

That All Shall Agree: On David Bentley Hart's Interpretation of Romans 5:18-19

Daniel O'Brien

Publication Date

08-12-2023

License

This work is made available under a Exclusive rights in copyrighted work license and should only be used in accordance with that license.

Citation for this work (American Psychological Association 7th edition)

O'Brien, D. (2021). *That All Shall Agree: On David Bentley Hart's Interpretation of Romans 5:18-19* (Version 1). University of Notre Dame. <https://doi.org/10.7274/24734364.v1>

This work was downloaded from CurateND, the University of Notre Dame's institutional repository.

For more information about this work, to report or an issue, or to preserve and share your original work, please contact the CurateND team for assistance at curate@nd.edu.

My first semester, I spent a lot of time in Hesburgh—but it wasn't really a library to me. It was a study spot, and a place to hang out with friends, sure, but the books on the shelves seemed little more than decoration. But when my professor for my theology class in the Program of Liberal Studies announced that we would have the opportunity to write a research paper, my eyes became opened to the treasure that had been before me the whole time.

I was incredibly excited to do research—a process which I had enjoyed immensely in my junior and senior year history class in high school—on a topic of my choice in theology—my intellectual passion. The trouble was that I did not know where to start. Thankfully, my professor provided us with an entire class period devoted to how to engage with the library's resources. Here, I learned how to use OneSearch to locate articles, books, book reviews, and more; I was also shown the specific library guide for Theology and Religion and was given the contact information for all of the librarians. While I was grateful for these resources, I did not fully appreciate their value at first: my initial vision to use online journals (with perhaps two or three books generally related to the subject if I were feeling ambitious) remained. This vision quickly faded when I began to try to find online resources on my own. I was overwhelmed by the sheer quantity of works related to my project and had no idea how to sift through them all to find the sources most pertinent to my project on the admittedly specific topic of universalist interpretations of Romans 5:18-19—the intersection of a niche theological position and just two sentences of biblical text. But remembering my professor's emphasis on the fantastic helpfulness of the librarians, I decided to reach out to Dr. Alan Krieger, the Theology and Philosophy Librarian. This was perhaps the best decision I made during the course of the semester-long project. Besides giving me advice as to how to better use

the libraries online databases, including the ATLA Religion Database, he pointed me to several areas within the library itself to find physical books on the subject, including commentaries on Romans, books on universalism, and journal articles on the specific intersection between the two.

As I had rarely set foot beyond the first two floors of the library, going up to the twelfth floor of the library was a journey into the unknown. Yet when I arrived, the theology nerd in me soon felt like a kid in a candy store: scores and scores of scholarly works in numerous languages on countless different subjects lay before me, in rows upon rows of shelves. Yet thanks to Dr. Krieger's advice, I quickly found the areas relevant to my topic of research and soon began piling books on one of the desks. After I had exhausted my initial physical search, I once again referenced OneSearch in order to find more works in other areas of the floor and even other floors, thanks to the map function present on the website. Some of these works I checked out and brought back to my dorm, but many of them I simply left on the shelves—because from that day on I studied on the twelfth floor for the rest of the semester. Even when doing work totally unrelated to my project, my mind would slowly drift to it—and when it did, any of the works I needed could be in my physical hands in thirty seconds, even if I had not checked them out. If a scholar cited an interesting or relevant journal article in a work I was reading, the referenced journal itself would be sitting on a shelf less than ten yards away. There have been times where I have spent over an hour in the library simply following a trail of citations, book to book, soaking in as many perspectives on the topic as possible: while I ended up officially checking out twelve of the fourteen sources I cite in my paper, I easily consulted twice as many in my time on the twelfth floor. I truly became immersed in that floor of the library, and in doing so my understanding of the

topic was enhanced to a degree that would not have been possible if I hadn't followed Dr. Krieger's advice and engaged with the library's incredible print resources.

Although I ended up using primarily print resources, this project taught me how to effectively use the library's digital resources as well. I now consider myself adept at OneSearch, in using both keywords and the search filters; in particular, I found the Peer-reviewed Journals filter to be incredibly useful. Often I found that the digital resources and the print resources complemented each other quite well: sometimes I would peruse digital versions of journal articles before checking out in print those I found to be useful, and other times I would consult digital versions of books or articles I had already checked out in print if they were not with me at the time. Furthermore, after my initial foray into the twelfth floor where I simply walked to the areas Dr. Krieger recommended, the ability to use OneSearch's map feature to locate print works undoubtedly saved me a significant amount of time (and most likely frustration too) and allowed me to quickly locate resources on all floors.

Simply put, without both the digital and print resources the library has to offer and the generous help of the librarians, I would not have been able to complete my research project in the way I was able to. I am not only incredibly grateful to Hesburgh Library for helping me complete this project with a higher level of scholarly engagement, but also for introducing me to the incredible intellectual resources the library has to offer, which I will certainly treasure for the rest of my time at Notre Dame.