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THE MYSTICAL MEANING OF SCRIPTURE: MEDIEVAL AND MODERN PRESUPPOSITIONS

GRACE M. JANTZEN

In 1506 Wynkyn de Worde, one of the foremost printers in England, published a book entitled *The Pilgrimage of Perfection*, in which he expresses great concern for the readers of Scripture of his time that they "lene all togyder to the litteral sense of scripture, and not to ye spiritual or mistical sense". Four and a half centuries later, theologians and Biblical scholars find it difficult to understand such motivation, let alone to share it. Mysticism in much modern thinking stands for subjective psychological states characterized by terms like ecstasy, union and ineffability.[1] In many book shops it is categorized with magic and the occult. In so far as the "mystical sense" of Scripture is remembered, it is thought of, often, as a web of pious fantasy spun by medieval authors who found free association more congenial than historical accuracy, and from which we have been mercifully delivered by modern critical scholarship. Wynkyn de Worde's fears that readers of the Bible will "lene all togyder to the litteral sense of scripture" have been fulfilled in a far greater measure than even he could have foreseen.

I do not wish to undervalue in any way the enormous gains in our understanding of the Bible made possible by modern historical and critical study, or the fruitfulness of recent approaches of narrative interpretation. Nevertheless, I suggest that the virtual disappearance of study of the mystical sense of scripture is both a symptom and a cause of our increasing intellectual and spiritual poverty. In this paper I wish to outline what was intended by the "mystical meaning of scripture" and thereby indicate some shifts in hermeneutical principles from medieval to modern times, particularly in relation to the spiritual life. These shifts are closely related to the drastic change from medieval to modern presuppositions of what mysticism is, and this will be a subtheme in what I have to say.

From patristic times through the Middle Ages and until the Reformation, the mystical meaning of Scripture was considered to be of primary importance. There were, of course, changes of nuance and emphasis during those centuries, and their view of Scripture and its exegesis was of course not monolithic.[2] For the purposes of this paper, however, I shall for the most part draw attention not to the differences, but to the similarity and continuity of presuppositions and hermeneutical principles, considering in turn their understanding of the purpose of Scripture, the goal which the interpretation of Scripture was intended to achieve, and the methods by which it was held that this goal could be accomplished.

1. The Purpose of Scripture

According to medieval students of the Bible, and consistent with their patristic sources, the purpose of Scripture could be understood only with reference to Christ. Christ is the Logos, the Word of God who brings the good news of the love of God to us, and thus restores us to God by his Incarnation. This message of Christ we receive through the tradition, which goes back to the apostles who had direct contact with Jesus, and it is confirmed by the Holy Spirit in his transforming action in our lives and communities. It is also recorded in the Gospels.

From this it follows that the Incarnation, understood with reference to our salvation, is the fundamental hermeneutical principle. Medieval students of the Scripture do not start with Biblical exegesis and work towards a theology; they start with the work of Christ for us and in us, and use this as the key to understanding Scripture. Biblical interpretation is therefore seen to be fundamentally related to worship, the worship of God with our whole minds as we seek to penetrate the biblical books, and with our whole selves as we are transformed into the image of Christ by means of that study.

Because Jesus the Incarnate Word has shown us that God's intention to us is an intention of love and reconciliation, and because Jesus drew on the Hebrew Scriptures in his teaching to make God's ways known to us, it follows that we have in Jesus both the principle and the example of how those Scriptures should be interpreted. Christ used the Scriptures to show "the things concerning himself", the way in which they found their fulfilment in him and his work of reconciliation. Accordingly the Scriptures are for us also the Word of God in a secondary sense; they point to Christ who is the Word of God in the primary sense. Hence it was held that everything in Scripture (indeed, every *word*, sometimes) pointed to him, and to our restoration to God through him. Boniface, in his *Ars Grammatica*, expressed it succinctly: To understand something *is* to see it in relation to Christ.[3]

This method of interpreting the Bible in terms of its relationship to Christ goes back at least to Origen, who in turn drew on the practices of allegorizing already prevalent with Philo the Jew, and Origen's mentor, Clement of Alexandria, and who exercised an influence on the Latin West through the translation of Rufinus. Origen discusses exegesis in some detail in his book *On First Principles*. Just, as in his view, a human being consists of body, soul and spirit, so also the Scripture has three corresponding levels of meaning: the literal, the moral, and the mystical or spiritual.[4] Origen considers the mystical meaning to be real and important; indeed, he takes it to be the most important of all the three senses, though often it is hidden in an obscure passage, or is something which would be a "stumbling block" if taken literally.[5] On the whole, the mystical meaning of Scripture is the one that shows its significance in relation to Christ. Thus, for example, Origen cites St Paul's discussion of the ancient Israelites' drinking of the water from the rock which Moses struck for them, an account which St Paul concludes with the statement, "And that rock was Christ". This procedure, by which the apostle finds the deepest meaning of the ancient Scripture fulfilled in Christ, is taken as normative.

The threefold sense of Scripture is often reduced by patristic writers, including Origen himself, to a twofold distinction between the literal and the mystical. The "mystical", again, is intended as an objective meaning, not a subjective fantasy, let alone a mere state of mind. The contrast between literal and mystical is in no way a contrast between objective and subjective, but rather the

contrast between the old covenant and the new, the letter and the spirit, the promise and the fulfilment. It is for this reason that the mystical meaning in patristic exegesis centres on Christ, who is the fulfilment of all the promises and the bringer of the new covenant.

In Origen this fulfilment was seen, sometimes, more in terms of the Christ-Logos than in terms of the historical Jesus; and it was partly for this reason that the Church took exception to his writings.[6] With the Cappadocian Fathers, however, influenced as they were by the strongly incarnational Christology of Irenaeus, the mystical meaning of Scripture is the meaning which interprets the passage in question in relation to the Incarnation and its redemptive significance. A famous example is Gregory of Nyssa's *Life of Moses*. Gregory first recounts for his Hellenized readers the events of Moses as given in Jewish scriptures, and then proceeds to explain their spiritual or mystical meaning; the light of the burning bush becomes Christ the Radiance of the world; the manna is the Word, Christ, who comes down from heaven and is born of a virgin; even the rod that changed to a snake before Pharaoh is "a figure of the mystery of the Lord's incarnation" which frees those who are bound under the tyranny of the evil one.[7] Thus, the movement from the literal to the mystical sense is not a movement away from historical reality but rather a movement to a deeper understanding of its objective significance, as found in Christ.[8]

A delightful example in Western patristic writing of drawing out the mystical meaning of a passage of Scripture is found in Augustine's exposition of Psalm 89.6[9], which reads, in the version Augustine was commenting upon, "For who is he among the clouds who shall be compared unto thee, Lord?" Augustine was indignant at the very thought that this should be taken in no more than its straightforward sense:

> Does it appear to you, brethren, a high ground of praise, that the clouds cannot be compared to their Creator? If it is taken in its literal, not in its mystical meaning, is it not so: what? are the stars that are above the clouds to be compared with the Lord? what? can the sun, moon, angels, heavens, be even compared with the Lord?

He then proceeds to elucidate the mystical meaning, in which the clouds are compared, first to the flesh in general, as that which veils the brightness of the spirit (the sun); and then to the flesh of Jesus Christ in the Incarnation, which veiled the heavenly brightness of his divinity from human eyes.[10]

This idea of the mystical meaning of Scripture as the essence of its significance for us was developed and refined throughout the medieval period, with the "mystical" itself being subdivided into further categories. Thus, for example, Bonaventure in his *Breviloquium* explains that

> the depth of scripture consists in a multiplicity of mystical interpretations. Besides the literal sense, some passages have to be interpreted in three different manners, namely allegorically, morally, and tropologically. There is *allegory*, when one fact points to another, by reference to which one should believe. There is *tropology* or *morality*, when facts make us understand rules of conduct. There is *anagogy* or elevation of the mind towards the eternal felicity of the saints.[11]

Different thinkers subdivided the concept in different ways; but common to the writers of the late medieval hermeneutical tradition and on into the Reformation we find still the Christological focus which had been to the fore in patristic writings. Martin Luther took this up in his early *Dictata super Psalterium* of 1513-15. He distinguished between two meanings of the Old Testament, the literal-historical, and the literal-prophetic meaning, by which he means its significance to Jesus Christ and the Church. On this basis Luther maintained that Christ is the *sensus principalis* of Scripture, the one in whom it all hangs together. This Christological hermeneutical principle ties together all the senses of Scripture: the literal, and the various mystical senses – allegorical, tropological, and anagogical – in the central focus on Christ.[12]

Now, taking the Incarnation as the fundamental hermeneutical principle is relatively plausible in terms of the four Gospels, and these were indeed taken as the key to understanding all Scripture. But it is far from obvious in the case of other books of the canon: how could it be said that the accounts of the kings of Israel and Judah, or the cynicism of Ecclesiastes, or the meticulous details about clean and unclean beasts in Leviticus all really refer to Christ? Yet here again it was held that the Incarnation gives the clue. Just as Christ was really the divine Son of God though he became truly man for our sakes, so also all Scripture was genuinely the Word of God pointing to Christ for our redemption, though it was given in human forms. Just as the human flesh both revealed and concealed the divine Son, so the words of Scripture both reveal and conceal its full meaning. The eyes of the disciples had to be opened before they could recognize Jesus as the Son of God; just so must we be spiritually enlightened to discern Christ in all of Scripture. It was the task of the leaders of the faith to show the depth of meaning of Scripture: hence the examples of Gregory of Nyssa and Augustine already quoted, and the medieval practice of "glossing" the Scripture – that is, copying interpretative comments of the fathers either in the margins or interlinearly.[13]

Implicit in this is a further major hermeneutical principle, namely that of the unity of the Scriptures. Because of the Incarnation, the Bible can be known to be unlike any other book. It is the revelation of God's salvific intentions to humankind, the way in which the message of his love can penetrate our hearts. Accordingly, no Scripture is to be taken in isolation, but each part is to be compared to every other part, with the Gospels taking pride of place, because they are the primary testimony to Christ. Medieval authors were on the whole not oblivious of the fact that the books of the Bible were composed by a wide variety of authors writing in very diverse circumstances; and to a certain extent this was recognized to be important. But far more important than the question of what the original author "really meant" by any given passage was what the Holy Spirit, the primary Author, "meant". To the extent that they did concern themselves with the author's intentions they might follow the Alexandrians and say that although the

human writer was aware only of the historical meaning, the Holy Spirit used this to convey a mystical meaning as well, though this was not part of the author's intention. Or, less likely, they would follow the Antiochenes and say that the author was indeed aware of the mystical meaning which was divinely revealed to him, but that he deliberately veiled it in the historical meaning, just as Christ deliberately took flesh in the Incarnation.[14] But the more fundamental issue was not the human author's intentions, but the intention of God the Spirit, and this could be discussed only from the point of view of the Incarnation. In so far as the books of the Bible are Scripture, therefore, they are the unified Word of God pointing spiritually to the primary Word of God who is Christ.

The physical body of Christ was real and important, and so also is the literal or historical sense of Scripture. This is not to be ignored, and certainly not to be violated. Indeed, it is taken as the foundation upon which understanding of Scripture rests, without which there could be no revelation, just as there could be no Incarnation without a real human body of Christ. Some medieval exegetes like Andrew of St Victor made more of this foundation than others did,[15] but they all agreed that it was indispensible. But they agreed, also, that veiled by this historical sense is the inner mystical sense, and it is this which must be discerned. Should anyone get stuck on the historical sense to the exclusion of the mystical sense, that would be equivalent to recognizing the humanity of Christ only, and not his divinity, thereby missing the central point of the Incarnation.

The ever present danger of stressing these mystical meaning(s) of scripture was that exegesis could degenerate into sheer fantasy, with interpreters reading whatever they liked into the text and then dignifying their speculations with the term "mystical". Modern thinkers tend, partly for that reason, to dismiss the idea of a mystical meaning of Scripture; and it cannot be denied that in the Middle Ages there were times when fantasy went wild. It is also true, however, that medieval theologians had a different view than do modern thinkers of the role of the imagination in exegesis; we shall soon explore this further. Yet it should not be thought that medieval theologians were unaware of the danger of undisciplined fantasy; and we have already seen some of the ways in which their hermeneutical principles were intended to prevent it. In the first place, they held that while the spiritual sense is the essence, the literal sense is the foundation on which it is built, and any particular mystical interpretation must be established by the literal sense of the scriptures as a whole. Secondly, interpretation is not a private matter, but takes its place within the church and is subject to the corporate exegesis of the church. Because of this, it is subject above all to the transforming work of Christ in the lives of believers, and must be grounded in the Incarnation and the salvation through the love of God expressed therein.[16]

2. The Goal of Scripture Study

Since the purpose of Scripture is to lead women and men to Christ, and thus restore them to God and God's love for humankind, it follows that the aim of exegesis is to further this restoration. Augustine's *De Doctrina Christiana* has been called the Magna Carta of medieval Biblical interpretation.[17] In it he said,

> Whoever... thinks that he understands the divine Scriptures or any part of them so that it does not build the double love of God and of our neighbour does not understand it at all.[18]

For the medieval exegetical tradition, this statement was normative. If Christ is at the centre of hermeneutics, then the goal of all Biblical study must be the building of love, *caritas*, which he restores. The mystical meaning of Scripture, therefore, has a moral dimension, not necessarily in the sense of implying rules or principles, but in the sense that it has an application to the reader's own relationship to Christ and the church. Bede, for instance, says that reading the Scriptures is receiving the bread of God by which "the Lord designates the secret meanings by which the world was to be nourished unto perpetual salvation".[19]

Since God's intention to humankind is revealed in Christ to be our salvation, and since all Scripture points to Christ, it follows that the aim of studying Scripture is our conversion, restoring us to the divine image that has been fractured by sin. It is not primarily the acquisition of information that is important, not even information about God, let alone about the historical authors and their circumstances. This is rather a means to an end, and that end is transformation into the love of God. Thus, the mystical meaning of Scripture is not something that we can learn while leaving everything else as it is. It is rather that which soaks us in the love of God. To use terms dear to the heart of Bernard of Clairvaux, it is the encounter with the love of Christ in the word of Scripture that transforms our hearts of stone into hearts of flesh, restoring us to dignity and freedom individually and collectively as we receive the grace of God. And for all his emphasis on the importance of Scripture, Bonaventure says at the end of *The Soul's Journey into God*

> But if you wish to know how these things come about,
> ask grace not instruction,
> desire not understanding,
> the groaning of prayer not diligent reading,
> the Spouse not the teacher,
> God not man,
> darkness not clarity,
> not light but fire
> that totally inflames and carries us into God...[20]

The study of Scripture is to take us beyond itself, to the heart of God; and though Scripture is indispensible as a means, it is not an end. Beyond the clarity of understanding is the darkness of God, the mystery that is not a problem to be solved but the living flame of love ignited in our lives by the encounter with that love in Christ through the words of the Bible.

Because of this (among other reasons), medieval exegetes had a rather different understanding of the role of imagination than is found in, say, modern Biblical critics. As Augustine had said,

> Whoever finds a lesson there useful to the building of charity, even though he has not said what the author may be shown to have intended in that place, has not been deceived, nor is he lying in any way.[21]

Imaginative meditation is to be encouraged, not cramped by the literal or historical sense, because it is by imaginative entry into the mystical sense of Scripture that we encounter and receive the love and grace of God in a way that allows that grace to penetrate our lives rather than be merely theoretical. Some particularly beautiful examples of this are to be found in the prayers of Anselm. Here, for instance, is the beginning of his "Prayer to St Mary Magdalene":

St Mary Magdalene,
you came with springing tears
to the spring of mercy, Christ;
from him your burning thirst was abundantly refreshed;
through him your sins were forgiven;
by him your bitter sorrow was consoled.
My dearest lady,
well you know by your own life
how a sinful soul can be reconciled with its creator,
what counsel a soul in misery needs,
what medicine will restore the sick to health...[22]

And it is this restoration that is the object of Anselm's meditation and prayer. Subsequent scholarship might object that Anselm is illegitimately running together various Marys of Scripture and tradition, and combining them with the woman at the well of the fourth Gospel; but in comparison with the depth of his meditation, such an objection, though accurate, is shallow.

That is not to say that anything goes. As already seen, the boundaries of meditation are set by the Incarnation, and thus more generally by consistency with the Gospels and the broad literal sense of Scripture which, like the flesh of Christ, must be transcended but never denied or violated. But within these boundaries the moral transformation enabled by imaginative engagement with the mystical meaning of the text is out of comparison more important than accuracy to the precise historical or literal meaning. "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life."

3. The Methods of Scripture Study

Implicit in what I have said about the goal of Biblical study are principles about how it should be undertaken. Since its aim was transformation into the love of God, it was obviously not a disinterested or objective stance, but one of prayer, contrition and worship. This is not to say that intellectual acumen was not brought to bear. On the contrary, medieval Biblical scholarship is characterized by great stretching of the mind, creative and disciplined thinking intended to "bring every thought into the captivity of Christ" and to love God with all one's mind. Augustine had instructed that Biblical scholars should make use of all the intellectual resources available in philosophy, grammar, rhetoric, and indeed all the liberal arts[23]. In medieval schools this was taken literally: students were admitted to formal Biblical study only after having completed the *quadrivium* and the *trivium*, the Seven Liberal Arts which included the study of logic and the classics, and might well take four or more years of solid study.[24] Indicative also of the sheer labour that was expended is the hand-copying of the Bible and its massive glosses, and the love that went into the intricate detail of manuscript illumination.

Nevertheless all this intellectual and manual labour was a product and expression of the context of prayer. In *De Doctrina Christiana*[25] Augustine had set forth seven steps for the understanding of Scripture. They begin with the fear of God and recognition of God's will which bring about moral purity and integrity, proceed through meekness and intellectual purgation, and culminate in the experience of the mercy of God which illuminates and leads to wisdom. The progression, and in particular the relationship between asceticism, integrity, and insight deserves a study in itself: for the present let me simply re-emphasize that a moral and intellectual will-to-integrity is recognized as necessarily inseparable from insight into Scripture, if by insight is meant not the acquisition of data merely, but the encounter with the love of God in Christ.

According to Benedict, his monastery was to be "a school for God's service"[26], a school where the monks would learn to receive and to give divine *caritas*. Inevitably, therefore, the study of Scripture according to the principles I have sketched was an indispensible part of Christian formation in the monastery, and the practices of the monastery were inseparable from the developing quest for the mystical meaning of Scripture. Two aspects of monastic life which both expressed and gave shape to this quest were the *lectio divina* and the liturgy.

The *lectio divina*, the private or public reading of Scripture, was given a large place in developing monasticism. Even when this reading was done privately, it was often done semi-audibly, forming the words of Scripture with the lips and tongue; and it was done ruminatively, chewing over the sense and sound of each word and passage, and thus inscribing it upon the memory. The monks tried to learn the Scriptures "by heart", committing them to memory and being so immersed in them that thought and life flowed out of them.[27] Thus, we find in Bernard of Clairvaux, one example among many others, that his writings are a catena of Scriptural phrases and allusions. He thinks his thoughts in Biblical language, and though they are formed by that language they are still his, and highly original. Choosing a passage at random, we find in the second Sermon on the Song of Songs the following:

> How shall I, mere dust and ashes, presume that God takes an interest in me? He is entirely taken up with loving his Father, he has no need of me or of what I possess... If it be really true, as you prophets have said, that God has determined to show mercy, to reveal himself in a more favourable light, let him establish a covenant of peace, an everlasting covenant with me by the kiss of his mouth. If he will not revoke his given word, let him empty himself, let him humble himself, let him bend to me and kiss me with the kiss of his mouth.[28]

In these few lines are at least eight quotations from the Vulgate;[29] woven together to express Bernard's own intentions. The rich layers of nuance and allusion made possible by this immersion in Scripture is the outward manifestation of the inner encounter with Christ in prayerful attentiveness to the Word.

As such, it could be said to be sacramental, and a reflection also of the liturgy. The mystical meaning of

Scripture, the encounter with Christ through the sacred page, is importantly parallel to the encounter with him in the Eucharist, his mystical body and blood. It is no accident that both are called "mystical": in each case the reference is to the divine reality given in and through the physical. In neither case is the physical dispensible; in both cases it must be understood as more than it appears. The celebration of the Eucharist, the receiving of Christ through the elements of bread and wine, is the communal enactment and context of the reception of Christ which also takes place in Scripture.

From this it is apparent that the grasp of the mystical meaning of Scripture, like the reception of the mystical body and blood of Christ, is not a matter of purely private consolation. It is communal, both in the sense that it is in the context of a worshipping community that it is received, shared and tested, and also in the sense that the development of *caritas* which is its goal cannot but have social and political consequences. It is no accident that the monasteries, devoted to learning the mystical meaning of Scripture, were also often oases of social justice, and addressed themselves to the problems of poverty, illness, and ignorance and to political and ecclesiastical structures that reinforced these social ills. The measure of the encounter with the *caritas* of Christ in Scripture is the measure of the transformation of life, individually and communally, into his likeness.

We cannot go back behind the legacy of the Reformation and the Enlightenment, and its impact upon Biblical scholarship. Nor should we want to. It would be foolish indeed to reject the gains of historical and literary insight into Scripture, or to refuse to take seriously its criticisms of medieval hermeneutical procedure. But I suggest that if in the process we "lene all togyder to the litteral sense of scripture, and not to ye spiritual or mistical sense", as Wynken de Worde feared, and if we lose thereby the transformation of our lives and societies by failing to encounter in Scripture the love and justice of Christ, the divine Word, then our loss is incomparably greater than our gain.

FOOTNOTES

I wish to thank Janet Morley for insights derived from our discussions of this paper.

1. This is in large part a legacy of William James *The Varieties of Religious Experience* Gifford Lectures of 1901-2 and still regularly reprinted and regarded as normative for much subsequent thinking about mysticism. For a penetrating account of the inadequacy of James' position see Nicholas Lash *Easter in Ordinary: Reflections on Human Experience and the Knowledge of God*, (London, SCM, 1988).
2. A standard discussion of medieval interpretation of Scripture is Henri de Lubac *Exégèse Médiévale: Les quatre sens de l'Ecriture*, 2 Vols. (Paris, 1959-). See also Beryl Smalley *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages*, 3rd edition (Oxford, Blackwells, 1983).
3. Cf. Jean Leclercq's discussion of Boniface in his *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God: A Study in Monastic Culture*, (London, SPCK, 1978) pp. 47-50.
4. Origen *On First Principles*, IV.9.
5. Ibid. IV.2.9.
6. Cf. K. J. Torjesen *Hermeneutical Procedure and Theological Method in Origen's Exegesis*, Patristische Texte und Studien (Berlin and New York, de Gruyeter, 1986). For an example in Origen where fulfilment of the mystical meeting goes beyond the historical Jesus, see Homily XXVII in Numbers, where the 42 stopping places of the Israelites in the wilderness are interpreted first in terms of the 42 ancestors of the incarnate Christ, but then also in terms of the steps toward perfection which the pilgrim soul should pursue. Rowan Greer, ed., *Origen*, Classics of Western Spirituality (London, SPCK, and New York, Paulist Press, 1979) pp. 245-269. I am grateful to Christoph Schwöbel for his helpful comments on this point.
7. Gregory of Nyssa *The Life of Moses* trans. Abraham Malherbe and Everett Ferguson, Classics of Western Spirituality (London, SPCK, and New York, Paulist Press, 1978); the references are II.26, 27, 139-40.
8. Cf. Andrew Louth *Discerning the Mystery: An Essay on the Nature of Theology*, (Oxford, Clarendon, 1983) ch. V.
9. In the Vulgate, Psalm 88.
10. Augustine *Expositions on the Book of Psalms* Philip Schaff, ed., Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church Vol. VIII (Wm B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1888, reprinted 1983).
11. Bonaventure *Breviloquium* Prologue 4.1. *The Works of Bonaventure* 5 vols. trans. José de Vinck (Patterson, New Jersey, St. Anthony Guild Press, 1960-1970).
12. Alistair McGrath, *Luther's Theology of the Cross: Martin Luther's Theological Breakthrough* (Oxford, Blackwell, 1985) p. 80; cf p. 122. McGrath notes that Luther later shifted to an increased emphasis on the tropological, though this if anything reinforced the emphasis on Christ.
13. Cf. G. R. Evans, *The Logic and Language of the Bible Vol. I The Earlier Middle Ages; Vol. II The Road to Reformation* (Cambridge, 1984-5).
14. Smalley, op. cit., pp. 6-20.
15. Ibid., ch. IV.
16. Cf. Aquinas, *In I Sent*, Prologue q.1 a.5 and a.7; Jean Gerson, *De Sensu literali sacrae scripturae*.
17. By Sandra Schneiders in "Scripture and Spirituality" in Bernard McGinn et al., eds., *Christian Spirituality: Origins to the Twelfth Century* (New York, Crossroad, and London, RKP, 1987) p. 14.
18. Augustine *On Christian Doctrine* Bk. I. XXXVI trans D. W. Robertson Jr. The Library of Liberal Arts (New York, Bobbs-Merrill, 1958).
19. Quoted by Benedicta Ward in *Fairacres Chronicle*, Vol. 21 no. 1, Spring 1988, p. 15.
20. Bonaventure, *The Soul's Journey into God*, VII.6 trans. Ewert Cousins Classics of Western Spirituality (New York, Paulist Press, and London, SPCK, 1978).
21. *On Christian Doctrine*, Bk I.XXXVI.
22. *The Prayers and Meditations of St Anselm*, trans. Benedicta Ward, (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, Penguin, 1973) p. 201.
23. *On Christian Doctrine*, Bk. II.XL; BK. IV.III, IV, XI, etc.
24. Cf. William Boyd, *The History of Western Education*, Eleventh edition revised by Edmund J. King (London, Adam and Charles Black, 1975) Ch. V.
25. Bk. II.VII.
26. Prologue *The Rule of St Benedict*, trans. Anthony C. Meisel and M. L. del Mastro (New York, Image Books, Doubleday, 1975).
27. Jean Leclercq, *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God*, pp. 88-96.
28. Bernard of Clairvaux, *On the Song of Songs*, Vol. I Serm. 2.6, trans Kilian Walsh, OCSO (Cistercian Publications, Kalamazoo, Michigan, 1977).
29. They are Sir. 10.9; Ps. 15.2; Ps. 76.8; Sir. 45.30; Is. 61.8; Ps. 888.35; Phil. 2.7; Song 1.1. (Psalms are numbered as in the Vulgate.)

THE PROBLEM OF THE PENULTIMATE

THEORIES OF SALVATION RECONSIDERED IN A SOUTH AFRICAN TOWN

RONALD NICOLSON

The concept of penultimate in the title I have of course borrowed from Bonhoeffer's *Ethics* where Bonhoeffer suggests that in certain circumstances, penultimate issues – bread for the hungry, first aid for the wounded – have to take even theological precedence over what are still, in Bonhoeffer's eyes, the ultimate issues of eternity, justification, and grace.[1]

I think we must develop this further than Bonhoeffer was able in the 1930s. If Liberation Theology has taught us anything, it is to recognize that people living in miserable penultimate conditions like poverty, personal degradation and powerlessness, are the victims not only of their own sin, nor even the sin of those who oppress them, but of particular social systems; and that until the system is changed there can be little change in the individual's power to direct his or her own life along new paths. A Christian lifestyle is impossible under some conditions. No doubt there will be heroic exceptions to this generalization, although to be honest, I am not sure even of this.

It does depend, of course, on what we mean by "being saved". If we believe in Original Guilt, we may believe that S. Francis Xavier, forbidden to evangelize in 16th century India, was nevertheless instrumental in bringing salvation to those babies in the crowded streets whom he baptized by sprinkling water on them surreptitiously under his robes as he passed by. Die of hunger they might, but they would go to heaven, not to hell or limbo. Time and scholarship do not permit me to enter arguments in this paper about the Biblical meaning of *yasha*, *lutrosis*, *soteria* and the like. I will only say briefly that I am sure that in the Old Testament salvation did not refer primarily to an other-wordly bliss; that the kingdom of God in the preaching of Jesus was at least in part about bringing God's kingdom on this earth; and that where Paul talks about liberation from the four tyrants of sin, flesh, death and powers he means that Christians will live as new men and women, reborn, risen in Christ, in this present life as well as in heaven. In short, we believe that God loves us now, helps us now, and saves us now, even though the fullness of salvation may lie in the as yet unrealized *eschaton*.

Where no here-and-now help appears to be forthcoming, and where some people at least live under a social system which renders it extremely difficult to make moral choices, to live as a responsible human person, or to achieve any of our human potential, then our Christian understanding of how God saves in Jesus must deal with that issue – or else Christianity has no relevance to the problems, penultimate as they may be, that beset us. William James made the point in *The Varieties or Religious Experience*: people choose a God for his or her saving power. When that saving power is no longer evident or credible, their religious views change.[2]

Perhaps mention of James and his pragmatism is enough already to ruffle philosophical sensibilities. We cannot reduce the concept of truth to the concept of usefulness. We cannot reduce God-talk to what is empirically verifiable in terms of benefits. We cannot judge God by the standards of what seems to us to be pragmatic.

All this is true – of truth in general, of God in particular. But Christianity claims not only to be true. It claims of God not only that he exists, that he is Creator and Lawgiver and Ground of our Being. It claims to be of *saving* truth, and it says that God loves us. It claims that salvation is to be experienced not only in heaven but on earth.

> "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

So that, if salvation talk is not to be mere shibboleth, perhaps there has to be some evidence of just how Jesus has actually helped in a particular situation.

I return to my title: theories of salvation reconsidered in a South African town. It seems to me then that although we may draw a distinction between what is ultimately and wholly true, and what is immediately and partially true, the demand for Christian soteriological claims to be shown to have *relevance* and *credibility* in particular situations cannot be bypassed.

I cannot ask English theologians, of course, to share my concern for our South African particular situation. Nor, as a very middle-class Anglicized white person living in the ordinary middle-class circumstances of a teacher's salary, can I claim to share in the situation of black people in South Africa. I can only think and speak as a concerned person who is something of an outsider to the black experience, although as a parish priest of scores of black and "coloured" persons their life has been part of my life too.

It worries me that in the South African church, salvation talk is usually no different from salvation talk in England. South African black theology tends to be an historical survey of the evil things which black people have had to endure, rather than an investigation of how God (and if God) can help. I recall a paper read by a black priest and academic, on "Jesus in South Africa today". He used two books as the background to his paper, which never departed far from the lines taken in those books. One was Oliver Quick's *Doctrines of the Creeds*, the other John Macquarrie's *Principles of Christian Theology*. His paper was followed by one from a Roman Catholic black priest. It offered a lucid summary of some of the Vatican II documents. Neither paper touched on what I see as major problems for the credibility of Christian soteriology in South Africa today.

1. South Africa is by and large a Christian country, in the sense that 80% of the population claims to be Christian. Not all of these are churchgoers or what we might describe as practising Christians, but amongst both black and white (excepting the English-speaking white minority, whose patterns of worship are very similar to England) the proportion of regular worshippers would be very much higher than in Europe. Probably 50% would be at least monthly worshippers.

2. The leaders of the apartheid government are also virtually all Christians, and regularly worshipping Christians. The whole concept of constitutional apartheid, while its roots can be traced back to English colonial government in Victorian Natal, was worked out by devout Afrikaans Christian persons. Dr Malan, first Prime Minister of the apartheid era, was a Christian clergyman.

Many of the black leaders, both in South Africa and in exile, are also Christian: some even fellow members of the Dutch Reformed Church family. Almost all of them are products of the Christian mission schools.

We have to face the fact that sincere Christian belief has not prevented the development by those believers of a cruel, often violent system of government, nor so far provided a means for oppressed and oppressor to meet in any kind of reconciliation or promotion of change, nor for the oppressed to throw off their yoke.

3. What is of even more importance, most black people in South Africa live under conditions to which the conventional salvation theories in Christian tradition simply do not apply. That is what I hope to show in this paper.

4. In fact there is some evidence that some of the conventional salvation theories have in fact contributed to the development of an apartheid ideology.

It would take too long to give a detailed sociological analysis of the black situation in South Africa. In order to give some bones to my thesis, I hope I may be forgiven a personalizing of the situation as a way of trying to encapsulate it. I will take for my model a little boy I know called Linda. He is the fifth child of his mother, who has never been married. This is a very normal state of affairs in black urban life. His mother, Antonia Sikakane, is a most respectable, hardworking person who earns her living as a charwoman. The children have a number of different fathers, none of whom pay maintenance of any kind – again, a fairly normal situation.

They all live, together with Antonia's three sisters and some of their children, in a three-bedroomed house in a township near Pietermaritzburg where I live. None of the older sisters can find work. As the only breadwinner Antonia is expected within the Zulu context of the extended family to support them all. Thus, there are, I think, 15 people living in three rooms – again, a fairly normal situation.

Linda is Antonia's last born. He is four now. Sometimes he comes to work with Antonia, but usually she must leave him at home with the unmarried sisters – who, unfortunately, are inclined to drink all day, not surprisingly in their unemployed and hopeless situation, and are not very reliable. At present Linda is a smiling, cheerful child, but already he has had three bad attacks of dysentery, one of measles; he is statistically lucky to have survived to four years old. Antonia loves him dearly, but as she must leave for work by 6 am to catch her bus, and does not return until 6 pm, she sees little of him except at weekends. Linda, therefore, has very little opportunity to have his character shaped by parental modelling; his models are his drunken and uncaring aunts.

In two years' time, Linda will be old enough to go to school with his brothers. Unfortunately, the brothers are not always able to attend school, not only because Antonia is unable to pay the fees, but because some older children in the Pietermaritzburg townships believe that education in a government school in apartheid South Africa is a waste of time, so that they periodically go on boycotts. Freedom first, education later, is their cry. This means that no children may attend school, for the boycotters keep watch. Police or army guard the schools to prevent direct picketing there, but the organizers, themselves probably still teenagers, know the pupils. They catch them later in the day. Perhaps they beat them; perhaps they kill them. So that the years in which a South African black school stays open long enough for children to write end-of-year examinations is rare indeed.

Pietermaritzburg, normally a quiet market town, is also, unfortunately for Linda, the main battleground at present between two rival black approaches to liberation. Chief Buthelezi leads the Zulu-based Inkatha movement which co-operates guardedly with government agencies in order to get into a stronger bargaining position. Others prefer the non-tribal, mostly urban based United Democratic Front, which resents traditional tribal authority, refuses even limited co-operation with the government, and sees Buthelezi as a sell-out.

Antonia and her children have no preferences either way. Like many in her position, Antonia knows and cares little about politics but wants her children to have a better education than she did, and to live in peace. That is, however, not possible. Their house is situated in a block which is regarded as Inkatha territory. The local school is therefore by association an Inkatha school. Periodically UDF supporters lie in wait for these Inkatha scholars. Three children at the primary school which Linda's brothers attend were found dead on the perimeter of the playground last year. If they were to live in a UDF area, the situation would of course merely be reversed. There is no peace to be found. In January of this year alone, 100 people were killed around Pietermaritzburg. Some of the killers were themselves mere children.

I could go on with this sad story and we could analyse cause and effect; but for now all I want to do is ask, what does salvation mean for Linda? Realistically, in these circumstances, Linda is unlikely to learn at school to do more than read or write. He will, therefore, never be equipped for anything other than manual work, whatever his natural potential. He will always be at the bottom of society. He may be killed before he leaves school. His laughing little face now will, within ten years, have changed because of fear, and death, and violence, and hopelessness, and self-destructiveness. If Linda himself in later years becomes a killer or a thief – or, as will almost surely be the case, the father of several children by women with whom he has no permanent relationship, for whom he will care nothing, and who will grow up in similar hopelessness – can normal Christian criteria of judgement be applied?

Antonia is a fervent Christian. She is a Zionist, a member of that very large group of what might be regarded as a kind of indigenous house church. There is very little formal theology in her church – the minister, although called *mfundisi*, the Zulu name for a "reverend", is very much a part-time clergyman: he earns his living as

proclaim to your congregations the Word of God and the Gospel of Christ."[9]

It encourages black pietism too. To quote Ned Temko from the *Christian Science Monitor*,

> "Many blacks, at least older ones, draw on a heritage of Christianity rooted in the white missionary work of the 18th and 19th centuries, which has endowed many with what seems to be a bottomless mix of patience and goodwill."[10]

Perhaps this is a good thing. Other perhaps, to quote an angry young black man,

> "The white man's God has been used to tame the black people."[11]

Perhaps it would seem, therefore, that Aulen, Macquarrie and others are right when they say that a return, in demythologized form, to the older victory theory would be much more helpful. It would seem very relevant to Linda. In Jesus, God has overcome death and devil and all that is hostile to his loving purposes. Again, I pass over the scriptural and traditional theological arguments for and against the theory, and ask, does it in fact help Linda? Certainly the theory seems to lie behind many of the confident statements made by prominent Christian leaders in South Africa.

> "It may seem as if the dictators, the powerful and the mighty have full control over this world. Their arrogance seems to have no bounds. But the Church knows that Jesus Christ is Lord of history, he is Lord of life, and his truth will have the final word."[12]

> "Real peace and real security will come to our land only when apartheid has been dismantled. I have no doubt that this will happen. If God be for us, who can be against us."[13]

Perphaps most clearly of all,

> "God cares, and God will act decisively to bring justice, peace and reconciliation to our land."[14]

Of course, if black people can believe that God is on their side, they will be restored to hope and confidence in their cause. I cannot, and would not wish to, deny that their Christian belief has been a source of courage for a great number of brave black leaders, from Chief Albert Luthuli to Archbishop Tutu himself. But we have to ask, because increasing numbers of young black people are asking, if God is going to act, why does he stay his hand? If God were to act tomorrow to overthrow apartheid, would we not accuse him of having been too slow? Whole generations of black people have lived and died in humiliation and suffering: did he not care about them?

The whole concept of God acting in history is a problematic one, as Maurice Wiles has shown us in his recent Bampton lectures.[15] In South Africa, it has a particularly lurid history. The Voortrekkers, believing themselves to be God's children in a world of heathen darkness, and having suffered a grievous loss when a whole party of men, women and children were killed by a Zulu band, set out to meet the Zulu army head on. They met on the banks of a river in Northern Natal. The Trekker leaders prayed for victory, and promised that if God gave them victory they would erect a church in his honour, and each year on the anniversary of the battle would remember and thank him. Although few in number, they did, of course, have guns against the Zulu spears. So many Zulus were killed that the river ran red, and is called Blood River to this day. The Trekker prayers were answered. The battle was won. The church was built, and each year on 16 December, the Day of the Covenant, all of Afrikaans South Africa observes a holy day of sabbath. God acted to save his people.

Indeed, if God is lord of history in South Africa we would have to say that Dr Malan was right: God has made the Afrikaner mighty. This is exactly what they have in the past believed. As well as being Calvinists, the Dutch Reformed Churches in South Africa were much influenced by Abraham Kuyper. Kuyper taught his own version of the victory theory. He taught that Jesus is lord of all life, political and spiritual. The Church and the *Volk* (the people, the nation of God), are one and the same, chosen by God for victory over the forces of heathenism and of ungodly secular humanism. The belief sustained the Afrikaner nation through their battles with blacks and with the English, and indeed enables them still to regard the criticisms of the outside world as being nothing but ungodly liberal and communist attacks on the true people of God.

The victory theory can thus be used by either side in the struggle. There is no doubt that the Afrikaans people did triumph over real oppression and injustice, as well as over circumstantial disasters – and that their religious beliefs did have a great part to play in that triumph. I would be reluctant to describe this as God's action except in a most indirect sense. Expectations of divine intervention to restore justice in South Africa are unlikely to be realized.

Of course, that is not what the victory theory meant in the early church, we might say. They had no illusions that Jesus as Victor meant that Christians would triumph in any political way over their enemies in this world. The theory means victory over physical death, and victory over spiritual death; victory over temptation, over sin, over the power of evil to distort my life. It is in these ways that Jesus is victorious.

But what can victory over death mean for Linda? If he dies at five – remembering that a high proportion of South African children still die before their sixth birthday – can we honestly say that, since he and they have gone to heaven, Jesus has brought salvation to them? Is this really a message of hope to their mothers? In an ultimate sense, of course, it is, but we can be excused some penultimate scepticism.

And victory over sin? We see indeed that Jesus was triumphantly victorious to the end. But is this true of Christians in general? S. Athanasius in his *de Incarnatione* provided various arguments against the ridicule by Jews and Greeks of the idea of incarnation. He invokes scripture, and resurrection. He invokes the New Testament miracles of Jesus. But then he points to the growth of the Church, to the chastity of young Christian men and women, to the way that fierce and savage heathen, when they hear of Jesus, turn from fighting to farming, from extending swords to extending hands in

prayer. People change in Christianity, he says, as they do not in your false and empty religions.[16]

We might have problems with much of Athanasius' argument now, when church growth is static, perhaps even declining, when standards of sexual morality are no different within and without the church. We might have difficulty, with Ireland or Lebanon or South Africa in mind, to say that Christians prefer farming to fighting. But surely Athanasius was right in his expectations? If the claim of victory is true, there ought to be some discernible difference between the lives of Christians and non-Christians. I do not think it lets us off the hook to say that war-loving or sexually immoral or politically unjust Christians are not really Christians; if that is true, then who are the "real Christians", and who would qualify? The fact that Christian government, meaning by "Christian" someone who believes in and sincerely wants to follow the teachings of Jesus, can impose the apartheid regime raises serious questions about the credibility of Christian salvation claims.

One of the problems for victory theorists has always been to show how Jesus' victory extends to us in any real way. This is just another example of the same problem. It brings me back to my pragmatic starting point. Salvation-talk must have some grounding in empirical reality if it is not to be mere talk, mere airy theory with no present reality. How does God in Jesus make a real difference for Linda and his world?

I have dealt critically with the penal and victory theories, because they are so prominent in church teaching, and said nothing about the solace and strength to be gained by black people from worship, from hearing the word, from uniting in sacramental sacrifice and celebration. I think though that the same difficulties apply. The solace is real, there is no doubt; but is solace what is required? And is there evidence that strength in Christ, strength in Christian sacraments, strength in hearing the Word, is greater and more effective than strength from other religions? Is there in fact not counter-evidence? Jews, Hindus, Moslems – particularly in recent years the last named of these – seem to produce proportionately as many courageous resisters as Christians, and we have the nagging point that sincere and regular participation in Word and Sacrament has not prevented other devout Christians from imposing the apartheid regime. How may Linda find salvation made available to him in Jesus?

I have said nothing about Moltmann, nothing about Liberation Theology, partly because outside of some of the universities and seminaries these approaches play little part as yet in ordinary local Christian life and teaching in South Africa. There is much more to be said, but not in this paper! We can always say that Christian life and salvation is really not about mundane and transient things, however painful, but about ultimate and eternal salvation in the last days. This would mean, though, that the kingdom of God has nothing to do with this world, which would be a move away from an important part of Biblical teaching. If God's kingdom is to come to reality in even a small way in this world for Linda, an interpretation of the salvation which Jesus offers will have to be found which does help Linda to throw off the circumstances which presently imprison him. The traditional models do not seem to do this.

Notes

1. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Ethics*, ed. Eberhard Bethge, tr. Neville Horton Smith (London: SCM, 1955), p. 94.
2. William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* ed. Martin E. Marty (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1982), p. 239.
3. Hymns Ancient & Modern Revised no. 214.
4. I. D. MacCrine, *Race Attitudes in South Africa* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1937).
5. Ibid. p. 127.
6. Ibid. p. 126.
7. Quoted van der Merwe, 1975, p. 27.
8. Quoted in Sheila van der Horst, ed., *Race Discrimination in South Africa* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1981), p. 189.
9. Quoted John W. de Gruchy and W. B. de Villiers, *The Message in Perspective* (Johannesburg: SA Council of Churches, 1968), p. 34.
10. Ned Temko, *The Christian Science Monitor*, April 6-12, 1987, p. 18.
11. *The Argus*, 6 November 1976 (after the first Soweto riots).
12. Allan Boesak at the World Council of Churches Vancouver Assembly 1983.
13. Desmond M. Tutu in *Apartheid is a Heresy*, ed. John W. de Gruchy and Charles Villa-Vicencio (Cape Town: David Philip, 1983), p. 47.
14. Desmond M. Tutu in *Bishop Desmond Tutu: the voice*, ed. John Webster (London: Mowbray, 1982), p. 88.
15. Maurice Wiles, *God's Action in the World* (London: SCM, 1986).
16. Ed. and tr. Robert W. Thomson (Oxford: Clarendon, 1971), p. 263-265.

ELI (EARTH-GODDESS); AS A GUARDIAN OF SOCIAL MORALITY AMONG THE TRADITIONAL IKWERRE OF RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA

WELLINGTON O. WOTOGBE-WENEKA

Introduction

One of the most heartening and encouraging revelations at this stage of increased interest in African Studies is the fact that prior to the coming of the white missionaries into African soil, Africans had had and still have their clearly defined means of social and moral control. This is among what had kept the various African communities and societies going, and all functioning smoothly before the white colonists came with their western pattern of social and moral control. This paper is as a result of a study carried out among the Ikwerre ethnic group whereby the significant role of ELI, the earth-goddess, in directing and guarding the traditional Ikwerre to moral rectitude was identified. Again, it has also been established that no traditional religious concept of the people of our study can be comprehended and appreciated in Ikwerre theology unless the unique position and role of *Eli* is clearly understood. For instance, all over Ikwerre land there is a common saying to the effect that *Nye Kpakwataru, Eli chekwetaa* (The earth-goddess only protects the just). Justice as we all know it, is a cardinal moral concept. Thus, this saying of the Ikwerre goes to buttress the people's strong belief that *Eli* (the earth-goddess) loves and protects any morally upright man and that the morally depraved will never win the favour and blessings of the gods.

In Ikwerre theology, *Eli* and the ancestors are so believed to be responsible for the people's morality that a casual observer may erroneously conclude that the supreme being (God) has no hand in directing the people to moral rectitude. But this is not the case. In Ikwerre's cosmogony, the people strongly believe that Chiokuke[1] is responsible for all that exist on the earth's surface, including the various divinities of which *Eli* (the earth-goddess) is a part; and that power exercised by such divinities is believed to have been given to them by the Supreme God Himself.

Clarification of the concepts of Eli

Etymologically speaking, *Eli* literally means "land", but in Ikwerre theology it refers to the earth-goddess. Thus *Nso-Eli* or *NHE ELI SỌGWU NSỌ* (what the earth-goddess forbids) are the Ikwerre expressions for "sin". Similarly, *ỌRU-ELI* or *OMERU-ELI* are their words for "to commit sin" or simply "to sin", just as *Nye-aru r'eli* are the people's expression for a sinner.

Eli is strongly believed to be the repository of the Ikwerre morality. For instance, whenever abominable events occur people will exclaim as they troop out *Eli whulem* or *Eli-ikwenjọ* or *Eli rulem* which will literally mean "the land is lost", "land, forbid bad or evil thing", "the land is spoilt" respectively, but these expressions are meaningless in theological terms. In Ikwerre theology, the three expressions actually mean "the earth-goddess is lost or finished", "may the earth-goddess forbid evil", and "the earth-goddess is defiled". For this reason, therefore, bad things, evil or immoral acts are those acts, sayings, thoughts, which *Eli* forbids. In other words, whoever indulges in them has evoked upon himself the wrath of *Eli* with its adverse consequences. Besides, such acts are said to be abominable, sacrilegious, for they are usually considered supernatural crimes before *Eli* the earth-goddess. The only hope of escape for such an offender can come if and only when he must have performed the prescribed expiatory, reparatory and propitiatory ritual sacrifices which are believed to be capable of assuaging and/or warding off the anger of *Eli*, and/or any other equally aggrieved deity. Again, the consequences of such actions are believed to be contagious, as their effect may go beyond the individual offender to embrace his relations, the chief priest in charge of *Eli*'s shrine at the time the offence was committed, and even the whole of one's village. In other words, it is the people's belief that whatever sufferings and misfortunes an individual or his relations encounter after an abominable act, is brought about as a consequence of the offence committed against *Eli*. However, this view does not negate the fact that there are in existence other workers of evil and misfortunes in the society, such as the sorcerers and witches who are called *Nde nshi-eli* among the Ikwerre of our focus. These are the apprehensions which had guarded and guided the social morality of the Ikwerre, and are still very much influential in curbing the people's moral excesses in the traditional Ikwerre. For that, there is everywhere the belief and fear of *Eli* deity, which always instils fear into people thereby acting as a restraint or a check on their day to day activities. Besides, the psychological and financial[2] implication of the consequences of offences or crimes against *Eli* are sufficient reasons why most people have chosen in most cases, to conduct their affairs in a socially and morally approved pattern.

Eli and Ikwerre concepts of evil

The act of murder is regarded as one of the greatest offences or crimes a man can commit against *Eli* in Ikwerre land. Two categories of murder can be distinguished. One is the unpremeditated or accidental murder. In either case however, what is important is the fact that blood has been spilled or the life of a fellow human being has been taken, particularly when it involves the life of a kinsman, an action which is strongly believed to make the earth-goddess *Eli* rage with anger. Nabofa tell us[3] that when a child is born in most African communities, one of the first rituals performed on him is that which is meant to unite him mystically to the earth-goddess of his place of origin, hence with such rituals also all those who hail from the same town or village will thus be linked to the earth, which they jointly conceive as the mother from whose womb they all came. Because of this, in the act of murder, the murderer has destabilised not only his own psyche but his own people, the chief priest and the entire community to which he belongs, since all these are mystically united under the motherhood of the earth-goddess. Thus, among the Ikwerre, explains a community leader,[4] if it is an accidental murder (ochu aghom) of a kinsman by a fellow kinsman, the murderer must go on self-exile before the offence is made public, and at that place he will be lying on the floor on *ọkwụkwọ ọkinima ọvara* (red plantain leaf) until the earth-goddess is placated. This act of remorse and self denial no doubt symbolises the offender's demonstration of a feeling of guilt brought upon him through his unintentional murdering of his fellow human being and kinsman, and

also is a symbol of the offender's humility before the earth-goddess, who is now believed to be raging with anger as one of her "children" has been forcefully killed. Again, as a consequence, the incumbent chief priest of *Eli* known as *Nye vugwu eli* or *Nye kwa eli* at the time the crime was committed must run away to a neighbouring town or village or from among his own village until the earth-goddess is placated. But before this placatory ritual is performed the relatives of the culprit will meet the chief priest in whichever village he must have run to and present him with *akọrọ nu ekho* (a type of foliage plant), *awhuru akwa ọkwụkwụ* (the shell of a newly hatched hen), and some quantity of palm oil. These items being presented to the chief priest symbolise the preparedness of the relatives of the culprit to perform the placatory ritual, and at the same time symbolise the recalling of the chief priest back to his cult, so that he can direct or supervise the *ọwhaji eli* (placatory ritual).[5]

On the other hand, if it is a premeditated murder of a kinsman by a fellow kinsman, there is no wastage of time. In the words of a community leader,[6] a stranger and not a native is given *arọ ibe* (a pointed metal-like stick used traditionally in pointing at a culprit) to go and point at the culprit. This symbolises that the sinner should go and hang himself without delay at the *ajọ ọhia* (evil forest). It is believed that unlike the accidental murder, there is no amount of expiatory or placatory ritual that is capable of washing off the blood of a kinsman intentionally murdered. Here again, it must be seen that the idea behind sending a stranger instead of a native to perform such an action, is tantamount to his actually taking part in the murder, as it is believed that *dieli gbuo dieli ibe a* (a native does not murder a fellow native). A stranger on the other hand is not mystically united with the native and so it not bound by the wrath of the *Eli* deity. Besides, it is obligatory that as soon as the stranger finishes this assignment, he must pack up his belongings and go to another village. In such cases, strangers often employed for this assignment are those who are no longer in the good books of the natives, and such assignment is as it were, forced upon them in order to find excuse for asking them to quit the village.

Metu records that among the Ibo, in the case of unpremeditated murder, the killer is notified and given opportunity to flee the town whereas, in the intentional type, the houses and property of the culprit's family are destroyed, and if he does not flee, he is expected to hang himself.[7] In another part of Igboland, it is said that if a person murders a stranger who is staying in one's house the gods are outraged and the consequence is that the offender is offered up as "Osu" to the outraged divinity to placate his anger and ward-off a grave calamity.[8] However, the Ikwerre exercise some moderation because, unlike the Ibo, the culprit can come to compromise with the relatives of his victim and the two parties agree on certain compensatory terms. This was the view Amadi expressed when he writes that "in Ikwerre, bargaining was possible; and death penalty could be commuted to a heavy fine, usually involving the replacement by a slave or free born".[9]

Stibbs has drawn our attention to think that this practice of the Ikwerre also finds expression among the Israelites of the Judeo-Christian Bible where a ransom was seen as an offering made for the release or redemption of a life otherwise forfeited. According to Stibbs, such divinely-ordained practice provided for them ceremonial indication that sinners deserving judgment and death could only live in God's sight if some equivalent sacrifice of life or shedding of blood were provided to take the place of their own punishment; and again, it is by this only that their sin could be expiated before God.[10] In fact, among the Ikwerre, the consequence of the offence of murder is believed to be so inevitable that there is no escape from it before the *Eli*. Among the Lambas of Northern Nigeria, it is reported that heinous crimes like murder are beyond human vengeance, but the criminal does not escape. A curse is said to be imposed upon him, for he will go mad, or be driven to suicide, or be drowned in the river, all being the work of the wronged deities.[11] These are the rigours and fate awaiting a murderer before the Ikwerre *Eli* divinity, hence for fear of *Eli* rather than a genuine voluntary resolve not to commit the offence, people often strive to avoid the offence.

If and when suicide is committed among the Ikwerre, the *Eli* is said to have been polluted by the culprit. Secondly, it is said of the culprit, *eli kpapiyalama* (the earth-goddess has exposed him). This suggests that the culprits may have been committing a series of abominable acts against *Eli* in the past, hence in annoyance, *Eli* has now used this occasion of suicide to bring his past atrocities to the notice of all.

As in the case of murder, the chief priest of *Eli* at the time the suicide was committed, on hearing of this *Nsọ-eli* (what the earth-goddess forbids), must run to a neighbouring village and only returns whenever the relatives of the deceased have presented him with *akọrọ nu ekho* (a foliage plant), *awhuru akwa ọkwụkwụ* (the shell of a newly hatched hen), and oil, signifying their preparedness to cleanse the earth. As a consequence also, the relatives of the deceased incur unexpected and heavy expenses as they have to placate the earth-goddess who is believed to have been defiled. Besides, the corpse of the deceased through suicide is accorded a shabby and shameful burial rite, for it is believed to be sacrilegious and sinful to bury the corpse of a suicide at home. Rather, it is thrown into the *ajọ ọhia* (evil forest). Again, by the way of suicide, the deceased has brought disgrace and public ridicule to members of his family and the entire village, because this is believed to be a sign that they harbour evil doers. Thus, with the apprehensions of these consequences, people have often refrained from thinking in terms of suicide.

It is also abominable before *Eli* for close relatives to have sexual intercourse with one another. This act is believed to be capable of defiling or polluting the earth-divinity. The general assumption in Ikwerreland is that people who commit this type of offence do so out of sheer ignorance of their being in close relation with those with whom they commit the offence; especially among the teenagers who are yet to be briefed on their elaborate extended relations, as it is the case with most African communities. This is why we will agree with Beidelman when he said that "those Nuer sins that are most dangerous, such as incest with close kin, usually are not intentional and therefore, presumably involve little psychic guilt as we understood the notion".[12] Since this type of offence is in most cases committed out of ignorance, its consequence only comes upon the sinners where they refuse to placate the defiled or polluted earth-

goddess, on being told that they are relations. In which case, explains a community leader,[13] where pregnancy results out of the union, it is strongly believed that the woman must have painful labour and might even die during labour; and that if the baby is eventually born, it will only live for a moment and die afterwards. Among the Yoruba, writes Awolalu, "if a man and a woman commit incest, the two people involved in the immoral act are exposed to ridicule and are required to offer propitiatory sacrifice to assuage the anger of the ancestral spirits".[14] Dopamu also reported the belief among the Mende of Sierra Leone to the effect that it is forbidden for a man to have sexual intercourse with his wife's sister or any of her relations, and any person that violates this law of incest will be punished with sickness.[15] In Ikwerre, the general belief is that the earth-goddess usually takes her vengeance on and holds any adult member of the society who sees or even hears that a close relation commits the offence of incest and fails to point out or expose them. An Ikwerre proverb amply illustrates this: *Ọwhu okpute gbu okhovadu, bekhaa bee nugee gbu wọnti* (seeing and conniving at evil kills the elders, hearing of evil and failing to withdraw from it kills the young). As a consequence also, the chief priest of *Eli* at the time must run to a neighbouring village and only returns when he is presented with prescribed items which symbolise the readiness of the culprits to cleanse the land ritually and thereby purge themselves of the wrath of the gods. It is a consideration of the shame of exposure and public ridicule of this offensive act against *Eli* that often makes people refrain from such immoral acts.

It is also considered an abominable act against *Eli* for sexual intercourse to take place in the bush or on farmland or on bare floor. It is believed that *Eli* will hold the offenders. The belief is that offenders will be inflicted with swollen sickness and meet a series of misfortunes until they are forced by such circumstance to confess their offence against *Eli* before the priest of *Eli*. This is important because as a private affair, it would have been naturally difficult for someone else to detect except through a volitional confession of those who did the act.

Recently, a stranger in an Ikwerre village had sexual intercourse with his wife in the bush, since the practice is no abomination in the stranger's home village. This man had a series of sleepless nights as the *Eli* is said to be disturbing him and asking him to go and confess his *Nsọ-eli*. Initially, this stranger took it lightly, but as this persisted, he was forced to go to the chief priest and find out from him what is mean by *Nsọ-eli* in Ikwerre language. The chief priest listed a number of *Nsọ-eli* of his people for the stranger which included the offence of having sexual intercourse in the bush, and asked him whether he had ever committed any of them to which he answered in the affirmative. Having declared *Nye aru reli* (one who defiled the earth), the man absconded from the town for fear of the consequences of his abominable act, especially the public ridicule that would accompany his exposure. It was said of him *eli kwega laa* (the earth-goddess could not harbour him). This vindicates the Ikwerre belief that the gods are never on the side of the evil one. Again, if the stranger had refused to confess this abominable act, it is believed that even though he escapes punishment during this life time, divine judgment is inescapable for the culprit in the life-after because as Brandon once observed, "Whatever the nature of one's personal convictions, the idea that all men after death have to face divine judgment is generally familiar".[16] Thus, among the Ikwerre, when copulation took place on the farmland, the offender is said to have two gods to contend with – *Eli* (the earth-goddess) and *Ajọknujii* (the god of yam). Expensive sacrifices would have to be made to ward off the wrath of the gods. As Amadi succinctly puts it:

> "all available evidence indicates that offenders fell ill or died if they did not perform the appropriate ritual to cleanse the land and themselves after committing abominations. Moreover, any misfortune suffered by the village after the abomination was attributed to the offended gods."[17]

Not only avoiding the bush and the bare floor, during sexual intercourse, one should also comport oneself in such a manner that one's legs or hands do not drop on the floor while having sexual intercourse on the bed. In the view of a community leader, the one who sees this offence against *Eli* being committed and fails to report it to the chief priest stands as condemned before the gods as the real offender.[18]

Stealing which is considered abominable against the earth-goddess in Ikwerreland includes stealing of yam-seedlings, yam tubers and the stealing of native goats, and all other animals believed to be the property of the gods. For instance, the name for native goat in Ikwerre is *ewu-eli* which literarily means "earth's goat". But the real meaning as the name implies is "goat that belongs to the earth-goddess". Again, the native goat, of all the domestic animals, is owned by *Eli*. Thus, it becomes abominable for a mortal being to attempt to steal a thing that belongs to the gods. Similarly, whoever steals yam-seedlings already planted or even yam-tubers already tied at the yam-ban has incurred the wrath of the earth-goddess, for the people believe that no one steals things which belong to the gods and goes scot-free. A Yoruba proverb which clearly illustrates this point is that which says:

> "A-mokun jale, bi oba aiye o ri o, t'oke nwo o" (You who steal in the cover of the night, know you assuredly that if the earthly king does not see you, the heavenly king (God) does).[19]

The offence of yam and goat stealing is said to be so grievous that in the past culprits are sold off into slavery without mercy if they are natives, and if they are strangers, they are nailed on the head, that is, killed instantly to avoid the wrath of the gods. The recent practice however is for the culprit to approach the chief priest who prescribes for him what is to be bought to appease the gods.[20]

The Ikwerre name for poisoning is *Nshi-eli*. In other words, its meaning in actual fact is "poisoning against the earth-goddess", hence for an individual to eliminate the life of others through sorcery or witchcraft is considered a serious offence against the earth-goddess. Usually an accused is located or identified through divination. As the news of the alleged offence spreads like wildfire in the village, the accused becomes isolated as all his friends will desert him. He is then summoned to the central village square and with the *mkpara ọha* (the elder's staff of office), he is made to swear an oath by the *mkpara ọha* and the gods

of the land to the effect that the *mkpara ọha* and *eli* should kill him if he was the one who committed the sin of which he is accused. After swearing the oath, he is still isolated and he is expected to die as a result within one year in which he is under oath, and if he does not die as expected, he is immediately declared to have been vindicated by the gods. He then gives a party, rejoicing his vindication with his relations, friends and well-wishers in what is called *Ọ̀hhu nzugbara*. On the contrary, if he dies within the year he is under oath, it is then concluded that he was guilty and his living relatives are expected to perform the earth-cleansing ritual in the manner of a murderer without which it is believed, there will be no peace in the land.

All over Ikwerreland, various deities and divinities are worshipped and each of these divinities has one type of sacred animal or another dedicated to it, and hence, such animals are sacred to the devotees. For example, Atah of Omagwa has the crocodile as its sacred animal while Rukani of Akpor has the python as its own sacred animal. Killing any of these animals is regarded in the area as equivalent to killing the very Deity which they symbolise, and this act is believed to make *Eli* deity to rage with anger. One of the foremost consequences of the offence of killing a sacred animal therefore is that one has invoked on oneself the wrath of the gods. Besides, the cordial relationship between the gods and the culprit has by this very act been broken. Thus, it is generally believed among the people that any misfortune that befalls one after this incident is a manifestation of the gods' anger on the culprit. In which case, the culprit will never have peace of mind until he has performed the requisite pacificatory ritual sacrifice to appease the aggrieved gods. For example, McEwen and Aseltine reported of how the Meyan hunters, after killing a deer, apologise to the deer for taking its life. They do this by approaching their priest with a certain amount of money requesting him to pray to the gods for their forgiveness.[21] It will be seen from this that they do so in the understanding that the deer whose life has been taken belongs to their gods and that failure on their part to come forward for this propitiatory sacrifice is believed to be capable of leading them to a disastrous end; hence the people willingly come forward for such rituals. This is where we have to agree with Gaba who expressed the view that:

> "the very submission of the individuals to punishment and rites of purification after behaving in certain ways suggests that there may be a consciousness in the people of personal responsibility for their action."[22]

Thus, in order to avoid the wrath of *Eli* and its disastrous consequences, Ikwerre people often strive to refrain from these offences that are against *Eli* deity.

Certain days of the week and certain periods of the day are designated and consecrated holy days. There are laid down rules on what to and what not to do at such holy days or periods, of which, failure or refusal on the part of an individual to adhere to such rules is believed to have polluted the day or period. On such holy days, people are not even supposed to die because death on such holy days is seen as polluting to the holy days. Besides, it is immediately concluded that the deceased had had "a dirty record in the book of the gods of the land", *Eli* in particular, hence they allowed him to die on such a holy day of all the days of the week. In desecrating a holy period or time, the offender has incurred the wrath of the gods, and hence must spend heavily to ward off their anger, thereby re-establishing his strained relationship with these gods. Failing to do this, the culprit is believed to be meeting myriads of misfortunes, and if he eventually dies, he is thrown into the evil forest. Those who die on holy days are never buried that day but the following day.

In parts of Ikwerreland, it is an abomination for a woman of puberty age and above to climb a tree, no matter how low the tree may be. In areas of Ikwerre where this act is regarded as abominable, *Eli* the earth-goddess, it is believed, will make the offender crippled and, in extreme provocation, kills the person. For instance, a chief priest narrates of how about 12 years ago, a stranger woman who was caught climbing a tree refused to placate the earth, and ran away to her place, only to die at pregnancy the same year. Her death was immediately explained away as the result of her refusal to come forward for such placatory ritual. It was even said that a native who saw the stranger when she was climbing but refused to report her to the chief priest as tradition demands, also died mysteriously on hearing of the news of the death of the stranger. This goes to buttress the belief held among the people that an offence committed against the earth-goddess can never go unpunished, except where a substitute in the form of a scapegoat is provided, as is common with most African communities; for as Awolalu rightly observed:

> "where the sacrifice was meant to be substitutionary, the offerer's sin and guilt were transferred upon the victim, who acted as the scapegoat."[23]

In parts of Ikwerre, in addition to other expenses, the offender is fined a specific amount to be determined by the elders and *ọwhọ* (staff of justice) holders.

Among the Ikwerre also, if a taboo is broken, the offender automatically invites the wrath of the deity who imposed the taboo upon the people and with whom He entered into covenant, just as Parrinder puts it when he said:

> "if a man breaks a taboo he expects the supernatural penalty to follow, and his friend may desert him or punish him still further."[24]

It is probably in this realisation that Marret said of taboos that "they are ceremonial abstinence based on the fear of definite consequences".[25] Fortes added his voice by saying that "those taboos are scrupulously observed, for the wages of disobedience are misfortunes, sickness, and even death of a wife or child".[26]

Final remarks

We have been examining the various ways in which *Eli* (earth-goddess) can be seen as a guardian of social morality among the traditional Ikwerre. In Ikwerre, as it is the case with most African communities, there exist laws, customs, set patterns of behaviour, rules and regulations, observances and taboos, which are held sacred and which must be observed by every individual in the community. These, when observed will make for the smooth running of the society. Their sacredness lies in the

understanding of the people that they are instituted by the gods of the land, particularly *Eli*. That the people should respect and abide by these social customs and prohibitions is a true demonstration of the awareness on the part of the people that *Eli* stands for their well-being, social harmony and above all, moral control. In other words, the people regard *Eli* deity as a moral watch-dog, whose presence in their midst always reminds them of the need to behave in a socially approved manner. Again, we see here that *Eli* is held in high esteem and respect probably due to their understanding that, unlike the Christian concept of a merciful God, *Eli* is merciless, and strikes or punishes instantly whoever goes contrary to the morally accepted social principles.

However, this does not mean that everybody in Ikwerreland of today is of the fear and respect of *Eli*. In other words, in the minds of some people today the traditional religious practices are no longer taken seriously, as evidenced from proven cases of deliberate neglect of their gods and shrines by the devotees, to the extent that local shrines are allowed to be overgrown with weeds. Some people no longer bother to attend to the gods and the ancestors, let alone accepting them as the watch-dog of traditional morality. In fact, to many in Ikwerre today, morality has been thrown overboard. What is uppermost in the minds of such people is how to make it materially with little or no regard to traditional morality. Again, it will be noted that with the coming of the western civilisation also came an improved health care delivery through western medicine. Thus, those diseases formerly attributed to the wrath of *Eli* (earth-goddess) because of offences against her by man, are nowadays explained and handled in scientific terms, and anything to the contrary is branded superstitious. With this also came western values and ideologies in every aspect of life of the traditional people. Therefore, for one to be in tune with modern life meant abandoning and undermining every aspect of traditional life of the people. It is probably in this light that we can rationally explain the reason for the shift in emphasis of the understanding and whole acceptance of the role *Eli* was originally believed to play in directing and guarding people to moral rectitude, like the days when traditional religious practices with their taboos and precepts were blindly accepted by adherents without questions.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Chiokuke is the Ikwerre word for Supreme God meaning (God who creates). Other names and attributes of God among the people include *Olugbuo* (the victor), *Igbugirighu* (the impenetrable), *Otuhobi* (He whose decision is final), etc.
2. Sacrifical rituals meant to assuage or ward off the consequences of a crime or an offence against *Eli* are usually very expensive, of which people dread the idea of incurring such avoidable expenditure.
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19. Awolalu *op. cit.* p. 10.
20. See also Arinze F. A. *Sacrifices in Ibo Religion*, Ibadan, University Press, Ibadan, 1970, p. 34.
21. Richard C. McEwen and Herschel E. Ageltine "Prayer in Primitive Religion" *Religious Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 1, March 1979, p. 102.
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THE FUNDAMENTALIST PARADIGM AND ITS DILEMMAS

NIELS C. NIELSEN, Jr.

Contemporary Fundamentalist Phenomena

Recent decades have seen a worldwide increase in belligerency and rhetoric by fundamentalist parties in a variety of religions – Sikhism, Hinduism and Buddhism as well as Islam and Christianity. Claiming the authority of scripture, these conservatives of the far right do battle for the truths of their faith. Their absolutism and uncritical homiletical language often resonates with folk piety. Much is being written in criticism of "fundamentalist phenomena" by sociologists and even by historians.[1] Too little is being said in clarification of what is going on by theologians, as they judge it to be simply obscurantist.[2]

Harvey Cox, in his recent book, *Religion in the Secular City*, is an exception.[3] Cox assigns Protestant fundamentalism – along with Liberation Theology – a dynamic role in the post-modern revival of religion. Of course, in the end he denies that fundamentalism will become at last victorious because of the dilemmas intrinsic in the position. Not only are its advocates unable to come to terms with the critical historical study of the Bible. Even in their intransigency, they are caught in the either/or between defensiveness and accommodation. Does this limitation extend to so-called fundamentalists in other religions?

James Davison Hunter in his recent study, *Evangelicalism, the Coming Generation*, suggests that it does in his summary discussion of the far right in Judaism, Islam and Japanese Buddhism.[4] Classifying low church American fundamentalism as one type of Evangelicalism, he finds major similarities and differences crossculturally; among the latter, for example, is the greater emphasis on orthopraxis in both Judaism and Islam. Yet common dilemmas range across the board from family morals and social concerns to debate about who is included and excluded in salvation. Fundamentalists have become politicized worldwide. When fundamentalist exclusiveness and intolerance is carried over into politics, the outlook becomes a wider community concern.

Social and literary criticism of fundamentalism is not new. Menken caricaturized Bryan following the Scopes Trial and Sinclair Lewis wrote his novel, *Elmer Gantry*.[5] Lewis' Elmer Gantry has been revived recently, in press attacks on the Bakers and their PTLs as well as the Pentecostal faith healer, Oral Roberts. Fundamentalist controversy about evolution continues in the United States and today centres on "scientific creationism". Actually, it was a change of scientific model, occasioned by the work of Darwin, which forced a new religious orientation. Paley's natural theology became outdated. Today, the debate about creation myths (often set in obscurantist terms of scientism vs. fundamentalism) has not slowed the growth of the New Religious Right. Still, contact with new cultural and scientific world views cannot be avoided over a long period of time. This is the case in Islam and Buddhism as much as Christianity. The practical dilemma is one of some accommodation or increased defensiveness.

Hunter, in his sociological analysis, calls attention to the way that boundaries are shifting.[6] Assuredly, fundamentalism has a new dynamic, fuelled, for example, by television evangelists who use computer technology to personalize correspondence with their supporters as well as by new oil riches in the Middle East. But in education the dilemmas of the position are more evident. In the United States, Hunter insists, even the most dedicated conservative institutions do not escape fully the dilemmas of secularization. Hunter's research, for example, shows that evangelicals attending secular private or state universities retain their conviction in a larger percentage than those who attend religiously conservative schools.[7] The reason, oversimplified, is that even in carefully guarded orthodox institutions, the fundamentalist literalist model faces new challenges whenever epistemological and historical questions are raised critically in the teaching of the humanities.

Initially, fundamentalist conviction was as a reaction against evolution and higher criticism. The position has been inspired from the outset by the belief that essential tenets of the faith have been given away in compromise. It is interesting that in the second wave of American fundamentalism, following the second world war, Billy Graham and his entourage used the name "Evangelical" to distinguish their outlook from an earlier less open and more polemical stance. But his first premises remained premillennial dispensational. Graham explained:

> If by fundamentalist you mean "narrow", "bigoted", "prejudiced", "extremist", "emotional", "snake handler", "without social conscience" – then I am definitely not a fundamentalist. However, if by fundamentalist you mean a person who accepts the authority of Scriptures, the virgin birth of Christ, the atoning death of Christ, His bodily resurrection, His second coming, and personal salvation by faith through grace, then I am a fundamentalist.[8]

Most recently, Jerry Falwell, taking over Graham's role as an adviser to politicians again has preferred the designation "Fundamentalism" in what he acknowledges as a "red neck" theology.[9]

Paradigm theory

Both Graham and Falwell appeal to religious conviction. Is there a theological reference – as distinguished from a simply sociological or psychological one – which can help to explain and illumine the "fundamentalist phenomenon"? Hans Küng in his recent book, *Theology for the Third Millenium*, develops a theory of religious paradigm or model changes which borrows from Thomas Kuhn's analysis of scientific revolutions. He invokes periodization of theological models together with a limited historicism against the growing conservativism in his own religious community, the Roman Catholic Church. Can it be applied more generally to fundamentalism?

On Kuhn's analysis, a given paradigm reigns in the scientific community during a particular era, until it is challenged by changed cultural circumstances, new data and ideas. Eventually, it is replaced by another model: for example, the Ptolemaic by the Copernican world view, Newton's physics by that of Einstein, or Paley's fixed teleological model by the evolutionary outlook of

Darwin. Scientists already initiated in the tradition of a particular model commonly resist change. It was biologists not just theologians who initially opposed the Darwinian revolution. Kuhn's point is not only that interpretative perspectives are not simply empirical or self-evident, but that paradigm changes are not brought about without radical discontinuity.

Hans Küng finds similar paradigm changes in religion – a thesis which Kuhn acknowledged was possible when he was asked about it by the theologian. Model shifts in religions' history bring discontinuity as well as continuity. Küng's examples include the Protestant Reformation, the Enlightenment and what he designates as the post-modern model, as well as the Theravada and Mahayanist Buddhist, and Sunni and Shi'ite Moslem perspectives. Thus, in Christianity, there has been an early apocalpytic-eschatological model, a Patristic model strongly influenced by Greek philosophy, medieval scholastic, Reformation and Counter Reformation models, as well as Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment models. Küng not only periodizes Christian history but the history of other faiths, Islam and Buddhism, for example. This periodization was welcomed at the Buddhist-Christian dialogue conference held at the University of Hawaii in 1984, by the distinguished Buddhist historian H. Nakamura.[10] Recently, Küng has extended his analysis to Judaism and Chinese religion.

How would such periodization help to clarify the phenomenon of fundamentalism? Reference to its recent growth and development makes clear that the fundamentalist, too, has his paradigm, one which is historically conditioned. On Küng's interpretation, a model is not simply intellectual; it is rather both cultural and personal – a life-stance, a grid, through which the self and the world as well as deity are interpreted. Of course, this periodization challenges any absolutistic view of religion which premises a timeless absolutism – as in the case of fundamentalism. Truth is not denied, but any exhaustive description or formulation is challenged.

Arising in reaction against modernism and secularization, fundamentalism affirms a pre-Enlightenment paradigm in a post-Enlightenment era. When a past cultural synthesis is defended defensively – as in fundamentalism – the time bound character of religious knowledge becomes doubly evident, Küng argues. The way out is not the absolutizing of a particular model from the past, but at the very least a change of outer garments – in the words of Pope John XXIII whom Küng quotes so often. By its historicization, Küng's paradigm theory makes clear the indirect and symbolic character of knowledge in both science and religion.

The criticism is that fundamentalism is distinguished today by its ahistorical and literalistic paradigm. In many respects, it embodies retrogression to a pre-Enlightenment view, as we have already noted. In this model theory, fundamentalism need not be limited to a single culture, Christian, Islamic or Buddhist. In fact, it has a crosscultural outreach. To be sure there are significant differences between fundamentalisms in various religions, but also meaningful analogies. Their popular following arises in part from a revival of folk piety in a post-modern era in which secularization is no longer on the rise. But fundamentalism is only one response, one model among others. How seriously ought it to be taken theologically?

Of course, the roots of religious models are not just intellectual but existential and emotional in life stance. Paradoxically, fundamentalism's non-symbolic type of religious language often has done more to invigorate symbolism than a more abstract appeal. In spite of all differences between fundamentalists belonging to major faiths, a common premise joins them. It is that hermeneutical subtleties such as the identification of symbol and myth are not to be allowed in interpreting the written Word of God. The plain evident meaning of the text is to be honoured. But this too is a theological model, and the perennial question is whether such a programme can be carried out without ambiguity with respect to religious meaning and symbolism. Most fundamentalists do not understand that symbolic language is not limited to religion, but takes many different forms, artistic and literary, political and even scientific. Our criticism is that they make a too literalistic – and thus reductionistic claim for religious truth.

An often unrecognized dilemma is to be found at the centre of such an outlook: on the one hand, a highly symbolic mythical world view dominates. On the other hand, symbolism is not recognized as such but treated instead with radical literalism. Put otherwise, fundamentalism seems to honour the major symbols of the tradition (creation, eschatology, Christology), but in fact destroys any gain from such recognition by a reductionistic dogmatism. A common paradigm or model, shared by fundamentalists in a variety of religions, at least analogically unites them. What is held in common is an intolerant absolutist and atemporal premise which ignores the history of religion, and in consequence allows no pluralism within religions or between them.

This much can be said in defence of the fundamentalist stance. Today, more than before, it has become apparent that secularization is not as far advanced in the popular mind as had been believed.[11] The death of the sacred – and with it the religious sense of life – has been announced prematurely. In fact, there is a large range of popular religious conviction which is not put off by literalistic piety. To be sure, fundamentalism's apocalyptic model at times has dramatic consequences which are not limited just to pious imagination. The destruction and killing envisaged so literalistically in premillennialist visions of the future have an all too real contemporary counterpart in Moslem and Sikh violence. Today, triumphalism of one sort or another belongs to much of the new religious right. In a variety of religions, "fundamentalists" can be distinguished by the conviction that their non-pluralistic form of religion will outlast and overcome "secular humanism". Bruce Lawrence, Professor of Islamics and the History of Religion at Duke University, observes:

> Islamic fundamentalism is a major new departure in the most recent chapter of Islamic history. Fundamentalists, unlike their traditionalist counterparts, are determined to rekindle the glory of Islam, not by ignoring or retreating from the West, but by confronting, challenging, matching – and in God's good time, with His grace – defeating it.[12]

Fundamentalism and the history of religion

In this situation, fundamentalism is illumined significantly when it is viewed against the background of the longer history of religion. The late Mircea Eliade once remarked that for the first time – now in the latter part of the 20th-century – it has become possible to write a complete history of religion.[13] Scholars now know, as they did not before, what the human religious past has been in virtually every era and place on the globe. To be sure, there are esoteric meanings – of myths as well as rituals – which remain closed for lack of written records. Yet thanks to modern archeological and anthropological research, there is a greatly expanded knowledge in the late 20th-century. In reflecting about even so historically unselfconscious a movement as fundamentalism, this past ought not to be disregarded as in the case of most of its adherents. Characteristically, they treat protohistory – indeed all of religious life before the advent of Christianity or Islam – simply from the point of view of their own paradoxically literalistic mythology.

Today, the fundamentalist like the secular humanist (to use these identifications very generally to identify the far right and the far left) finds little meaning in the early history of religion. The fundamentalist dismisses it summarily as idolatrous and without revelation; the secular humanist views it as in terms of natural evolutionary growth (if indeed he sees any meaning in it at all). In either case, the dogmas of revelation or scientific progress have replaced it. Eliade, by contrast, is convinced that there has been a significant loss of the sense of meaning in the later more secularized eras. His view, to be sure, is the reverse of any simplistic doctrine of progress or evolution – naturalistic or theistic – in the history of religion.

Part of the strength of Eliade's scholarship is that he called attention to meanings in the religious past which were often overlooked. He insisted, most of all, that mythology is vital to religious life. Modern man's resistance to the symbolism of the sacred has led to its impoverishment.[16] Eliade argues that the human quest for salvation is at the same time a quest for being in the face of finitude and death. Moderns only reflect their own subjectivist bias when they suppose that the sacred – equivalent with the real on this view – is simply invented rather than encountered and discovered. "Secular humanism", by contrast, may be understood as an attempt to exclude religious symbols. Paul Kurtz, defending this position, argues that life has no intrinsic meaning.[17] Fundamentalists – opposing such a point – have little difficulty in attracting a following!

It ought not to be overlooked that folk piety – with its long history – is a progenitor of fundamentalism. Of course, primitive and archaic eras did not make our abstract distinctions of natural and supernatural, immanence and transcendence. Dominant in their world view was the manifestation of the sacred, kratophany.[14] The sacred was self-evidently the real. Eliade, himself Rumanian in background, took his cue from the German historian of religion, Rudolph Otto's pioneering study, *The Idea of the Holy.*[15] Eliade saw in it a confirmation of his own phenomenological approach. Otto argued that if we wish to understand what goes on in religion – past and present – we ought not to turn first to dogmatic theologies or the history of ideas. Explicit theological interpretation comes quite late in time and is often retrospective (a claim almost entirely ignored by fundamentalists).

Eliade is sure the evidence shows that homo sapiens has lived in awe of sacred power, conceived as the *mysterium tremendum*, virtually since the beginning of their life on our planet. In this setting, fundamentalist claims about "scientific creationism" become patently absurd. Creation myths are not just pre-scientific cosmology but an explanation of the world in terms of sacred power.[18] Creation stories were re-enacted at the beginning of the new year, in the sacred season, in order to recover the power of the gods which had been present at the beginning. The universe was renewed through myth and ritual. New strength was given to life and the human situation in this way.

Actually, television evangelists – reviving mythology – at times appear to have a shaman-like quality. The theme of shamanism is explored in one of Eliade's major books.[19] He views the shaman as a pivotal figure in the history of religion whose esoteric qualities loomed large in primitive and archaic religion. Is there a counterpart in modern television evangelists' emphasis on faith healing, ecstasy and glossalia? Eliade interestingly found similarities between the philosopher Heidegger's quest for being and shamanism. For himself, he was convinced that both are profound expressions of the quest for reality and the sacred.

Our claim is that Eliade's writing contributes to the present discussion of fundamentalism in his analysis of primitive and archaic religious models. His description of the way in which myth and ritual are linked to paradigms of sacred space and sacred time was innovative and illuminating. Eliade offered less help, however, in understanding the later religions with founders, particularly since what Karl Jaspers designates as the "Axial Period", from the eighth to the fifth centuries before the Common Era.[20] With respect to the latter, Küng's theory of paradigm changes is more helpful. Still, the conclusions of both scholars converge in measure in criticism of fundamentalism.

Fundamentalists expound the basic symbols of their respective traditions with singular literalness in order to maintain what they regard as the integrity of the faith. Our argument has been, however, that they do not avoid the dilemmas of religious language. The "hermeneutical question" – which fundamentalists do not ask – is what symbolic model will be used. The critical historical judgement must be that religion's past – in particular, its major symbols – are not the property of any single faith. Eliade argued that most if not all major religious symbols antedate the religions with founders. For the historian of religion, the question is not whether religions will borrow from each other, but only how and in what way. No doubt, earlier symbol systems were expanded and converted in terms of later faith traditions and conviction. But in this process, all symbols were not created *ex nihilo*.

To the present, major religions have a limited number of symbolic models from which they understand reality. Knowledge is never exhaustive conceptually, but identified in a variety of symbols, for example, deity,

creation, the fall, salvation and eschatology. In Küng's terms there are macro-, meso- and micro-paradigms.[21] Particular doctrines fall under the second classification, their explication often under the third. In the case of Christianity, creation, Christology and redemption are meso- or micro-models in a larger macro-paradigm. Most important, it was first in the oral preliterate stage that creation, the new birth and passage into another life were symbolized in story. Actually, the preliterate stage produced the major myths and symbols which continue to have vitality to the present.

Today, the ahistorical mode in which the New Religious Right continues to view symbol and myth – literalistically – is the source of its dilemma. Fundamentalists' refusal to understand scriptual texts in terms of higher criticism leads to reductionism.[22] From their point of view, anything short of biblicism does not speak to the central issues, and even if it happened to do so, it would distort them. Actually, religious knowledge has never been limited simply to written texts in the past. The language of the sacred has been recorded in scriptures. Its dynamic remains more existentially alive than the fundamentalist paradigm of verbal inspiration allows. Phenomenologically, there is a variety of models in the scriptures and tradition of a single religion as well throughout the larger history of religion.

What is clear, as Tillich emphasized, is that symbolic paradigms live and die.[23] Fundamentalism has grown because some modernist liberal as well as some more traditional ones have died. How much religious models are invented, how much discovered, need not be here decided. To say the least, there is a larger human interpretative element in both law and doctrine than fundamentalists allow. In the end, God must be described symbolically (or analogically) more than fundamentalists realize.[24] Our conclusion is that their literalism is one way, a very powerful one, in which popular piety invokes religious symbolism (generally without complete consistency or clarity). Fundamentalist language is not as simply scriptural or timeless as is claimed. It does not stand alone but has a historical background in revivalist developments in both Christianity and Islam. In both religions, its non-sacramental, highly verbalized model lives on in preaching, now conveyed through mass media.

FOOTNOTES

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ADAM AS ANALOGY: HELP OR HINDRANCE?

LARRY KREITZER

1) ADAM IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

The use of "Adam" in the New Testament is by no means extensive. The name itself occurs only nine times (Luke 3:38; Romans 5:14a and b; 1 Corinthians 15:22; 45a and b; 1 Timothy 2:13 and 14; Jude 14), but in a wide variety of senses. Sometimes its use is built upon the Genesis account's portrayal of Adam as the first human creature: Adam is seen as the historic progenitor of the race. This is most clear in Jude 14 (a quote from Ethiopian Enoch 1:9) where Enoch is described as "the seventh generation of Adam". Here the meaning is quite straightforward. "Adam" is simply spoken of as an historical figure. In the same way, the Lucan reference to Adam is set within the geneological table of Jesus, beginning with Jesus himself, and running backwards until it climaxes in the first created man. By such a structure the historical relationship between Jesus and Adam is emphasized and Jesus is seen to fit within the flow of human history. We who live in the 20th century are immediately presented with a difficulty by such an emphasis upon the historical side of the Adam stories. Few of us who live in a scientific age still hold to the literal beginning of the human race in Adam. We are "post-Darwinian" and find great difficulty in juggling the historical claims of these references to Adam with what we know to be scientifically true.

Fortunately, the complete meaning of "Adam" within the New Testament is not restricted to such a narrow historical basis as we see in Jude and Luke. We do find, in some of the other passages, hints of typological significance of "Adam". "Adam" as a theological category is thereby rescued and is able to have some contemporary meaning.

We see a brief indication of this when we turn to the passage in 1 Timothy 2:13-14. There the assumption of Adam as the first historical man underlies the author's point, but "Adam" begins to take on an additional meaning as well. We see this in the way that the writer delivers his instruction concerning the submission of women to men and bases it upon the Genesis account of the creation of woman from man. Adam and Eve are called into service as historical, *and normative,* examples of how men and women should interrelate. However, here an additional problem surfaces by the way in which "Adam" and "Eve" are used in a manner which betrays a male-centred culture. In short, the story presented in 1 Timothy smacks of the worst kind of chauvinism. The author has interpreted the Genesis stories in such a way as to support his understanding of the natural hierarchy between the sexes. Such an understanding is unpalatable, to say the least, for many today. Yet even though we may not like his uses of the "Adam" analogy, at least he has broken out of the "historical" category.

When we turn to the Adam reference in Romans 5 and 1 Corinthians 15, we see an even more developed and complicated typological use of "Adam". Paul's use of "Adam" provides us with an ideal opportunity to see how he adapts and shapes an idea so as to communicate to his audiences various insights he has concerning their heritage of experience in the Lord Jesus Christ. By looking at the image of Adam in Romans and 1 Corinthians perhaps we can come to a better understanding of the particular tension and ideas within the churches which led Paul to write, as well as throw light on Paul himself and expose one aspect of his thought. In so doing, we can catch something of the dynamic spirit of the apostle who helped to launch the Church into the Hellenistic world.

2) ADAM IN 1 CORINTHIANS 15

The chapter is a self-contained discussion of the resurrection of the dead which may be summarized thus:

1-11	The Resurrection of Christ as the Basis of the Gospel
12-34	Christ's Resurrection and Our Resurrection
12-19	Results of denying the Resurrection
20-28	Results of accepting the Resurrection
29-34	Excursus on Baptism of the Dead
35-57	The Resurrection Body
35-44a	Analogies from Nature
44b-49	Analogies from Adam
50-57	Victory over Death: The Mystery of the Resurrection
58	Exhortation

The first instance of Paul's Adam analogy is introduced by a statement (verse 20a), built upon the declaration of Christ's resurrection found in verses 3-5. Paul expands the tradition given in verse 3 by including the phrase "from the dead" (as he also did in verse 12). In the second half of verse 20 the meaning of Christ's resurrection is amplified: Christ is also the "First-fruits" of those who are asleep. Here a new point is interjected – the unity of Christ and the believers. The resurrection bodies of the redeemed are to correspond to and flow from Christ's resurrection body in the same way that the harvest corresponds to and flows from its first-fruits. At the same time the image is one of distinction for Christ is the *first*-fruits of the harvest to follow. It is to further amplify and explain this relationship between Christ and his believers that the Adam/Christ analogy is used by Paul. In verses 21-22 Paul sets forth a double parallelism showing that relationship:

21a	For since by a man came death,
21b	so also by a man came the resurrection of the dead.
22a	For as in Adam all die,
22b	so also in Christ shall all be made alive.

The two verses should be taken together as the second serves to clarify the first. In verse 21a, Paul is making reference to Adam who, in Genesis 3, transgressed the command of God and brought upon himself the sentence of death of which he is warned in Genesis 2:17. This act of disobedience by Adam is the source of death's introduction into the world and becomes the subject of much speculation within Jewish pseudepigraphal literature. Two examples will help to demonstrate the point. The first is found in 4 Ezra 7:48: "O Adam, what have you done? Your sin was not your fall alone; it was ours also, the fall of all your descendants". We might at this point be tempted to think that "Adam" has a

monopoly on the dubious privilege of being the originator of sin. Such is not the case, however. There are some writings which drag Eve into the picture as well. A good example is Ben Sirah 25:24: "From a woman did sin originate, and because of her we all must die." Considering the general attitude Ben Sirah demonstrates towards women I do not know if this should be considered a blow for the feminist movement or not. In any case, it is an interesting, and often overlooked, variation on the theme. Here we can see one of the great difficulties in the "Adam" analogy – its sexist presuppositions. I find myself wondering how I, as a male, would feel if the tables were turned and the traditional sexual roles reversed. Would I feel alienated today if we spoke of "Eve" in the same sexist way that we speak of "Adam"? How does the message of "Adam" as a type communicate to a people which does not entirely share the sexist presuppositions of the first-century world (or at least do not share them to the same degree that Paul did)? If "Adam" is going to communicate to us today this sexist barrier must be recognized and overcome. Perhaps it is time to raise up "Eve" and point to her involvement in the Fall as well.

To return to Paul, it is significant that what he does not tell us here is *how* Adam's sin is communicated to the rest of mankind or what is meant when he says that "in Adam all die". Maybe this is an indication of how unimportant the problem of sin's transmission was for Paul. We must turn to Romans 5, written later, for any further discussion along these lines.

Here in 1 Corinthians 15:21-22 Paul is using the image of Adam, who would be understood to be the father of the human race, in order to speak of Christ as the founder of the New Humanity. He assumes the Corinthians were familiar with Adam's representative role as the father of mankind and recognized that a continuity of death existed between him and his descendants. In using the Adam image as he has, and by building upon the common beliefs he shared with the Corinthians concerning the resurrection of Christ, he is able to discuss the more immediate subject of the resurrection of the believers. In verse 22 Paul expands his statement of verse 20 emphasizing the identity of resurrection existence between Christ and his believers.

The second instance of Paul's Adam analogy in 1 Corinthians 15 is found in verses 45-49, a quotation of and commentary on Genesis 2:7. The section is founded upon Paul's statement in 44b: "If there is a physical body there is also a spiritual body". This statement in 44b is a summary of the preceding paragraph which begins in verse 35 where Paul, in the style of diatribe, enters into a discussion of the nature of the resurrection body. The discussion centres upon what kind of bodies the resurrected will be given. That the question is raised at all is a reflection of the Greek-speaking world's inability to understand how the resurrection could be "the standing up of corpses" *(anastasis nekron)*. Paul answers the question in a roundabout way by pointing first of all to various examples in nature – sowing of grain and resultant plants (36-37); different types of bodies among God's creatures (38-39); and even within the cosmic order (40-41). In verse 42 Paul focuses once again upon the resurrection of the dead and through a series of contrasts (corruption/incorruption; dishonour/glory; weakness/power) arrives at the climatic antithesis of physical and spiritual bodies in verse 44. Thus Paul is able to speak of both a *soma psuchikon* (physical body) and a *soma pneumatikon* (spiritual body). It is in attempting to explain the relationship that exists between these two "bodies" that he turns once again to the Adam/Christ analogy in verses 45-49. To the observant reader this is an underhand way of winning the argument, for it involves an expansion of the meaning of *soma* (body) into two groups. In effect Paul talks out of both sides of his mouth and reinterprets the meaning of the word to suit his case. One can almost see the Corinthians' mouths dropping open in amazement at this verbal sleight of hand. They have been outmanoeuvred in the rhetorical battle and there is little recourse but to concede the point.

In any case, it is important to note not only *what* Paul does with his "Adam" image but *why* he does it. Paul indicates by his reworking of the passage from Genesis 2:7 that he understands the resurrection of the believer to be both somatic and future. By quoting this passage from Genesis and paralleling it in terms of Christ as Second Adam, Paul is using the Adam analogy as a way of speaking about the nature of the resurrection body of the believers. However, we must not assume that *all* Paul wants to communicate through the Adam/Christ analogy at this point is that Christ is *"soma pneumatikon"*. For Paul goes on to describe Christ as the "life-giving spirit". In other words, Paul is not merely making an anthropological claim about Christ as Second Adam here; his meaning goes beyond that. He is also making a christological statement about the Risen Lord who has manifested himself as the regenerating Spirit within the church. The passage in Genesis lent itself toward that purpose.

In a sense, therefore, Paul's use of the typology of Adam/Christ is not consistent. In calling Christ the "life-giving Spirit" Paul is making a statement about the work of Christ within the Church which has no parallel in the Adamic side of the analogy. The motivating factor in Paul's use of the analogy is his desire to show that a relationship exists between Christ and his believers just as a relationship existed between Adam and the rest of humanity. But the wonder of what God had done for man through Christ was so great, and Paul's experience of it so real, that the Adam/Christ analogy breaks down. It was employed in so far as it was useful in demonstrating the solidarity of the two Adams with their respective followers, but when it could no longer communicate or contain the message about Christ's life-transforming power in the life of the Christian it is laid aside.

3) ADAM IN ROMANS 5

In Romans 5 we have a discussion of the Christian's "life in Christ". The chapter is easily divided into two major sections: verses 1-11 and verses 12-21. The two halves are intimately related in that within both sections the central theme is the Christian's life in Christ and the relationship the present experience of justification has with the ultimate hope of salvation. To help clarify this relationship, the Adam/Christ analogy is introduced in verses 12-21. Romans 5:12-21 may be structured thus:

12	Introductory comparison between Adam and Christ
13-14	Excursus on law and sin in relation to death
15-17	Excursus contrasting the acts of Adam and Christ
18	Restatement of thought of verse 12
19-21	Expansion of the verse 18 contrast between Adam and Christ with reference to the surpassing nature of grace

The introductory statement of 5:12 is most easily understood as an uncompleted sentence. It probably began in Paul's mind as a straightforward contrast between the act of Adam and the act of Christ (the "through one man" would seem to so indicate) but the thought is never finished. Instead, Paul is side-tracked for at least five verses (13-17) in which he discusses two important tributaries of his main stream of thought.

Incidentally, it is quite interesting to note how often Paul does exhibit this tendency of "chasing rabbits" or "going off on a tangent" and leaving a thought uncompleted. I suppose we should not complain too much, since some of the countryside we pass in these extra-curricular jaunts is very beautiful and interesting. The tendency does stand as a suggestive hint of Paul's roaming mind and does bring to mind several lecturers I have known who display the same characteristic . . .

These two excursus are in themselves quite interesting. The first is contained in 13-14 and is designed to more fully explain the relationship between sin, law and death. This is accomplished by Paul in two steps with verse 13 showing how sin and death are related, and verse 14 showing how death is connected to law and sin. In the first excursus Paul is concerned with answering the question (arising from his statement in 5:12) of how it is that Adam's sin is in some sense responsible for *our* sin and death. It is at this juncture that we can see the great strength of the Adam analogy, as well as its fatal weakness. Its great strength is that it offers an explanation of *our* sinfulness based upon our being physical descendants of Adam. At the same time its great weakness is exposed in that it is inherently unjust and makes *Adam's* sin responsible for *our* punishment. It is precisely this very incongruity which has occupied so much of the thought of Christian thinkers, such as Augustine of Hippo, over the centuries. The whole issue is made even more difficult for us today when we consider the question of the historicity of Adam. What impact does the rise of modern science have upon religious texts, such as Genesis 1-3 and Romans 5, which purport to contain truth about human origins? To what degree is the truth contained within those texts undermined or contaminated by a scientific mindset? These types of hermeneutical questions inevitably arise whenever we try and plumb the depths of the Adam analogy. We find ourselves unable to resist the flight into the theological clouds which the analogy affords. At the same time we should not overlook Paul's primary reason for introducing the idea of "Adam" in the first place.

Paul is not interested in giving us an extended discussion on the nature of sin for purely independent interest. On the contrary, the whole excursus on Adam arises because Paul is seeking to prepare the way for expounding the significance of Christ's act of righteousness and its meaning for the believer.

In verses 15-17 Paul takes another detour of thought, this time in contrasting the acts of Adam and Christ. In all three verses the argument *a minore ad maius* (from the minor to the major) is present:

Verse 15 The *transgression* of Adam is contrasted with the abounding *grace and gift* of God in Christ.

Verse 16 The *judgement* coming from *one* transgression is contrasted with the *free gift* arising from *many* transgressions.

Verse 17 The *death* arising from the *one transgression* is contrasted with the *grace and righteousness* reigning in *life* in the *one* Jesus Christ.

It is not until verse 18 that Paul returns to the initial thought set forth in 5:12. It is almost as if he has suddenly realized how far the chase has taken him away from the main path, muttered "Now, where was I? . . . Oh, Yes! I remember", and picks up again. In 18a, however, this thought of 5:12 is restated and then is immediately followed by the long awaited apodosis in 18b. Verses 19-21 service to fill out in more detail the tremendous truth concerning the surpassing of sin and its effects by God's grace.

Paul's understanding of the Lord Jesus Christ is such that when comparing Adam and Christ in Romans 5:12-21 he can only say, "Christ! How much more . . ."

4) SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

Within the New Testament the idea of Christ as Second Adam is explicitly detailed only in the Pauline epistles to the churches at Rome and Corinth. When writing to these churches Paul uses the Adam/Christ analogy as a useful tool to illustrate his understanding of Jesus Christ and what Christ has done for mankind. He wishes by use of the analogy to demonstrate to the congregations at Rome and Corinth the relationship which exists between Christ and the Christian believers. Within 1 Corinthians the focus of the analogy is with Adam and Christ as symbolic *persons* while in Romans the focus is on their respective *acts*.

In any case, the Adam/Christ analogy is by no means a rigidly defined structure in which one finds Adam and Christ strictly compared point by point. On the one hand, Adam and Christ are complemented in that both are representative figures for their followers. Both encompass humanity within themselves. Both stand as typological figures of an aeon. Both by their respective acts set the pattern for the people who follow them. On the other hand, Adam and Christ are also contrasted in that the effects of their respective acts are so dissimilar. Adam's act yielded sin and death while Christ's yielded righteousness and life. There is continuity as well as discontinuity within the analogy.

Paul is quite free in his use of the figure of Adam as the antitype of Christ. When the boundaries of his Adamic thought are seen to place restrictions upon his understanding of the person and work of Christ they are

crossed with no reservation. Indeed, the Adam/Christ analogy is inadequate at points, as we have seen, and needs to be mixed with other concepts in order to express more comprehensively the significance of Christ for Paul.

A study of "Adam" within the New Testament thus raises several key problems of interpretation. In spite of the fact that "Adam" is obviously an important means by which Paul can communicate something of his understanding of the significance of Christ, I cannot help but feel it is a vehicle which has severe "mechanical" problems. No doubt it still is an invaluable analogical tool in expressing Christians' relationship with their Lord and still contributes on that level. At the same time it is not an all-purpose instrument and does not fit many of the conventions we take for granted. In short, it is both a Help *and* a Hindrance. Our task is to rely upon its strengths without becoming entangled in its weaknesses.

BOOK REVIEWS

Studies in the Religious Tradition of the Old Testament

Peter R. Ackroyd. SCM Press, 1987. Pp. xiv + 305. £12.50

Fifteen of Professor Ackroyd's essays, the earliest read as his 1961 Inaugural Lecture in the Samuel Davidson Chair of Old Testament Studies here at King's College, the latest as a 1986 lecture at Princeton Theological Seminary, are here collected around the theme of continuity within the religious tradition of the Old Testament. All but the last of these have been published before, and are reproduced in this book in substantially unrevised form. Several of them, however, originally appeared in publications which are not easily accessible to British readers. For that reason alone, quite apart from the opportunity which it provides for us to examine in a thoroughgoing way the author's contribution to this aspect of Old Testament studies over more than 25 years of scholarship, this collection is to be welcomed.

There are three major divisions in the book. The first, headed "Continuity", contains five essays which deal with the wider questions of continuity and discontinuity within the Old Testament. There is inevitably some degree of overlap between these essays, but each concentrates on different aspects of the theme. "Continuity: A Contribution to the Study of the Old Testament Religious Tradition" examines three lines of continuity (in patterns of thought, in religious life and practice, and in attitudes to what became the Old Testament writings) which may be said to give some kind of order to the tradition. "The Theology of Tradition: An Approach to Old Testament Theological Problems" is concerned to emphasize the nature and range of the evidence of diversity within the tradition, and to demonstrate the problems inherent in many modern attempts to find unity. "Continuity and Discontinuity: Rehabilitation and Authentication" is more concerned with the attempts made in Old Testament times to overcome breaks in continuity, and the effects of these attempts upon the formation of the literature. "The Temple Vessels: A Continuity Theme" discusses one such attempt in detail. Finally, "The Vitality of the Word of God in the Old Testament: A Contribution to the Study of the Transmission and Exposition of Old Testament Material" further explores the ongoing process of reinterpretation which is evident in many texts, emphasizing that this has taken place as part of ". . . the life of a real community in which the word of God has been not merely handed down, but creatively applied" (p. 74).

The second edition of the book, "Aspects of the Prophetic Tradition", contains six essays which consider these broader questions in relation to the prophets, and specifically in relation to the Isaiah tradition. "Isaiah 1-12: Presentation of a Prophet" argues that the Isaiah tradition grew to its present immense proportions in part because of the presentation of this prophet in the first 12 chapters of the book. "Isaiah 36-39: Structure and Function" stresses the important role of these chapters in the transition within the book between disaster and renewed hope and salvation. "Historians and Prophets" uses two cases (the reign of Ahaz and the events surrounding the fall of Jerusalem) in which the Old Testament offers alternative presentations of particular periods in history to elucidate some of the questions which arise out of an examination of such presentations. The thrust of "An Interpretation of the Babylonian Exile: A Study of II Kings 20 and Isaiah 38-39" is for the most part clear from its title, although this essay also contains some interesting comments both on the way in which these chapters affect our understanding of the material which precedes them and on the development of the traditions concerning Hezekiah both within and beyond the Old Testament. This latter subject is further explored in "The Death of Hezekiah: A Pointer to the Future?". The concluding essay of this section, "The Biblical Interpretation of the Reigns of Ahaz and Hezekiah", is concerned to emphasize the extent to which the Biblical materials are indeed *interpretations* of history, and to indicate that different historical assessments of these kings are possible.

The third section of the book, entitled "Towards the Canon", contains three essays relating to the question of canon. "A Judgment Narrative between Kings and Chronicles? An Approach to Amos 7.9-17" argues that these verses may originally have been found in alternative form in the books of Kings. The existence of such alternative forms of the text illustrates the degree to which canonical fixation of particular texts is the result of chance factors, and warns us against too narrow a view of canonicity and canonical authority. "The Open Canon" develops these ideas, discussing in more detail many of the difficulties which exist in relation to the concept of canon without (in spite of the title) arriving at any definite conclusions. "Original Text and Canonical Text" argues that the authority of the biblical word lies neither in any "original" text, nor in any finally agreed "canonical" form, but ". . . in the interaction between text and reader, text and expositor, in the creative moment which such an interaction provides" (pp. 233-234). There follows, finally, an "Epilogue" containing one essay, "The Old Testament Religious Tradition: Unity and Change", which addresses the whole theme of the book in a general way and provides a fitting climax to it.

The issues which are discussed in these essays are clearly fundamental to the study of the Old Testament, and the author's treatment of them is always stimulating. The picture which I receive of his own approach to the matter of continuity and discontinuity in the tradition, if I may presume to summarize it, is as follows. The diversity and discontinuities within the tradition must not be underestimated or underplayed: the witness which the tradition provides to the events and personalities, whether human or divine, which lie behind it is truly multi-faceted. Consequently, interpretation of the tradition is a complex affair. Threads of continuity may be detected which help us to make sense of it: ultimate continuity, however, lies only in God himself, the greater reality of which the witnesses are speaking. That there are weaknesses in this position is undoubted. There are also, in my view, a couple of the essays which are weaker than the others: that on Amos 7.9-17 seems particularly speculative. The book could not, however, be read without profit by anyone interested in the nature of the Old Testament literature and in the implications of this for the way in which it should be studied and taught. I would highly recommend it for students and teachers

alike.

Iain Provan

The Jews in Luke-Acts

Jack T. Sanders. SCM Press, 1987. Pp. xviii + 410. £15.00

Why are some passages in Luke's two volumes which record a positive Jewish response to Jesus and to Christian preaching juxtaposed with others which speak of God's rejection of Israel? This question has teased readers of Luke-Acts for a very long time and has received very different answers. Jack Sanders outdoes almost every scholar who has tackled this baffling subject. He insists that once we understand Luke's intentions and methods properly, his portrait of the Jews is clear: they are so consistently and implacably hostile to Jesus and to the church that Luke holds out no hope for their salvation. Indeed Luke is guilty of "anti-semitism".

Luke has had a bad press in some quarters in recent decades. He has been accused of poisoning the purity of Paul's gospel by introducing "early Catholicism" and by appealing to history as "proof" for faith. But the charge of anti-semitism has rarely been levelled at Luke. Most recent writers have accepted that his attitude to the Jews is more carefully nuanced than, say, Matthew's or John's.

So how does Sanders defend his case? At first sight his discussion seems very thorough. In Part I he examines the evidence thematically, with chapters on Luke's attitude to the Jewish leaders, to Jerusalem, to the Jewish people, to the Pharisees and to the "periphery" (outcasts, Samaritans, proselytes, God-fearers). In Part II (which takes up almost half the book) he discusses every passage in Luke's gospel and in Acts which has some bearing on Luke's attitude to the Jews. We are given what the author himself calls a "single-issue" commentary. In fact Part II adds very little, if anything, to the argument. Given the conclusions of the first five chapters, it is easy to predict what Sanders will say in his commentary. The reader turns in vain to Part II for more thorough exegesis of the passages which are the linchpins of the argument.

How plausible is the argument which is set out lucidly and with verve in Part I? Let us take up briefly the charge of "anti-semitism". Sanders concedes (p. xvi) that Luke's "hostility towards Jews was not exactly racial in the way in which we think of racial hatred today, but it was something very close to it". The author "does not know what to call that hostility if not antisemitism". But to label Luke's religious polemic "antisemitic" is almost as absurd as alleging that there are antisemitic passages in the Old Testament prophets. Sanders shows no awareness of the social function of the anti-Jewish polemic in Luke-Acts: it forms part of a much wider concern on Luke's part to legitimate the fledgeling Christian movement as the "true Israel".

Neither of the two passages to which Sanders appeals in proof-text fashion to confirm Luke's antisemitism will bear the weight he has placed on them (p. xvii and p. 317). Acts 18.6 is alleged to state that Jews are guilty of "the sentence of death". But in this passage in good Lucan fashion a biblical idiom is being used to state that Paul is not responsible for the ultimate fate of those in Corinth who have opposed him (see Ezekiel 33.4 and also Acts 20.26). In Luke 19.27 Luke is alleged to "call down the sentence, 'Slaughter them!' on those Jews who refuse to accept Christ as their ruler". This verse is certainly a puzzling conclusion to the parable of the pounds. It may be an allegorical hint at the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans. But it can hardly be antisemitic: the good servants commended by the returning king (Jesus) cannot be Gentiles – they are *Jews*!

Sanders' solution of the riddle with which we began this review is novel. Indeed it is the central pillar of his case; on examination it proves to be in poor condition. Sanders' key to the riddle is to separate speech from narrative (p. 50). In what they say on the subject in "speeches", Jesus, Peter, Stephen and Paul present "an entirely, completely, wholly, uniformly consistent attitude towards the Jewish people as a whole" (p. 63). In the story line, however, we find a quite different situation: in numerous passages in Luke-Acts there is a positive response on the part of many Jews to Jesus and to Christian preaching. The enigma is resolved, Sanders claims, by observing that in the final scene in Acts the distinction has ceased to exist: the Jews have *become* what they from the first *were* – intransigent opponents of the purposes of God.

This separation of "speech" and "narrative" is artificial, to say the least; it will undoubtedly call down the wrath of narrative critics. But quite apart from that issue, in the final scene of Acts Luke is much more ambivalent to the Jews than Sanders allows. Although Paul is under house arrest in Rome, he speaks to large numbers of Jews, "seeking to persuade them about Jesus by appealing to the law of Moses and to the prophets". "Some were won over (*epeithonto*) by his arguments, while others disbelieved" (Acts 28.24). In the light of Acts 19.8 (a strikingly similar passage) the clear implication is that some of the Jews became converts. The citation of Isaiah 6.9-10 which follows may well be addressed to the Jews who "disbelieved" (*ēpisteuoun*). In such a large book Sanders' failure to discuss these crucial verbs is almost incomprehensible. He contents himself with a brief footnote (p. 366, n. 245) which refers to some secondary literature!

In the final verse of Acts Luke portrays Paul preaching the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ quite openly and unhindered. But to whom? Sanders assumes "Gentiles only", although Luke does not say so explicitly. The western textual tradition tries to clear up the ambiguity by stating that Paul spoke to both Jews and Gentiles! Modern readers have to learn to live with Luke's ambiguity.

In short, as so often in Luke's two volumes, in his closing scene he is annoyingly imprecise. He seems to juxtapose rejection of the Jews with hope for their salvation. (Sanders misses the importance of the phrase "the hope of Israel" in Acts 28.20, and also in 23.6; 24.15f, 26.6f.) So we are back with the riddle with which we opened this review. One strand of the evidence *does* support Sanders' case – but as an explanation of *all* the evidence, it simply will not do.

Graham Stanton

The End of the Ages Has Come

Dale C. Allison, Jr. T & T Clark, 1987. Pp. xiii + 194. £13.95

The question of the eschatological teaching of the NT is a topical one in recent years and scholars have produced a host of books, monographs and articles on various aspects of the issue. Allison's book is a welcome addition to the scene in that it not only makes its own distinctive contribution to the issue of eschatology, but also stands as a helpful survey of much that has gone before. It is very readable and systematically presented, moving through the major NT writings as it covers the theme. The thesis of the book may be conveniently set out in the form of four propositions: (1) The NT speaks of Jesus' death as part of the "Great Tribulation" and his resurrection as part of the general resurrection; (2) Realised eschatology (as personified in the work of C. H. Dodd) does not adequately explain this witness within the NT; (3) Jesus himself thought of his death and resurrection in terms of tribulation/vindication; (4) The Church's interpretation of Jesus' passion and resurrection is dependent upon the prevailing pre-Easter eschatological expectations of Judaism. In many ways it is the last of these propositions which is most important, a fact which can be seen in the subtitle Allison gives to the book: "An Early Interpretation of the Passion and Resurrection of Jesus".

It can readily be seen how critical the relationship is between Jesus' eschatological teaching and that of the Church. As Allison says (p. 3): "This book thus concerns a point of continuity between the pre- and post-Easter periods and attempts evaluation by reference to the problem of promise and fulfilment in messianic movements in general".

Allison begins his study with a detailed discussion of the idea of a "Great Tribulation" within Jewish literature. This is perhaps the most original and creative portion of the book, with the diversity and variety of eschatological expression within Jewish literature being a key note. Certainly Allison's point is correct, although greater care should have been taken to apply the same rigorous method of investigation to other themes within this literature as well. For instance, the interpretation Allison offers concerning messianism lacks the same sensitivity to diversity. He is too quick to place many Jewish documents into a "Messianic file" when they actually demonstrate the same sort of diversity and variety he finds with respect to their eschatological content. This means his final analysis of the Jewish material is in need of a slight modification, but this in no way invalidates the main thesis of the book. Having established this theme (Chapter 2), the rest of the book is divided into two main parts. The first (chapters 3-8) follows this theme of the "Great Tribulation" through the NT materials, while the second (chapters 9-12) attempt to analyze the implications of the NT evidence for an understanding of how eschatological expectations functioned in the life of the early Church. It will be helpful if we take these two sections in turn.

When examining the major NT documents themselves, Allison follows the order: Mark, Matthew, John, Paul, Revelation, Luke-Acts as he pursues his study. Special attention is given to the redactional forces in operation in the composition of each of these NT books with Allison making some interesting and thought-provoking observations about the distinction between traditional material and redactional material. Generally Allison tends towards accepting many of the eschatological sections of the NT evidence as traditional and pre-Easter, thus bringing them closer to the thought of Jesus himself. There is some good, solid discussion here and much that will be of benefit to the serious student.

However, it is within the second section that Allison draws all the threads together and seeks to demonstrate how the Jewish background of "Great Tribulation" helps provide a means of tracing eschatological development within the thought of the early Church. For a student still reeling under the mass of literature surrounding the problem of the "Delay of the Parousia" Allison's book will appear as a gift from above which deals with the question fairly and sensibly. Of special note is chapter 12 entitled, "Correlations: From Expectation to Interpretation", which offers a very helpful suggestion about the sociological role that eschatological expectation plays in the life of the Church. Some parallels within Church history, including the cargo cults, the rise of Seventh-Day Adventism, etc, are profitably discussed.

The book contains a good "Summary and Conclusion" section as well as a short excursus on "Belief in the Resurrection of Jesus". It should prove to be immensely valuable to any student wishing to find a friendly guide through the tangle of eschatological materials, both primary and secondary, which are so central to NT studies today. It is comprehensive and up to date in its bibliography and contains a full and extensive set of indices.

Larry Kreitzer

The Glory of Christ in the New Testament. Studies in Christology in Memory of George Bradford Caird

Ed L. D. Hurst and N. T. Wright. Clarendon Press, 1987. Pp. xxviii + 311. £35.00

When George Caird (Dean Ireland's Professor of Exegesis of Holy Scripture, Oxford) died unexpectedly in 1984, this volume of essays, originally designed as a *Festschrift* for his 70th birthday, was recast for a different purpose, *in memoriam*. Most of the contributors were either Caird's pupils (like the two editors) or his colleagues at Oxford or McGill Universities, and they clearly remember Caird with considerable affection as well as scholarly respect (the volume opens with a magnificent "Memoir" by H. Chadwick). The title may be said to represent one of Caird's abiding interests, ever since his own 1944 PhD thesis on "The New Testament Conception of Doxa" (rumoured, incidentally, to contain no footnotes at all!).

This volume contains 21 diverse essays (with plenty of the now obligatory footnotes). Most have some connection with the theme of Christology, and the

emphasis on "glory" in the title is reflected in a number of contributions on transfiguration (eg Hooker on Mark 9) and on Johannine Christology (by M. Hengel, F. Watson, A. Harvey, M. Wiles and others). Otherwise, the collection is, as is usual in such cases, very much a "mixed bag" both in subject-matter (including topics like "Words for Love in Biblical Greek" (J. Barr) and "Reflections on so-called 'Triumphalism'" (C. F. D. Moule)) and in quality (some are decidedly "flabby" or simply restate previously published opinions; others make quite significant contributions to debate).

Since it would be tedious in a review simply to list all the contributors and their essay-titles, and since there is always a danger that the best essays get lost in such inaccessible tomes (who but the wealthier libraries will be able to afford this?), I will simply comment on what appear to me to be the most important essays. The longest and most erudite is Hengel's discussion of the Cana miracle of John 2 which has some well-aimed swipes at Bultmann and hypothetical source-criticism and some interesting observations on Dionysiac symbolism, though it still leaves this rather mysterious pericope somewhat obscure. Also on the Johannine material, Harvey develops some intriguing suggestions on Christ as "agent" and "Son" (thus being one with and vested with the authority of the sender/Father); but his thesis depends quite heavily on rabbinic conceptions of agency, and it could be questioned how much John was really in touch with these. Watson presents a provocative reading of John's Christology as adoptionist, the Word descending on Jesus at his baptism rather than being incarnate at his birth. Some intriguing evidence is put forward in support of this thesis (though I personally doubt that it is compatible with John 1.14 and it would have to account for the curious fact that the Gospel never explicitly says that Jesus was baptised!).

Among the other creative essays here, mention should be made of W. Houston's thoughtful observations on hermeneutics and Christological interpretation of Old Testament prophecies, and N. T. Wright's reinterpretation of 2 Cor 3.18 (we see the glory of the Lord reflected in other Christians). But to my mind the jewel in the crown is a fascinating essay by Robert Morgan on "The Historical Jesus and the Theology of the New Testament". As in some of his previous work, Morgan is concerned with the character of New Testament theology as *theology* and here in particular how it should relate to historical research into the life of Jesus. This is a notorious problem for anyone who understands doing New Testament theology as being concerned with "the Christian truth about Jesus" ("in having to do with Jesus, we have to do with God") which is clearly not the same as the historian's Jesus. How such faith and history are to be related is of course *the* theological issue posed by historical New Testament research in the last two centuries. It is Morgan's achievement not only to shed considerable light on the issues at stake here but also to propose a Christian theological solution to the particular problem of how to structure a New Testament Theology: he suggests a method which retains the traditional Christian framework (the faith framework of the evangelists) but critically assesses these with the aid of such "hard historical information" as historians can provide. The result would be, he insists, a "reasonable faith" which has not been banished from theology by the historian's "faithless reason". The proposal probably sounds a lot neater in theory than it ever could be in practice (what if some of the historical data is really incompatible with the faith framework? And are there such nuggets of historical information which can be isolated from the historian's non-theistic approach?) and no doubt others would define the role of New Testament theology quite differently; but this essay is a really serious theological contribution to a critical issue for the church today and deserves wide-spread attention.

One of the sad results of Caird's death is that it left unfinished his own *New Testament Theology* which would perhaps have been the climax of his contribution to New Testament studies. The manuscript is now being completed by one of his pupils and this is somehow strangely appropriate since one of Caird's lasting contributions to New Testament scholarship was to inspire the enthusiasm and hone the talents of a series of gifted research students. The exacting standards he set in philological and historical method, his independence of mind and the sparkling lucidity with which he wrote will continue to challenge and inspire even those who never encountered this formidable scholar.

John Barclay

Pax Romana and the Peace of Jesus Christ

Klaus Wengst. SCM Press, 1987. Pp. viii + 245. £8.50

Peace is a very contentious issue. Wengst shows us (for a very few it may be a reminder) something of the variety of people's experience of the law and order imposed under Roman rule in the Mediterranean world of the first century CE. For a proper historical awareness the account he presents and the material on which he bases it are very important; and for any theological and/or political stance attempting to root itself in Christian origins, his book must be an essential starting point. The sources and analyses of them have of course been available for a long time; but it has been all too easy for commentators and writers of New Testament "background" books to rest satisfied with a conventional chronicle of campaigns and successions and an abstract sketch of formal structures of administration. With an ear attuned to current resonances Wengst gives us a lively, readable and well warranted account of much more of the wider Roman world and then of the early Christian integrally bound up in it and reacting to it.

Eulogies of the empire from the pens of Aristides and Plutarch are complemented with somewhat more realistic assessments from Seneca, Josephus, Pliny junior and Tacitus in the main. I would myself prefer Philo, *de legatione*, to have been included, and more attention paid to Dio, largely relegated to footnotes. Even the wealthy beneficiaries could show a still more critical awareness. Wengst includes just two hostile "voices from below", (52-54), Calgacus in the words of Tacitus, and IV Ezra. Missing is any reference to contemporary Cynics (despite the listing of Ramsay MacMullen in the very full bibliography), or, for that matter, to James and his similar social awareness.

After the destruction and conquest by the Roman armies came the payment, of course, in taxation, hitting the poor hardest (poll taxes, taxes on produce). More significant still was the economic exploitation, sucking wealth into Italy and Rome, turning the provinces to cash-cropping – and ruining the rural economy of Italy itself. There was a genuine rule of law – but one from which somehow it was the rich who mainly benefited. Yet I think Wengst might well have included from, say, Pliny junior, an indication of just how quiescently law-abiding much of the Empire was, how few troops a governor had at his disposal (e.g., Letters, X xxvii/xxviii). But rightly, the cults of Rome and the Emperor are treated quite briefly. The ideological oppression, and even its internalisation, is much less important than the socio-economic.

Only now, when the scene has been set in the first third of the book, do we turn to a consideration of the response to all this of Jesus and of early Christians. Much debated words of Jesus (on "rulers of the gentiles", "repaying to Caesar", and so forth) are interpreted as a trenchant critique of power and its exercise at the time. I would only add that available Cynic parallels would even more strongly support this as the most likely way the words would have been "heard", at least when they reached the Greek cities. There is no ground for supposing that Jesus saw a realm of Caesar's where God's writ of justice was not to run.

Paul appears from his own writings as one dealt violently with by Roman as well as by Jewish authorities (e.g., II Cor. 11.23-27). The insistence on civil obedience, Rom. 13.1-7, (following Jewish – and Stoic – tradition) comes from one who has often flouted as well as implicitly rebuked "the powers". But perhaps Wengst, even while quoting I Thessalonians, underestimates Paul's insistence there, too, on responsible citizenship (compare recent writing by A. J. Malherbe, not included in the bibliography).

Luke, in Flavian times, presents the Empire in a much more favourable light (if with just some very "gentle" criticism to suggest a sense of realism). Clement of Rome accepts the Empire's authority structures as a godly ideal. Revelation (perhaps wrongly set by Wengst in Domitian's rather than in Trajan's time) presents a quite other picture. The seer is aware of the symbolic clash between Christians and the imperial cults; but it is Rome's exercise of social and political and economic power that is the main target. The image of the conquering lamb contradicts ordinary experience, where lambs do not conquer, and the saints will rule without subjects, and images of power are subverted – if not very effectively.

For Christians the implication would seem to be that we are most loyal to Jesus the Christ when we look at the world from among the oppressed and the marginalised. In 140 pages of text and 60 of notes the picture has been effectively painted, and the implications made clear, for any of us willing to accept them.

F. Gerald Downing

Julian of Norwich

Grace Jantzen. SPCK, 1987. Pp. x + 230. £8.95

This study of the 14th-century mystic who, as well as occupying a salient position as a later Middle English prose writer, has in recent years attracted an increasing amount of general interest aims, in its author's own words, "to integrate the findings of scholarship with the interests of contemporary spirituality". It is divided into four parts: "Background and Biography"; "Julian's Spirituality"; "Julian's Theology of Integration"; "Wounds into Honours" (the last treating Julian's teaching on sin and suffering, spiritual growth and healing). In reading continuously I became aware of what is perhaps the result of over-light editing at the revision stage, in that occasionally points that have earlier been thoroughly rehearsed are introduced as if new, giving a slight sense of repetitiousness, but this is a minor criticism of what is in all major respects a thoroughly pondered and planned exposition. As befits a book aimed at a wide readership, quotations from Julian's text are from the most up-to-date modernised version, by Colledge and Walsh. The form of reference by chapter number provides for readers who may wish to refer to the original Middle English. It is regrettable, though, that references to Julian's text could not have been given in parenthesis on the page after the relevant quotation, rather than among the end-notes. As it is, the process of cross-referring to the context is physically a very awkward one.

The bibliography, which does not aim at comprehensive inclusion of the many short pieces on Julian, will be for the general reader a useful guide to the main secondary literature and for the Middle English student a useful source of reference to other relevant theological material from the period.

In Part One the author confronts the problem of finding an appropriate cultural and biographical context in which to consider a text about whose writer little more is known than the date of the experience which led to its writing, her age at that time, and that she became, at some unknown point of her life, an anchoress in Norwich at the church from which she is assumed to have taken her name, a writer, furthermore, whose text tells nothing of contemporary events and circumstances. Starting from the assumption that the 20th-century reader must take account of such background where it can be discovered, the author provides an account of significant events of the time likely to have impinged on Julian and her readers, alluding particularly to the effects of the Black Death as documented in Norwich, the plundering of Norwich during the Peasants' Revolt, and the persecution of Lollardry. It is thought-provoking to see Julian's text against this background, but we should also bear in mind that we do not know how much of her life Julian spent in Norwich. The author has generally been skilful in negotiating the risk which such a method necessarily involves, that it too easily admits inference, but there remain places where a suggestive "could have" becomes a questionable "would have". In considering Julian's personal biography, the author gives a useful and judicious review of the possibilities for education available to her, facing the puzzling paradox created by Julian's own reference to herself as unlettered and the

knowledge of scripture and teaching which her text reveals, pointing out that the disclaimer may refer simply to a lack of formal training in Latin, and that it does not, in any case, refer to the later phases of her life but to the time of her vision. Unlike some previous commentators on Julian, who have been eager to marshal the available evidence in support of the probability either that she knew Latin and had read widely, or that she would have had little chance of access to books and may have been illiterate, the present author is content to rest with the position that it is not demonstrable, though it may well be the case, that Julian could read Latin for herself, and to concentrate instead on illustrating Julian's affinity with patristic and spiritual works of the early Christian and medieval tradition, however acquired. The consideration of Julian's life of enclosure concludes that we cannot know when she entered the anchorhold or what she did before that. It is pointed out that none of the conflicting attempts to base arguments about the time of her entry into the anchorhold on reference in the text will stand up to investigation, and that consideration of the various possibilities for her life before that must be speculation useful only in so far as it prompts consideration of what we know about women's life-styles in the period. The author does not incline to the view frequently proposed, most recently with confidence by Colledge and Walsh, that Julian was a nun before her enclosure. The chapter on the life of an anchoress is liberally illustrated from two earlier well known rules for anchoresses, Aelred's rule for his sister, and the 13th-century *Ancrene Riwle*. For the benefit of readers not familiar with the latter text it may have been helpful to point out that the existence of several 14th-century versions of it do make it a legitimate frame of reference for Julian's text, though it cannot be known how far it might have been kept in the 14th century, nor whether Julian herself knew it. On this last point the author is wise to refrain from speculation, since the published arguments in support of the probability are hardly convincing.

In Part Two Julian's visions are considered in the context of the life of prayer and devotion which, as her text clearly implies, she practised, in whatever form, both before her visionary experience and in the interval between the writing of the shorter account of it and the longer version which contains the fruits of her extended reflection on its significance. The thrust of the argument is that experiences like Julian's are misunderstood if they are taken as psychological phenomena occurring in isolation rather than in the context of a life-style of belief and devotion.

Part Three has as its main propositions that Julian is an outstanding example of an integrated theologian for whom daily life, religious experience and theological reflection cohere into a theology which finds its focus in the passion of Christ, and that in her understanding and evaluation of doctrine Julian holds in tension the three criteria of natural reason, church teaching and experience. There is a detailed exposition of Julian's reflections on the Trinity and the Creation: the two are connected since her thinking on the Trinity is developed in terms of nature, mercy and grace for the protection, restoration and fulfilment of humanity. Included here is an analysis of Julian's distinction between substance and sensuality: substance the created nature constituting the essence of humanity as rooted in God; sensuality including the psychology and physicality of individual human beings. This analysis makes clear that the problem of sin and evil does not, for Julian, lie in a body-soul dualism.

Julian's meditation on the problem of evil and its remedy is probed further in Part Four, which explores in detail Julian's equation of sin with non-being and her famous vision of the lord and the servant. The assurance which Julian derived from this complex and long pondered vision, namely that God does not attach blame, is linked with the term projection in psychoanalytical theory. It is argued that the concept behind this modern notion is one with which Julian was familiar, in that she suggests that a frequent reaction to failure is frustration projected as a notion of God's anger.

These two last parts are the core of the book, whose value is that, unlike most other writing on Julian, it does not neglect her theological teaching in order to concentrate on her spirituality, and that it sets out her theological thinking as a whole, not treating it as derivative, though introducing skilfully deployed comparisons to locate Julian's work in relation to other medieval theological and spiritual teaching.

Throughout these last two parts Julian's analysis of the human condition is presented, as in Julian's own text, in the first person plural. The effect is to elide the "we" of the original text and the reader of the present book. The choice of this rhetorical strategy is a good one, conveying the quality of Julian's text more aptly than use of impersonal or third person constructions would have done, but modern readers may well be brought up short by the requirement to locate themselves within this ellipsis. This may well have been what Dr Jantzen intended. The book is written from the presupposition that Julian's text has a bearing on contemporary spirituality. Students of literary history who may not wish to take this kind of interest in the text would be making a mistake if they were deterred from reading this book on that account. It is the most useful as well as the most thought-provoking full length study of the subject which has yet been attempted.

Janet M. Cowen

Ambiguity and the Presence of God

Ruth Page. SCM 1985. Pp. ix + 230. £10.50

No book that I have reviewed has taken me as long as this one. Several times I have felt ready to write, and then been taken by uncertainty, by a confusion about what it is that I want to say. The "ambiguity" of the book's title was, it seemed, manifested in ambiguity of response. Partly, this is because it is not an easy book to read. Not because the ideas are particularly complex but because the language in which they are expressed is frequently unwieldy, cluttered with philosophical verbiage. After reading a chapter, a page, or even a paragraph, I remained uncertain about what was meant and where the thrust of the argument would take me.

Dr Page is concerned with a metaphysical view that she terms Ambiguity, a view of the world as marked in its

essence by change, diversity and polyvalence. She admits that she recommends Ambiguity because she is personally persuaded by it. She is not setting out to prove its existence. Nevertheless, if she is proposing a new metaphysical order or disorder, it seemed fair to expect that she would engage with a more traditional metaphysic. But there is no reference to Heraclitus in the index, and only three to Plato; none to Aristotle or Aquinas and, perhaps more remarkably, none to Heidegger or to Rahner.

Starting from the threefold nature of Ambiguity, Dr Page proceeds to argue that order in knowledge is something we create not something that is found. It is constructed from our perceptions and understandings and the way in which we structure them. There is no absolute truth because this is "an ambiguous, unfinished world whose chief discernible characteristic is its plasticity to various orderings". We need not resign ourselves to everything being relative and to the replacement of knowledge by description. Dr Page offers us "relativity" which "accepts that judgement, knowledge, morality, religion, aesthetics and all our other activities are dependent on our personal and social space- and time-bound conceptions, but yet demands that we choose and follow the best we know".

The consequence of this for Christianity, whose divine revelation is totally subject to historical forces, is the absence of any timeless version of Christian truth to which our theologies approximate. Theology is the subject of an interlude between the first part of the book, in which Dr Page sets out her ideas of ambiguity and relativity, and the second part in which she is concerned with the presence of God characterized as companionship. She explores in considerable detail the requirements of theological building blocks. They must be, as far as may be possible, appropriate, adequate, applicable and coherent. And sometimes they must be genuinely new, not expressed in a way that suggests that every possible theological category has been used. Here her writing is almost lucid, yet as we turn towards God's relationship to the present time and place of believing as the theological centre of gravity and revelation as the record of human perception of that relation, there is a most amazing sentence:

> But since the world is at any moment a temporary congeries of natural and human contingent orders patient of different interpretations and in the process of change, the closure of revelation into concrete expression is vulnerable both to change of interpretation in line with changed circumstances, and to its insufficiency for meeting a new contemporary situation. [p. 115]

Dr Page frequently expresses a hope that she will persuade others of the validity of Ambiguity as a metaphysic, and that it will have an effect on theology. She has not done her cause any good by writing in this frequently impenetrable style and SCM's editors should have told her so. If she has said anything of lasting value, and Maurice Wiles thinks she has, it is, alas, lost in this sea of sub-theological verbiage.

Martin Dudley

The Logic of Theology: A brief account of the relationship between basic concepts in theology

Dietrich Ritschl. SCM, 1986. Pp. xxvi + 310. £12.95

As an ordinand, seconded from Westcott House, I heard Dietrich Ritschl lecture at the Ecumenical Institute, Bossey in 1974. As hard-up theological students and aspiring theologians, we marvelled at the prestige of German theology as his Mercedes swept up the drive. This book was already in the making then. Ritschl began working on it in 1969 at Union Theological Seminary and it grew over a period of 15 years. For publication he pruned the material drastically, having developed "a considerable aversion to the verbosity, the repetitions and the superfluous didacticism" of most (German) theology. This engaging confession sets the tone for the autobiographical asides sprinkled throughout the book. They come across as rather self-indulgent.

The tautologous title will irritate purists. The subtitle is at the same time pretentious in its echo of Schleiermacher (*Kurze Darstellung*) and too modest in its delimitation of the ground covered. The book is more of a general orientation to Christian theology. The first part attempts a reconnaissance of the territory of theology, asking the question, "What is the case?". In it Ritschl argues for the inclusion of questions of cosmology, anthropology and epistemology in the scope of theology. Analysis of the reality of the world must be allowed to influence our theological positions – not merely unconsciously, as in ideology, but through disciplined reflection. Theology and church tend to operate with "a colourless, timeless and fleshless image of humanity", ignoring the fact that people are different from one another and change through life. For Ritschl, who is a trained and practising analytical (Jungian) therapist, psychotherapy can teach the church to speak realistically and therapeutically or curatively to the needs of humanity, rather than idealistically and moralistically as now. The narrative basis of religious language should be identified and the structure of memory and hope that is unique to the Christian worldview should be articulated. Thus understood, theology engages in the "secondary verification" of those "implicit axioms" or "regulative statements" that find their primary verification in worship. Doctrines are not propositional answers to metaphysical questions but pointers, clarifications, invitations. The concept of revelation is best avoided, for few can appreciate the complex historical and philosophical factors behind that misleading word.

The second part is an approach to the content of theology, asking the question, "What shall I think?". Ritschl wants to make the election of Israel and the Christian church his starting point. Consequently, Christian theology will be a continuous dialogue with Judaism. This commitment must be allowed to determine the content of doctrine: thus Ritschl finds the notion of incarnation unhelpful in so far as it implies that God's presence in Christ was greater than his presence in Israel. Ritschl enters a caveat against objectifying Christological concepts such as incarnation, the cross, the resurrection, so that the dynamics of human involvement become reified and take on a life of their

own. In the third part, which is concerned with practice and answers the question, "What shall I do?", Ritschl offers in place of detailed prescriptions two guiding principles: a basically therapeutic attitude towards humans and a basically doxological attitude towards God. Picking up earlier points (as he does throughout the second and third parts), Ritschl distinguishes three types of theology. First, biblical theology naïvely applied to today's problems. Second, academic theology, which is concerned with critical verification and does not necessarily imply practice. Third, theology as practical wisdom: drawing, of course, on the Bible and informed and chastened by academic discipline, it eschews confessional polemics, intra-disciplinary infighting and reputation building. It aims to be therapeutic to all concerned and to offer itself up to God. Pastoral experience and insight is its indispensable prerequisite.

For whom is this book intended? All who are committed to Christian theology today will find food for thought here. But beginners will find it too abstract and allusive, while professionals will be disappointed and frustrated by the brevity and fragmentary nature of much of the material. The further reading appended to most subsections is largely German: again, unhelpful for students, superfluous for scholars. The format of the book, with its cross-referencing and use of four different types (often all on the same page) is not a success. It seems gimmicky and contrived and, ironically, reinforces the impression of diffuseness and fragmentariness in a work dedicated to coherence and integration. The standard of proofreading is poor.

Paul Avis

The Incarnation. Collected Essays in Christology

Brian Hebblethwaite. CUP. Pp. viii + 184. £7.95

This book provoked in me a feeling that the era of the 1970s liberal Christologies was well and truly over, even if (as Canon Hebblethwaite points out) there is still great persuasive force in the idea of a non-incarnational Christology for Christian believers. All the articles in this collection of essays bar one were written from 1977-82. All bar two concern liberal Christology in general, and that corpus of writings in particular which began in 1970 with Norman Pittenger's *Christology Reconsidered* and ended with the publication of *The Myth of God Incarnate* in 1977. Thus there are 10 articles on Wiles, Hick, Lampe, Robinson and Cupitt, nine written from 1977-82 and one written for this book analyzing their respective replies to Hebblethwaite's criticisms. The other two stand on their own. One expounds Austin Farrer's Christology, and the other (which was part of the MacKinnon Festschrift) examines the relationship of theories of truth to Christology.

The debate aroused by The Myth was a very British, and indeed English, one. There are few references to German theologians in this book; occasionally Moltmann and Jüngel make a brief entrance and then swiftly exit. However, it is a narrower debate even than this. For Hebblethwaite realizes correctly that much of the liberal corpus of the 1970s was a critique of the English Anglican Incarnationalism written before 1960. His way of answering that critique is by showing the continued relevance and power of that inheritance.

It would thus be possible to portray this book as part of the continuing exposition of Anglican Incarnationalism which was described by Michael Ramsey in *From Gore to Temple*. The tradition reasserts itself after the stormy years of the 1970s, and non-carnational Christology is once more abandoned, as it was in England after the 1920s. Certainly the great strength of this book is the way article after article combine a passionate defence of the traditional Anglican approach to Christology, a great and reasoned clarity of style with a comprehensive survey of the liberal position. If nothing else, this book is an admirable resource for teachers of doctrine on Anglican Christology of this period.

But the value of this particular book goes beyond its particular context, although it is a great pity that this book was not published in 1984 when the debate was fresher in people's minds. Liberal theologians now address other questions, as Hebblethwaite himself notices: and his recent book on truth shows how the liberal/conservative debate is now located in the fields of religious language and epistemology. Lampe and Robinson have died, Goulder has left the Church, and Hick writes within an American context on world religions. The value of this collection, however, is that it restates Anglican Christology in a fresh and easily understandable way. It is, in the main, a work of apologetics, avoiding technical terms and closely reasoned argument: aimed, I would think, at the clergy, students, and laity, rather than the professional theologian. On those terms, then, how does the book succeed?

One difficulty with a collection of essays is that the same point is apt to be made in passing in a number of articles, but never developed. Thus it is crucial to Hebblethwaite's argument that the religious value of an Incarnational Christology is that God meets us in person in the Incarnation of Christ. But, says the critic, we no longer live in Palestine at the time of Christ. No matter, says Hebblethwaite: the spiritual and sacramental presence of the ascended Christ allows a personal commerce with God now, even if the glorified and risen humanity of Christ is only part of our future expectation and is not manifest to us now. This is a fair point, and one well taken. The problem is that this insight is made in several articles, but never developed extensively in any of them. Thus questions of the relationship of the Spirit to the risen Christ in the Church; the status of the concept "The Body of Christ" as eucharistic presence or in ecclesiology; or the way in which sacramental encounter differs from encounter with the Word in preaching or with a meeting with the earthly Jesus – these are not questions which are fully explored, or sometimes even asked.

But this is to be too negative. The value of the book is that there is a resolute defence of Chalcedonian language; the Trinitarian implications of Christology; an exploration of kenosis and pre-existence; hermeneutics and the place of the creeds; and the nature of truth claims

in Christology. The dominant theme is a welcome stress on the intra-Trinitarian life of God as the necessary grounding for a full Christology, which allows a proper appreciation of the costly love which the Incarnation reveals in God's care for his world. At times Hebblethwaite passes over too quickly the implications for divine being which a kenotic theory requires, but that is work for another day.

It is important to be clear what this work is not. It does not build on recent New Testament studies which show Jesus as the Jewish rabbi in a divided community fearful of its survival (Rowland, Sanders, Dunn, Harvey, Riches). It does not explore the relationship of time and eternity within Christology, as Professor Colin Gunton has done recently in *Yesterday and Today*. Nor is it particularly welcoming to Pannenberg ("the extremely difficult and roundabout conceptuality of *Jesus, God and Man*" pp. 155), and Moltmann has an ambiguous compliment paid to him ("There is much in that book with which we might wish to quarrel but the central chapter... constitutes a remarkable attempt to think through what it means for our concept of God to say that Christ's Cross is God's Cross in our world" p. 41). Only Jüngel, von Balthasar and perhaps Schillebeeckx are continental theologians whom Hebblethwaite is glad to commend. It is rather to T. F. Torrance, A. Farrer, and C. F. D. Moule that Hebblethwaite looks for inspiration.

So this collection of essays serves two purposes, and can be commended for them both. It provides an excellent overview of the debate in England from 1970-82 on the Incarnation, which was primarily though not entirely an Anglican debate. Secondly, in a restrained and clear way it restates traditional Trinitarian and Christological orthodoxy. It is not an original book; it ignores the Continent overmuch; and at times the chapters repeat but do not develop points made earlier. But it is a delight to read, exploring the religious and moral force of the Incarnation, and can be warmly commended as an Anglican apologia for traditional Christology. I hope it is widely read.

Peter Sedgwick

Themes in Theology. The Three-Fold Cord

Donald M. MacKinnon. T. & T. Clarke, 1987. Pp. viii + 243. £14.95

Our distinguished author's deep commitment to the traditional scheme of the Trinity and Incarnation, conceived as a base to be maintained and not abandoned, unites the essays collected in this stimulating volume.

Part A comprises six papers on problems within philosophical theology, with special reference to *theologia negativa*. In "The inexpressibility of God" we are warned against "reducing the divine eternity to terms of the recognizable". The transcendent is not to be levelled down "to the form of a magnified, supra-human reality". We pass to "Kant's philosophy of religion", and are reminded that it was in the context of competing religious authoritarianisms that Kant insisted that no form of religion could be valid which failed to acknowledge the sovereignty of moral principles. Kant is found to end in the tradition of negative theology in that he "can neither accept a religious faith that presupposes a divine self-revelation nor completely subordinate the entertainment of its possibility to morality as an instrument that serves the effective extension of the latter's authority". Kant reappears in the third essay, "Reflections on time and space" as treading "the narrow path between idealism and realism"; and profound questions concerning the relation of the temporal to the eternal are raised. In addition to recalling some unjustifiably neglected thinkers, the paper on "Some aspects of the treatment of Christianity by the British idealists" adverts to the service performed by Green and Edward Caird on behalf of those post-Tractarians whose teleological inheritance from Butler had been eroded by Darwin. The investigation of "Metaphor in theology" which follows is notable for its insistence upon the fact that "the saturation of our religious and theological speech by the consciously or unconsciously metaphorical, is perfectly compatible with the allowance that such speech is intentionally referential". The section ends with "Reflections on mortality". Since death deprives us of the context of genuinely human life, "any hereafter which we can represent to ourselves in significantly human terms is inadmissible". Here "an essentially negative theology must be enabled to have the last word".

Part B contains two essays: "Power politics and religious faith" and "Creon and Antigone", which endorse Dr MacKinnon's contention that "any serious theological work must take account of the over-all ecclesial, and human context in which it is carried on". We thus proceed from an historical study in which righteous anger is displayed against Constantine's slogan, *in hoc signo vinces*, to a discussion of nuclear power which tends in the direction of unilateralism, whilst appreciating the statesman's responsibilities.

Part C gathers pieces on "The Myth of God Incarnate", "The relation of the doctrines of the Incarnation and the Trinity," "Prolegomena to Christology," "Teilhard's Le Milieu Divin re-considered," "Crucifixion-Resurrection," and "Edward Schillebeeckx's Christology". The author confesses that this group of essays is informed by an impatience with those who shrink from the task of theological reconstruction, and with those who are unwilling to re-think *ab initio* the proper relations of church and state. He concurs with Charles Raven that we may not think of the universe as no more than the stage set for the drama of redemption – a point at which he feels Teilhard may still assist us; he urges a fresh review of kenōsis as "the conception which alone enables us to approach the *arcana* of the divine condescension" – and he will not permit "the rhetoric of *Christus Victor*" to obscure that reality; and in the review of Schillebeeckx he underlines the importance of a "proper hermeneutics".

Part D, "Epilogue," resumes the theme of the vulnerability of God as expressive of his essential being, and reminds us that all our thinking about the transcendent yet involved divine being must take due account of the fact that we are those who live in the century of Auschwitz.

Dr MacKinnon is appreciative of all he has learned from others, but he remains his own man, correcting and reproving where necessary. Thus, he finds the authors of *The Myth of God Incarnate* "by no means at ease in handling the history and sense of such notions as substance" (which, given the subject, some may consider an understatement as fatal as a tap from an elephant's paw); and he can descend upon Schillebeeckx from a great height thus: "The way in which Schillebeeckx has recourse to this particular phrase [i.e. 'Jesus as eschatological Lord'] is neither worthy of his stature as a theologian, nor indeed required to get him out of difficulties that he is treating more effectively elsewhere". Profoundly aware of mystery, and of the consequent limits of human awareness and understanding, Dr MacKinnon is not one to invent mysteries. Never afraid to nail his colours to the mast, he will, above all, permit no skirting of the scandal of particularity where the Incarnation is concerned.

In passing, a formidable agenda of work to be done is presented: on Teilhard's vision; on the place of silence before mystery and *contra* idolatry; on the analysis of "fact"; on Kant and eschatology; on the Holy Spirit and the mission of the Incarnate; on Moltmann *vis à vis* the idealist-realist debate; on Christ and time. In return, we would presume to ask Dr MacKinnon for more. There is, as we have said, much here on God's condescension (which *is* grace – than which, *pace* the quoted Newman, there is no higher gift); there is also the spectre of Auschwitz and all it represents. What, then, needs to be *done* in the God-ward direction in order to atonement, having special regard to God's holiness? At this point P. T. Forsyth, to whom passing reference is made, may come to our aid. Again, we should welcome Dr MacKinnon's observations upon James Denney's remark that it is "the doctrine of the Atonement . . . which makes it inevitable that we should have a Christology".

With our author, we regret that so many in the west have discussed the attributes of the one God independently of the fact of the divine tri-unity; and with him we urge a close *theological* (not simply a missiological/pragmatic) investigation of church establishments which, incidentally, are varied and not Anglican only. The issue should be pressed to the Trinity itself, for only when we take full account of the fact that God calls his Church into being by the Spirit through the Word, and gives it to his Son as bride, shall we have the basis for a proper consideration of church order, and the resources for witnessing to and, if need be over against, the powers that be.

For all the modesty with which he presents his deepest convictions, there is a steadiness of course here which would regard alien gusts as merely providing further occasions of wrestling. At the end of "Power politics and religious faith" he observes that "we have all of us to reckon with the fact that for all our boasted openness of mind, we are likely to continue to prefer the quick, seemingly satisfying answers of the *simplificateur*, whether theoretical or practical or both, rather than acknowledge the tragic stuff of which human existence, in its simultaneous *grandeur et misère*, is fashioned". Perhaps; but Donald MacKinnon will be among the last to succumb to the preference here prescribed.

Alan P. F. Sell

Atonement. From Holocaust to Paradise

Ulrich Simon. James Clarke, 1987. Pp. 138. £5.95

Professor Simon squirms at the memory of a Baltimore dinner party, when, "as a favour to myself", his hostess "put on" Mozart's *Requiem* as background musak. "Pearls," he mutters, "must not be cast before undiscerning swine." This book suggests that he would, however, have kept a most civilised conversation going. He is familiar with a range of writing. A paraphrase of "Expostulation and Reply" occurs as incidentally as an echo of E. M. W. Tillyard's literary criticism. He is so much at his ease in *Cymbeline* that he dares promise the "golden lads and girls" the "fulfilment" of "their wishes, their very selves", with never a hint that, as chimney sweepers, they must come to dust.

That nice accommodation, like the rest of Professor Simon's allusions, is being deployed in the service of an argument. Wordsworthian sensitivity to "this mighty sum of things forever speaking" is adduced so that we may be aware of the unity of the universe we inhabit. A Tillyardian "chain of being" is to be recognised in the play of Nature, in those wild creatures who "dramatise for us a sinless existence in no need of atonement". The brothers' dirge is deprived of its punning menace so that it shall present a view of decent warriors, artists, and inarticulate folk, rewarded as they pass from this life. Against our distrust of a world where a virus "breaks down our immunity", a mind is left vacant by "some imbalance in or after conception", and, "worst of all", a cancer intrudes in "an orgy of expansion", Professor Simon is setting the significance of art. Not those of literature only. He places the cosmological oddities of Dante and the secular redemptions of Goethe with the struggles of Michelangelo and the reconciliations of Monteverdi and Beethoven and Verdi. He, too, has a use for Mozart. These are "priests of music". And the extremely complex substance of atonement "can only be stated musically". Who but the least musical of us "can fail to be 'atoned' by being attuned to the great masses of Haydn"?

Art, which declares what God is doing, which "undoubtedly resolves and takes away sin and guilt", is, equally, prophetic of the evil which we are bringing about. *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* shewed that "the drug addict must murder in an orgy of violence". *The Devils* announced the institutionalisation of evil, in which "supported by the control of the media and military force, the godless authority rules and darkness covers the world". Too few of us listen or read. "Many contemporary Christians are Marxists and, like them, show themselves incapable of understanding the past." Pandemonium is upon us as the Sex Pistols "shoot out ecstatic invitations to a dance of hell". This is not time to entertain Origenesque doctrines of *apokatastasis* which "even Karl Barth flirts with".

These generalising denunciations become particularised when Professor Simon speaks of Barth's time and our own. It is, indeed, only when he writes of Nazi atrocities that he does particularise dates, places, names. The Nazis made a difference. "The very devilishness of the tormentors of our age enforces a far greater sensitivity to the measuring of sin and thus to the

quality of both justice and mercy." Modernistic interpretations of atonement may have "instinctively followed a subjective line", but "concentration camps may be said to have ended the subjective phase". We must now enquire not how human beings viewed themselves and their actions, or how we may understand them, but how God sees them. "One lesson, one poem, one account from the endless pages of notes taken from survivors, witnesses against the blasphemous notion that forgiveness through human effort is possible." Our soteriology is defined by the camps. How shall we speak as we contemplate "the Holocaust"?

Professor Simon's precise attention to our use of language enables him to avoid all vulgar theologies of holocaust. If "holocaust" is our word for a whole burnt offering made to God, then it certainly cannot be referred to what the Nazis thought they were doing. But if "holocaust" is the word for what is received by God, then we may believe that "the souls of the righteous are tried by God as men try gold", that, in the furnace, they are acceptable. God discerns atonement. The line of the sacrifice of Abel, of the *Aqedah*, of the Cross, is continued by God in the camps: "the crucified and the gassed became one".

Not everyone is sensitive to this line of atonement. The Jews shrink from extending to Christ the categories of *kippur* and pasch. The victims of Plötzensee did not appreciate their suffering as a participation in "the priestly act of the lamb". But Professor Simon points to "outstanding Jews" who have acknowledged their share with Jesus: "St Teresa of Avila, Mandelstamm, Edith Stein, Raissa Maritain, Levertoff, etc.". And how shall we be brought to their hope that we have a part in this line from Holocaust to Paradise? Augustine's great talk of the Vandals as "citizens to be ", or Luther's announcement of God's seeing us with Christ-coloured spectacles, might assist others; Professor Simon maintains his tone in suggesting that Shakespeare's prompting in his tragedies, and even more, perhaps, Verdi's powerful reworking of Shakespeare's design, may stir a sense of our own mortality, and so of the significance of dying offered in the crucifix, and, in the end, of God's seeing us and accepting us.

Hamish F. G. Swanston

Authority in the Anglican Communion. Essays presented to Bishop John Howe

Stephen W. Sykes (ed). Anglican Book Centre (Toronto), 1987. Pp. 286

It is said of Nero that he fiddled whilst Rome burned; it could perhaps be said of Anglicans that they appear to engage in self-teasing internal and ecumenical controversy about the nature of "authority" whilst the contemporary world heads towards the increasingly complex disintegration of human and ecological decay. It is, perhaps, with a certain a priori impatience that the reader turns to this collection, edited by an acknowledged master in Anglican studies, Professor Stephen Sykes of the University of Cambridge. The 1988 Lambeth Conference will mark an important staging post on the road from the 1948 Conference which served to focus the starting point of contemporary discussion of the meaning and unity of the Anglican communion. The contributions to this volume provide what amounts to a diverse, international commentary upon a sphere of discourse over which the dedicatee, Bishop John Howe, Executive Officer of the Anglican Communion 1969-71 and Secretary General of the Anglical Consultative Council 1971-82 and to the Lambeth Conference 1978, exercised an important influence. What is of special value in *Authority in the Anglican Communion* is the recognition, dear to the heart of the editor, of the international character of the Anglican Communion and the absence of any desire for formal ideological or juridical hegemony embodied in the office of the Archbishop of Canterbury. In the absence of such a centralised authority the articulation of a coherent alternative becomes a priority. The justification of the necessity of such inter-ecclesial coherence can of course be generated dogmatically without difficulty; the effort required in moving from such an ideological plane to the sphere of efficient, benign praxis is another matter.

The contributions are grouped under three subheadings concerned with the theology, the structures and usage, and the future of authority, respectively. Professor Sykes introduces the volume with a typically informed and judicious appraisal of the contextual significance of the problem of authority in Anglicanism and reiterates themes familiar to those acquainted with this distinguished theologian's work. In particular Sykes draws attention to the responsibility of the church towards the task of finding men and women "who will be capable of rising to the religious and ethical challenges of the future of humanity" (22). There is indeed a tension throughout the work between the seemingly trite and parochial concerns of ecclesiastical polity and the agenda of the world which manifests itself in different ways. Thus in the first part on "The Theology of Authority" Professor John E. Skinner of the Episcopal Divinity School provides a heavy-handed account of the relation of ideology, authority, and faith which uses some interesting etymologically-derived concepts along with trenchant assertions, of which the following are a representative example:

> "Ideology is fundamentally a cloak for unbelief. It hides its failure to acknowledge the ultimate identity of creator and redeemer, fact and value. In a desperate manner, ideology seeks to protect its adherents from the ultimate meaninglessness of a facticity devoid of value through the projection of quasi-objective structures of value and worth offered as opiates for a pervasive despair. Ideology is the expression of human sin." (37)

This invites the examiner's injunction: "Discuss critically"; we leave Professor Skinner's argument to the sociologically-informed reader to disentangle. Dean R. C. Craston, Vice-Chairman of the Anglican Consultative Council revisits P. T. Forsyth's understanding of the "Grace of a Holy God" as the source of authority and pays generous respect to the spiritual autonomy of the Gospel that resists all forms of structured encapsulation. Bishop H. R. McAdoo,

formerly Co-Chairman of the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission, reviews the progress of the Commission's Agreed Statement *Authority in the Church*, setting it in the context of the whole period from the Conference of 1888. He adopts what could be termed a "soft" conception of "comprehensiveness", citing Peter Baelz's comment that it springs "from a proper recognition of the *complementarities* of the Christian response to the gospel, not from an easy-going accommodation and compromise" (89). It is to Stephen Sykes' credit that his critique of "comprehensiveness" never postulates such a resolution, as he recognises more fully and consistently the sheer *incommensurability* of elements within the traditions of the Christian church that resist mutual assimilation. Bishop McAdoo's final suggestion that renewal could be generated through a realisation of the contemporary significance of the Cambridge Platonists has all the charm of the *simpliste* pneumatological realism all too popular in a contemporary church apparently subsisting at some distance from the real demands of a critical modernity. Professor J. E. Booty draws some interesting parallels between the holistic pre-modern thought of Richard Hooker and post-industrial problems of cultural fragmentation which would merit fuller development.

In part two on "Anglican Studies and Usage" Philip H. E. Thomas has put his unrivalled knowledge of historical sources to good effect and has produced a very well researched outline of the patterns of constitutional authority which makes very clear the diverse yet mutual problems of indigenisation which affect all churches within the family of the whole Anglican communion. K. S. Littleborough of Adelaide provides a clearly-argued and realistic appraisal of the Bishop-in-Synod as the organ of the dispersed authority clearly influenced by the distinctive Australian experience in the post-war period. Likewise, but in a more distinctly historical manner, Bishop Michael Nuttall of Natal outlines the evolution of the provincial synod in Southern Africa in a way that gives close insight into the interaction of church growth, national politics and the social policy and their consequences for the enabling of an indigenous ordained ministry. This contribution is of interest to all those concerned with the current crisis in South Africa. John S. Pobee of the World Council of Churches in Geneva has provided a well-documented article of some general importance which, though slight in scale, gives first hand insight into the problems experienced in the enculturation of Anglican patterns of ministry into traditional African society. To this diversity is added yet a further dimension by Gavin White of the University of Glasgow who compares recent Anglican discussion of collegiality and conciliarity with that in Russian Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism. White rightly draws attention to the considerable intrinsic interest of Australian religious practice and the hint of the emergence of a "quasi-imperial Anglicanism" in that country.

The contributions to part three, "The Ecumenical Future of Authority", are slighter in importance. Professor Günther Gassmann, Director of the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches comments in general terms upon the efficacy of ecumenical dialogues in relation to the issue of authority and upon the interdisciplinary analysis of "reception" not only as an elite, quasi-academic activity but in terms of the wider church body, that is as exemplified in the Faith and Order document *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*. The brief contribution of Cardinal Willebrands and the longer, perceptive essay by Professor J. Robert Wright cast light upon Anglican-Roman Catholic relations in the aftermath of ARCIC I and afford some initial insight into the increasingly important role of Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, and the need, perhaps, for greater realism as regards the relation of the somewhat isolated position of the ecumenical sphere of discourse to the *actual* power structure of the Roman Catholic Church and from the historic diversity of Anglicanism.

Professor Sykes comments in his conclusion upon catholicity and authority in Anglican-Lutheran relations and detects in this context a number of themes that illustrate this writer's preoccupation with systematic theology, sociological realism in ecclesiology and with Christian identity which "is not a harmonious state of equilibrium, but one in which paradoxes are constantly arising to provoke disquiet and tension" (282).

As we hinted above this book is best justified by its reflection within the bounds of a single volume of something of the international character of the Anglican Communion. In a world increasingly unified by its global crisis yet fraught by the increasing fragmentation of the human community then it is earnestly to be hoped that this particular manifestation of the Body of Christ may survive and serve to strengthen the endangered bonds of residual "species-being". Inasmuch as it contributes to this, *Authority in the Anglican Communion* may have made a very small contribution to the unity of the coming Kingdom.

R. H. Roberts

BOOKS RECEIVED

Richard Acland. *Hungry Sheep. At the End of the Individualist Episode.* Pickering. Pp. 140

A. M. Allchin. *Participation in God. A Forgotten Strand in Anglican Tradition.* DLT. Pp. ix + 85. £3.50

Godfrey Ashby. *Sacrifice. Its Nature and Purpose.* SCM Press. Pp. 149. £7.50

Margaret Baxter. *The Formation of the Christian Scriptures.* TEF Study Guide 26. SPCK. Pp. x + 146

Ernest Best. *Paul and His Converts.* T. & T. Clark. Pp. viii + 177. £11.95 (hb)

D. A. Carson and H. G. M. Williamson (ed.). *It is Written: Scripture Citing Scripture. Essays in Honour of Barnabas Lindars.* CUP. Pp. xx + 381. £37.50 (hb)

W. P. Carvin. *Creation and Scientific Explanation.* Scottish Academic Press. Pp. ix + 106. £10.50

Paul A. B. Clarke and Andrew Linzey (ed.). *Theology, the University and the Modern World.* Lester Crook Academic Publishing. Pp. 150. £5.95

Howard Cooper (ed.). *Soul Searching. Studies in Judaism and Psychotherapy.* SCM Press. Pp. xxviii + 239. £9.95

Scott Cordell. *Atheist Priest? Don Cupitt and Christianity.* SCM Press. Pp. xix + 103. £6.50

Douglas Dales. *Dunstan. Saint and Statesman.* Lutterworth. Pp. 207. £15.95 (hb)

John Fenton. *Finding the Way through John.* Mowbray. Pp. 105. £5.95

Victor H. Fiddes. *Science and the Gospel.* Scottish Academic Press. Pp. x + 113. £10.50

Dana Greene (ed.). *Evelyn Underhill. Modern Guide to the Ancient Quest for the Holy.* State University of New York Press. Pp. x + 260. $10.95

Lucas Grollenberg. *Unexpected Messiah, or How the Bible can be Misleading.* SCM Press. Pp. viii + 199. £6.95

Brian Hebblethwaite. *The Ocean of Truth. A Defence of Objective Theism.* CUP. Pp. x + 165. £7.50

Susanne Heine. *Christianity and the Goddess. Can Christianity cope with Sexuality?* SCM Press. Pp. vi + 183. £6.95

John Hick and Paul F. Knitter (ed.). *The Myth of Christian Uniqueness.* SCM Press. Pp. xii + 227. £8.50

Rabbi Michael Hilton and Fr Gordian Marshall OP. *The Gospels and Rabbinic Judaism. A Study Guide.* SCM Press. Pp. viii + 165. £6.95

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Peter McKenzie. *The Christians. Their Practices and Beliefs.* SPCK. Pp. 345. £15.00

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Stephen Pattison. *A Critique of Pastoral Care.* SCM Press. Pp. 210. £8.95

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James Tolhurst. *The Church a Communion – in the preaching and thought of John Henry Newman.* Fowler Wright. Pp. xiv + 232. £9.95

T. F. Torrance. *The Trinitarian Faith.* T. & T. Clark. Pp. 345. £17.50 (hb)

T. F. Torrance. *The Hermeneutics of John Calvin.* Scottish Academic Press. Pp. ix + 197. £17.50 (hb)

John Toy. *Jesus, Man for God.* Mowbray. Pp. viii + 144. £4.95.

William J. Wainwright. *Philosophy of Religion.* Wadsworth, Inc. Pp. xiii + 210.

Fraser Watts and Mark Williams. *The Psychology of Religious Knowing.* CUP. Pp. x + 169. £19.50 (hb)

Ben Witherington III. *Women in the Earliest Churches.* CUP, SNTS Monograph Series. Pp. xiii + 300. £27.50 (hb)

Carver T. Yu. *Being and Relation. A Theological Critique of Western Dualism and Individualism.* Scottish Academic Press. Pp. xxiv + 239. £15.00

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