spring quarter 1981

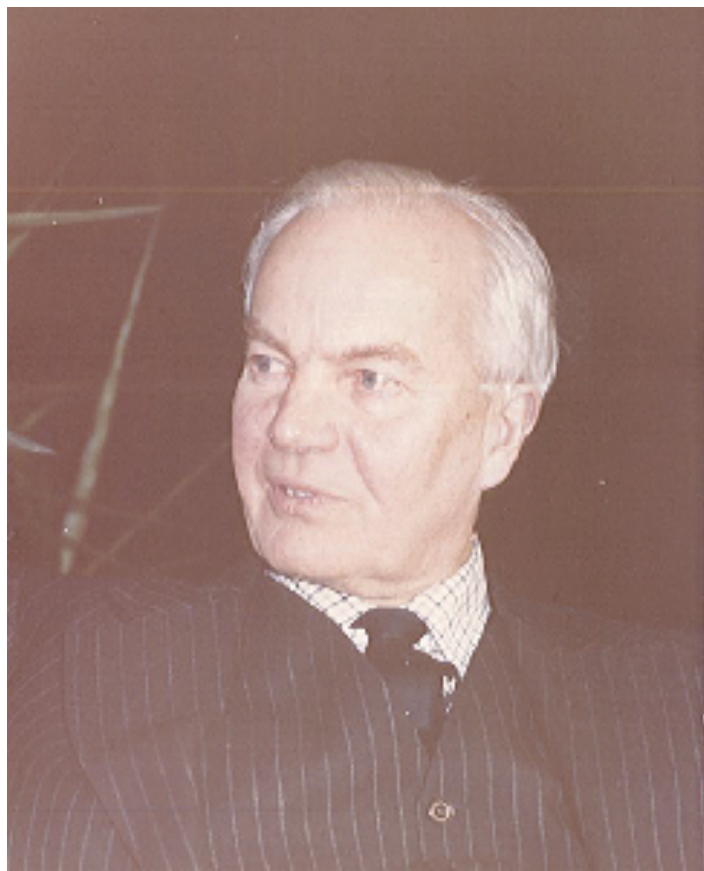
In mid-March, Prof. Torrance was touring through the States and made a special stop (at Hesselink’s invitation) to speak (*Holland Sentinel* clipping dated 13 March 1981) and visited us in Holland (13-19 March on C’s plan Calendar). This was a very meaningful event for us—the first time the professor with whom I had studied and for whom I had hoped to work would see us in our new setting.

[As I recall, it was during this visit that John Hesselink did the full-length interview with Torrance that was published in *Reformed Review*.¹⁶]

¹⁴ Meanwhile, Hesselink had written Prof. Torrance to explain why he had not contacted me (travel, teaching, etc.), but that there was “a very good possibility that we might be able to use him if he can wait for a year or so” (Torrance’s letter to me dated 20 Oct. 1975).

¹⁵ President Hesselink added that an arrangement might be worked out with Hope College whereby I would teach half-time in physics and half-time in theology, but this part of the plan turned out to be unworkable, and WTS hired me fulltime.

¹⁶ The interview was published as “A Pilgrimage in the School of Christ—An Interview with T.F. Torrance,” *Reformed Review* 38 (1984).



Prof. Thomas Torrance in 1981¹⁷

Fall quarter 1982

Professor Torrance passed my name on to James McCord, president of Princeton Theological Seminary (whom I had already met at the International Academy of Religious Sciences meeting in Spring quarter 1982) and chairman of the Center for Theological Inquiry (CTI). In due course, I received an invitation to be a resident member of the CTI during my sabbatical quarter in the Spring of 1984 (M's Feb. 1983 newsletter).

Spring quarter 1984 [my sabbatical term at the CTI, writing ch. 3.1 of *Creation and the History of Science*]

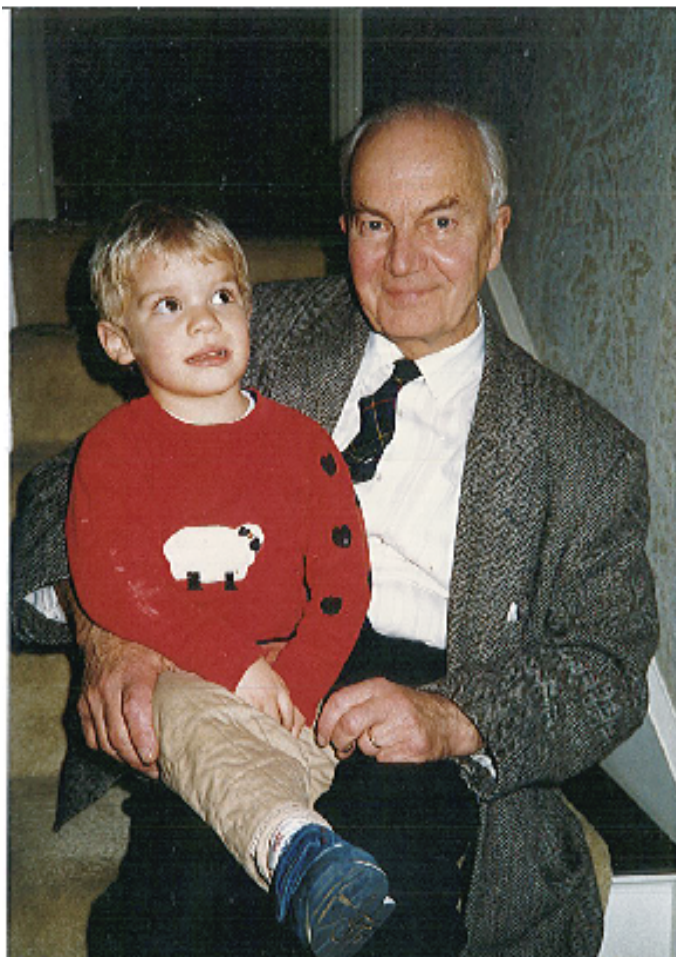
Professor Torrance visited Princeton Theological Seminary in late March to lecture (on 27 March on C's plan Calendar) and attend the installation of Thomas Gillespie as president of Princeton Seminary (28 March). We enjoyed having my professor dine with us on several times. He was great with the boys, particularly reading picture books. Martha was impressed with the way he scooped them up into his lap and read. One of the books he read *Mike Mulligan and his Steam Shovel*, (M's April 1984 newsletter). Martha recalls how he pronounced it a "very American story," due, we think, to its glamorization of industrial technology.

Torrance was hailed by many students as a needed evangelical voice at PTS. They came out to hear him and loved to talk with him after his lectures.

¹⁷ This photo was taken by my student Itoh Katsuhiro, when Prof. Torrance was addressing the faculties of Western and Calvin seminaries on 19 March 1981.

Spring quarter 1987 [another sabbatical term at the CTI, writing ch. 4 of *Creation and the History of Science*]

Back in Princeton, Thomas Torrance made his biannual visit for the CTI board in late April (28-30 April on C's Plan Calendar). Of course, we had him over to our townhouse for dinner. He and Patrick got along well and even blew bubbles together on the front steps of our townhouse (photo of Torrance with Patrick on his lap).



Patrick Kaiser w. Prof. Torrance, Princeton, April 1987

Spring quarter 1988 Chris's theological mentor, Thomas Torrance, initiated a series of dialogues between the Reformed churches (the WARC) and the Eastern Orthodox churches (first mentioned to Chris in a letter of 13 March 1983). At his request, I was invited to attend the first "official" meeting of the Orthodox-Reformed International Dialogue under the auspices of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (the cost of my travel was covered by WTS as its contribution to WARC). Since both communions placed a high value on theology, it was agreed to base the meetings on our common confessional standard, the Nicene (Niceno-Constantinopolitan) Creed in its original form (without the Western addition of the *filioque* clause). The main purpose of these meetings was to promote interfaith relationships and to write up joint statements of our common beliefs and distinctive traditions for the benefit of our churches.

Fall quarter 1988

Professor Torrance arrived in Holland (Chris met him at the Gerald R. Ford Airport) for a series of lectures and for a three-day visit (17-20 Oct. 1988 on my Plan Calendar). I was honored to have him speak in my own class on Biblical and Scientific Views of Creation and remember feeling very proud of my longtime connection with Torrance.

Prof. Torrance left for Princeton, and I followed him, to attend a science-theology “consultation” at the CTI (21-23 Oct. 1988 on my Plan Calendar). It was nice for me to be back in Princeton just a year and a half after my second sabbatical there and also to have more time with Prof. Torrance (who had once again engineered my invitation).

Spring quarter 1989

In late April, a reception honoring Professor Torrance was held at the CTI in Princeton, sponsored by publisher Helmers & Howard (who were soon to release an expanded edition of his book, *The Christian Frame of Mind*). At the recommendation of James Loder...I was invited to make a short presentation on “his work in the interrelation of theology and science” (Letter from Helmers & Howard dated 10 April 1989 and a Reception program dated 30 April). One of the points I stressed in my talk (as I recall) was Torrance’s ability to illustrate his theological ideas by citing Hebrew verbs (like the three Hebrew terms for redemption).¹⁸

On 8 March, I flew to Zurich, Switzerland, to attend the 3rd official meeting of the Orthodox-Reformed Dialogue. We convened in Kappel, Switzerland and stayed at the Haus der Stille und Besinnung (“House of Tranquility and Contemplation”). We had begun our conversations with papers and discussion on the Trinity, and this meeting was to move on to the topic of our respective Christological traditions.

I had been asked to address the methodological question of whether we should start from the NT witness concerning the Cross and Resurrection or from the Church’s doctrine of the Trinity (letter from Lukas Vischer dated 16 March 1991 in the permanent file)....

My paper proved to be more controversial than my earlier one on the doctrine of the Trinity.... However, Professor Torrance came to my defense (as always in public) and stated that if anyone could get any good theology out of critical NT studies, I was the one to do it. My paper was eventually published and was even summarized in an important review article.¹⁹

Summer 1996

At the end of June, Chris flew to Edinburgh to attend the sesquicentennial of New College. I had been invited to attend as a former lecturer (1993-95), and my registration fees were waved accordingly. I traveled (and shared a room in Holland House at Pollock Halls) with Bob Palma, a fellow student of Professor Torrance.... It was a very emotional experience for me to be back in Edinburgh after 21 years’ absence.... [We] had supper with Professor Torrance at the New Club on Princes St (1 July²⁰)...[and] celebrated his being awarded an honorary DD at graduation services in McEwan Hall (photo of myself and Prof. Torrance after the service on 6 July....

¹⁸ The three Hebrew verbs were *padah* (to redeem from slavery in Egypt), *kipper* (to atone, expiate), and *ga’al* (to act as kinsman redeemer).

¹⁹ “The Incarnation and the Trinity: Two Doctrines Rooted in the Offices of Christ,” *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 43 (1998), 221-55; objectively reviewed by Steven C. Salaris, “Christology in the Reformed-Orthodox Dialogue,” *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 38 (Fall 2001), 432-43 (436-7, 440-41, 442).

²⁰ All these July dates come from my handwritten notes, “Edinburgh Walks June-July 1996.”



Chris w. Prof. Torrance, 6 July 1996

While in Edinburgh, I took bus #15 to Braid Farm Road to visit the Torrances at their home (37 Braid Farm Road), and enjoyed a lunch with Professor Torrance at the Braid Hills Hotel (11 July).



Thomas & Margaret Torrance at home (1996)

January 2000

In mid-January, Chris flew to Edinburgh for the 6th meeting of the Oriental Orthodox-Reformed Dialogue, which was held at the Carberry Tower (on the east side of Edinburgh, just south of Musselburgh, 11-15 Jan. 2000 according to the official Communiqué). ...I had contacted Professor Torrance and he invited me (email from TFT dated 19 Nov. 1999) to visit him at his home (37 Braid Farm Road) and have lunch with him at the Braid Hills Hotel (Monday 10 Jan. 2000 on my Plan Calendar). I particularly wanted to talk with him because I was preparing an article on his use of the epistemological writings of Albert Einstein, and I had a list of questions for clarification. My article began by analyzing TF's citations of Einstein, and it concluded by pressing the ideal of intelligibility into the area of the evolutionary origin of human intelligence (a full circle).²¹ In general, Torrance was not keen on evolutionary theory (any more than he was on New Testament criticism...); but he admired my willingness to give the theory the benefit of the doubt and work through its consequences. When I finally sent TF the full manuscript of my article, he responded very kindly, saying:

"Your chapter is quite superb, and marvelously documented. It makes me regret again very much that I could not get New College to keep you here [back in 1974]! But I guess I must recall Romans 8.28!

"Thank you, Christopher, very much indeed for your truly excellent contribution to Elmer Colyer's book—I am delighted with it." (Email from Torrance dated 22 June 2000)

I distinctly remember sitting across from Tom in the upstairs library of the Torrance home, where we were surrounded by all of his books and papers. After going over all my questions about the paper, we talked about some other matters, and then my professor looked me straight in the eye and said, "And you were wrong about Bohr!" I couldn't help chuckling—I was much more secure in my own ideas (and career) than I had been back in 1971 (Fall 1971).

But January 2000 was the last time I would be able see my mentor and speak with him in person. I had benefitted from his guidance and patronage for nearly thirty years (1970-2000). From here on I would have to make my own way in the tangled world of academia (see January term 2009).

January and Spring semester 2002

In early January, Chris emailed some family news to his old professor, Tom Torrance. TF responded by urging me to write more books (with two rather pointed references to the publishing record of Alister McGrath; email from TFT dated 8 Jan. 2002)....

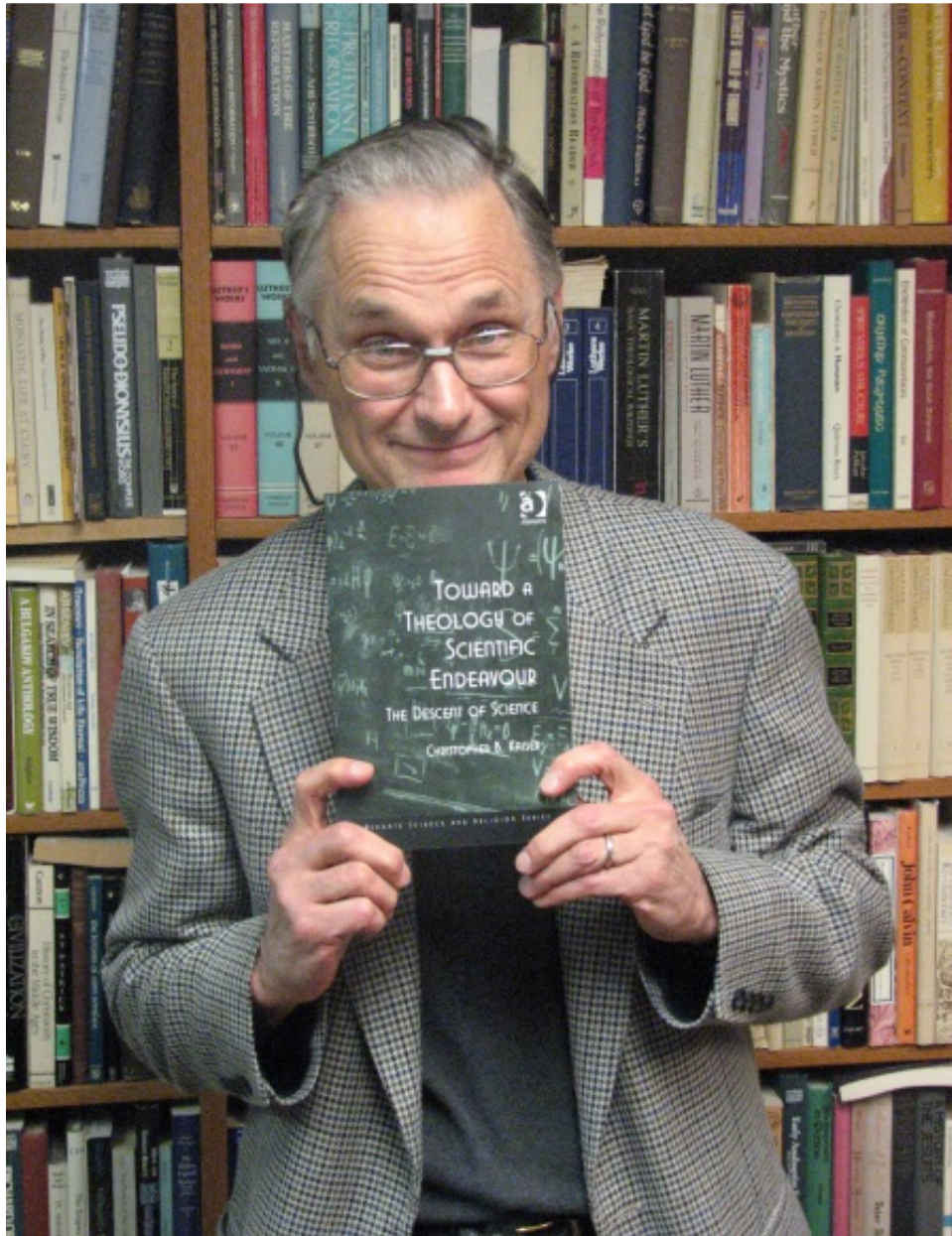
That email (8 Jan. 2002) was the very last that I would hear directly from my professor (over 30 years after Martha and I had first met him at Yale Divinity School; see Spring 1971). When I sent him a Christmas card in December 2003, I heard back from his eldest son, Thomas, that he had suffered a "lacunar stroke" and was henceforth living in a nursing home in Edinburgh (Herriot-Watt University letterhead from Thomas S. Torrance dated 26 Dec. 2003). In 2007, I received a Christmas card from Tom & Margaret Torrance, but was clearly signed by someone else. That card was postmarked 20 Nov., and my professor died two days after that.

Torrance's final words would eventually have their desired effect [and resulted in my writing *Toward a Theology of Scientific Endeavour: The Descent of Science*].

²¹ Published as "Humanity in an Intelligible Cosmos: Non-Duality in Albert Einstein and Thomas Torrance," in *The Promise of Trinitarian Theology: Theologians in Dialogue with T. F. Torrance*, ed. Elmer M. Colyer (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001), 239-67.

Fall semester 2007

[*Toward a Theology of Scientific Endeavour* finally came out five years later.]



Chris holding his new book, Fall 2007

The dedication page read, "For the Very Reverend Professor Thomas Forsyth Torrance, mentor and friend."