



**THE
DUKE
DIVINITY SCHOOL
REVIEW**

Winter 1978

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Let the Church Say “Amen!”

Nearly three decades ago, Reinhold Niebuhr made this general observation upon the dilemma of the liturgical life of American Protestantism:

The trouble with American Protestantism is that its protest against the various forms and disciplines [of worship] led to their destruction. It may be possible to have a brief period of religious spontaneity in which the absence of such disciplines does not matter. The evangelism of the American frontier may have been such a period. But this spontaneity does not last forever. When it is gone a church without adequate conduits of traditional liturgy and theological learning and tradition is without the waters of life.¹

Sometime before, Niebuhr had this to say about the worship of my own Methodist tradition:

When the old evangelical piety is dissipated and there are not powerful theological and liturgical forces to preserve the Christian faith and feeling the tendency is to sink into vulgarity or into a pure moralism. In all sectarian churches there are today types of vulgarized Christianity in which both sermon and service seek to intrigue the interest of the religiously indifferent masses by vaudeville appeals of various sorts. This represents the worst form of disintegration. The best form is to be found in the championship of various moral and social causes. . . . The vulgarization of sectarian Christianity is partly due to its difficulty in finding proper forms for the social expression of its faith.²

No doubt Niebuhr might have modified his position if he had been witness to the recent resurgence of lively sectarian enthusiasm and our growing recognition of the continuing vitality of some sectarian liturgical expressions. But his observations continue to impress me as an apt description of the current malaise which many of us in the “mainline” denominations have been experiencing on Sunday morning. Or, as one layperson put it to me, “You can’t have a Revival fifty-two Sundays a year. Something more has to happen.”

In reaching out for that “something more” the Church has wisely turned its attention again to worship, that central action of the church which forms and is formed by our Faith. For a very long time the church went about its Sunday morning business as usual, comfortable and confident that what it had always done in worship was still an appropriate response for today. That confidence has been shaken. Historical study of the liturgy revealed how much we had changed over the years, how much we had lost, and what there was to be regained. Theological and biblical reflection raised troubling questions about the adequacy of many of our liturgical practices.

Tensions inside and outside of the church, changes within our society, recognition of our peoples' unmet needs; all pressed in upon our worship and made change inevitable.

And change we did. New liturgies, new ways of worship, new insights swept over us. Of course, some of us continued to go on with business as usual, refusing to embrace the new. Others uncritically borrowed, adopted, and experimented; frantically embracing everything. Both responses are inadequate.

Unfortunately, most pastors received little guidance in this area during their seminary days. Worship was usually confined to an adjunct relationship to a preaching course or passing reference in Church History. Protestant seminaries produced ministers who were equipped for everything but the one required activity which they did, week-in-week-out, every Sunday of the year, before and with more people than any other pastoral duty—the leadership of public worship.

Things are changing. The study of worship is no longer a minor aspect of the seminary curriculum. Seminary chapels are reporting unusually high attendance at regular services. More denominational ordaining agencies are requiring their candidates to have at least one course in worship. Above all, the laity, after centuries of being convinced that worship was the sole concern of the pastor, are awakening to a renewed vision of liturgy as “the work of the people.”

Therefore we offer you this issue of the *Review* on worship. I have invited these writers to address themselves to pastors, sharing with you their observations on the present state and future prospects for worship within the local church. I hope these articles will remind you of the richness within this area of the church's life and the practical, pastoral significance of new trends in liturgical study. One of the most gratifying aspects of the current liturgical renewal is its strong ecumenical emphasis, its amazing consensus. So many of the barriers which once divided us are coming down as we come to Table and Font.

Let the church say, “Amen!”

W.H.W.

FOOTNOTES

1. “The Weakness of Common Worship in American Protestantism,” *Christianity and Crisis*, May 28, 1951.

2. “Sects and Churches,” *The Christian Century*, July 3, 1935.



Tension in the Sanctuary

by DON M. WARDLAW
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The late sixties and early seventies brought new and heady wine into many of our sanctuaries. Whether an inner city Roman Catholic parish in Atlanta, a posh Presbyterian church in suburban Dallas, or a Lutheran gathering in New Haven or Berkeley, in each case you find a freedom beat in their corporate worship that is still missing from most mainline congregations. The preacher seems relatively free of ministerial pomp, more natural and self-accepting. He's no longer a one-man show. He's given worship back to the people, and now serves as choreographer of the celebration. A housewife dances in the chancel to joy in the Lord as choir and combo offer an upbeat version of Psalm 150. The congregation breaks into applause in response to the declaration of pardon. The people offer each other the ancient Peace of Jesus Christ by joining hands, even hugging each other. Seemingly forgetful of some of its inhibitions, the congregation sings with new release. The sanctuary itself reflects the vibrancy in bright colors of new banners or pulpit and communion table cloths. Even the minister has exchanged his or her black robe for a multi-colored gown, somewhat dapper as he walks among the people while preaching or preparing the congregation for a baptism. Tangy wine! You hear in this worship echoes of a line from a Benedictine hymn: "Let us joyfully taste of the sober drunkenness of the Spirit."¹

I have shared the giddy happiness in these new sights and sounds in the sanctuary. In my more optimistic moments I have seen in this liturgical effervescence something of the rebirth of wonder that has emerged in unexpected places across this continent.

"and I am waiting
for the lost music to sound again
in the Lost Continent
in a new rebirth of wonder."²

Could it be true that some of this lost music that young people have heard in primitive family experiences in communes, or been entranced by in transcendental meditation, has gotten loose in our sanctuaries? Could it be that the new sense of transcendence that secretaries on coffee breaks experience while reading their

horoscopes is breaking loose in some sanctuaries like a new Pentecost? While from Bethel, Maine to Big Sur, California the floodgates of feeling have been opened in encounter groups of transactional analysis sessions, so have some worshipers in some pews found a new freedom to turn themselves loose in prayer or song. There is a culture-wide pragmatism and compartmentalization that shows a new sensitivity to pain and joy, to subtlety and sensuality, to surprise and mystery. I have wanted to believe that as worshipers we are more sensitive to inner experience than ever before and as a result are less willing for the parameters of our perception to be limited by neatly printed prayers of confession and balanced harmonies. Someone has changed our stale water into wine and we're no longer satisfied with liturgies-as-usual.

Yet, let's be realistic. Not all the worshipers hail the new wine as savior of the wedding feast. While many of our most loyal clergy and laity have not slept through the liturgical revolution, neither have they joined it. All along they simply have preferred the way things were. To them the careful symmetries of eighteenth and nineteenth century music, architecture and thought constructs more aptly represent the Presence than do syncopated rhythms, circled and swaying congregations, and bright audio-visuals.

The main resistance to the new look in liturgy, however, comes less from preference for "tradition,"³ as it does from reaction to gauche innovation. Many clergy and laity wonder if we haven't been drinking more a bad brew of impropriety than the new wine of Pentecost. They abhor the shaking of their liturgical foundations because their sensibilities have been violated. I know from experience how my unexamined zeal for new sounds and rhythms in liturgies has "ploughed people up emotionally," forcing traditionalists further into cloisters of yesteryear. You can sympathize with some of this resistance to change when you recall how some of us clergy plunged into the new look of liturgy.

In the first place, many revolutionaries in the chancel operated more by impulse than insight. Desperate to end boredom in worship we mistook liveliness for Life. Granted, the average worship service often reveals "less the joyful song of the 'new man' than the tiresome and familiar refrain of the old captivity in which nothing has been made new."⁴ Yet, too many of us innovators have assumed that new moves assure new meaning, that perky litanies, clever responses and chancel dancing have of themselves the power to raise the consciousness of the congregation to a new level of spiritual

awareness. As if a *lit-orgy* passes for *lit-urgy*!⁵ Although action itself can console and enlighten,⁶ suddenly altered behavior patterns and rhythms never guarantee changed feelings or perceptions.⁷

Many of us innovators, secondly, raised the hackles of traditionalists by unwittingly using liturgical gimmickry for managerial ends.⁸ Guitars, banners and folk talk became for some worship leaders the currency with which either to buy new members or to build an image in the community. In our zeal for liveliness we failed to see that such self-conscious, self-serving uses of liturgy violate the nature of worship itself. No congregation can sing its hymns wholeheartedly while stealing glances at how impressed its guests are. We design liturgies fundamentally to praise God rather than to win souls, promote social involvement, or foster psychological health. "All of these other things may be legitimate and necessary in their own place, and all of them may be incidentally present in worship, but the purpose of worship is essentially to serve God and that only. Any additional purpose is blasphemy: God is not to be used for our own purposes, not even for our good and necessary purposes."⁹

In the third place we liturgical experimenters turned off the traditional liturgists by using balloons and hit tunes more from desperation for relevance than from an understanding of the role of the contemporary in worship. Novel techniques in the sanctuary at times mask a fear that ancient *Glorias* and *Doxologies* are hopelessly anachronistic. In clutching at modernity, however, we have "staggered from one lopsidedness to the other." Our compulsive production of new orders and gritty litanies has often betrayed a tragic misunderstanding of the role of tradition in worship. Liturgies that constantly shift and dazzle confuse more than upbuild the consciousness of a congregation. As Robert Worley puts it, "Churchmen...encounter difficulty in transforming the church when those who give credit only to the present and reject all expressions from the past insist that only that which is totally new can meet the challenges of the present."¹⁰ We liturgical faddists often forget that only those in touch with their past can get in touch with their present. Amnesia is far worse than nostalgia.

The judicious use of traditional elements in worship adds the kind of fiber to a congregation's backbone that enables it to stand firm amid the winds of the present. The *Peace*, The *Kyrie*, or the *Sursum Corda* become occasions year in and year out, century upon century, for the Body of Christ to keep in touch with and feed upon the myriad of saints it carries in its collective unconscious. Genuine contemporaneity in worship, then, moves hand in hand with

tradition. Authentic tradition constantly lives in and empowers the Body for the present. That's why many congregations with "contemporary worship" at 8:30 Sunday morning and "traditional services" at 11:00 never come to appreciate things either old or new. When you or I maintain an unrelenting predilection for jazzy forms, we not only reveal our misunderstanding of things old, but also we betray our ignorance of the nature of relevance itself.¹¹ Relevance always needs to find its balance with irrelevance in worship. As Paul Hoon so wisely says, "The archetypal nature of man's subconscious life requires forms that are more than culturally credible. Man's libidinal need of mystical language that disengages him from the world and returns his energies in upon his own soul cannot be suppressed. His conscious and subconscious life needs as much to be decontaminated of, as engaged with, contemporary cultural images."¹² Dean Inge sagely concluded that when the Church marries the spirit of the age, she will be left a widow in the next generation.

Lest you think I'm too critical of recent liturgical innovation, however, remember that violated sensibilities belong not just to traditionalists alone. We clergy and laity pushing for liturgical reform need a hearing also. As I look back upon some of my own experiments in the sanctuary, I see in the recklessness of some of those moments an unconscious, if not desperate desire to penetrate the defenses of church people who use established liturgical forms as armor plate against reality. You can understand some of an innovator's abandon when you come up against the rock-like resistance many traditionalists offer to changes in the sanctuary.

Why these defenses against experimentation? What do many traditionalists stand to lose in the face of new forms of worship? Traditionalists fear, first of all, a loss of authority. Too many clergy today operate from nineteenth century models of leadership that display paternalistic, rugged individualism. Such leadership sets the example, calls the shots, takes the risks, and does most of the work. Committees exist to rubberstamp the leader's directives and to emulate his actions. More than a few clergy are sophisticated enough to manipulate the committee into thinking the new sanctuary or aid for the ghetto is its own idea. But such gestures at participatory decision making cannot gloss over the fact that laity do not own the process of determining the problem, setting the goals and establishing the steps for arriving at those goals.

No wonder, then, many clergy cannot afford to alter their patterns and practices in the worship hour. Their authority is at stake. For years we clergy have led liturgies as we have led programs,

setting the example, calling the shots, taking the risks, and doing most of the work. We have established the order of worship, prepared the prayers, picked the hymns, and dominated the hour in the leadership spotlight. Laity have possessed and participated in little of the process. Laity in fact have been conditioned for generations to expect clergy to plan and lead worship. Seminaries have inadvertently fostered the leadership of liturgy as a function belonging exclusively to clergy. Corporate worship for many congregations, then, is a dramatic occasion each week for the minister to act out his outdated authority model while the people sit at his feet seeming to give silent assent. How tempting for many of us clergy to become so enamoured with this paternalistic Sunday charade that we fail to perceive the

“authority resides primarily in those who give it and for only as long as the givers continue to give it. A minister, for example, may have the formal authority to preach and conduct worship each Sunday, but nothing he or she says is authoritative for the people filling the pews. They decide for themselves if and when they will hear him or her.”¹³

The revolution behind stained glass challenges traditional authority modes in the Church, asking if the power has not always in fact belonged to the people, and demanding that authority be seen as the process of the people deciding rather than the majesty of the clergy presiding. Since liturgy means “the work of the people,” then the people of God today are rightfully reclaiming that work as their own.

As chancel boundaries fall, traditionalists fear not only the loss of authority in worship, but also the loss of propriety. When I examine the spate of new liturgical materials and practices today, I must admit I sympathize with those who resist these changes. Some of the new liturgical language grates on ears tuned to the majestic sounds of previous centuries. To respond to a declaration of pardon with, “Thanks, I needed that!,” or to be told that we are going to “groove with Jesus” in prayer jolts the average sense, of propriety. Numerous folk tunes, such as Ray Repp’s “Allelu,” bounce with such syncopation as to make united congregational participation difficult. Unison prayers with strung out sentences or new creeds heavy with subordinate clauses make a mockery of the simple rhythms demanded for the congregation to speak in one voice. When St. Paul urged worshipers to do “all things . . . decently and in order,”¹⁴ we question how much he would profit from batting balloons around during the prayer of intercession or sailing paper plates with newspaper advertisements on them during a litany of thanks.

In one sense, however, we welcome the radical departure in ceremonial in recent years.¹⁵ The revolution in worship forms compels us to reexamine the nature of propriety itself. After all, how should a congregation “act” when it gathers to praise God? For generations most of our mainline churches have equated reverence with politeness, assuming that the hushed orderliness of people gathered in the court of a medieval king pictures the kind of sanctuary decorum the Almighty has ordained for all time. In jokes about something funny that happens during the worship hour the humor turns almost exclusively upon the violation of well-established boundaries of propriety. Whether or not the story line involves a fainting soprano, or a child needing to go to the bathroom, or a minister losing his sermon notes, the gag promises to take the starch out of Sunday dignity. Laughing about something unconventional or disorderly that happened in church relieves the tension we all feel as we try to “behave” in worship. For centuries we mainline Protestants have been conditioned to associate restricted expression with reverence. In the presence of God we are expected not to sing too loudly, speak too forcefully, or move too excitedly. We are to conduct ourselves as decorously as we would in an eighteenth century drawing room. Natural expression seems taboo not only because it might violate the dictates of reason and order but also because it might turn loose in the chancel and the uncontrollable libidinous forces.

Many church people wonder today, however, if the self-conscious courtliness of recent generations of worshipers has not done more to negate authentic worship than most uncensored natural expression in the pulpit or aisles. Granted the allegiance all expression in the sanctuary, natural or otherwise, owes to the canons of liturgical art,¹⁶ who can say that a show of reverence in corporate worship demands formalism and fastidiousness? With Miriam beside the Red Sea, David before the Ark, or the Prodigal before his homecoming friends, Scripture pictures reverence in the form of excited dancing.¹⁷ Reverence to the Psalmist thunders with full-throated, orchestral praise.¹⁸ True reverence refuses to be equated with Victorian manners. Many traditionalists, therefore, in fearing the loss of propriety through liturgical innovation actually fear the loss of control. In their efforts to restrict the decorum of the worshipers, traditionalists actually constrict themselves. As a parish minister for a number of years, I *felt* that constriction in the muscles of the throat as I led worship. Guarded posturing with the protective framework of liturgical formulae keeps the lid on subterranean *daimons*¹⁹ the release of which could be exciting, empowering and

redeeming. The struggle to maintain propriety can be at times a fundamental struggle with the fear of becoming, a natural defense against necessary change. Growth in Christ takes the kind of risks with our feelings that often scare us back into the safer climes of carefully controlled liturgies. While all meaningful worship needs clearly defined structure to give creative impetus and direction to forces alive in the body of worshipers, we need to guard against using structure, ceremony and decorum as a rationalization against getting in touch with ourselves. How ironic when worship becomes the setting for avoiding the true worship of giving our genuine selves to God.

Thirdly, in the liturgical revolution traditionalists fear the loss of a refuge. The sanctuary for many clergy and laity alike serves as the last bastion against shifting values and eroding absolutes. As we gather to worship we wonder about what has happened to all those fixed truths about inevitable progress, human potential, honesty in government, making the world safe for democracy, liberty and justice for all, or woman's place in the home. We had those absolutes so nicely wrapped, ribboned and displayed in the windows of our nineteenth century minds. But someone threw a brick through the display window. The church is running out of hiding places in the face of the world's demands that we radically reorient our thinking if this globe is to survive at all. No wonder we resist the current move to get rid of pews. Pews symbolize one of the few things in our lives that remains solid and bolted down.²⁰ And when we cannot afford pews, we opt for chairs stained and padded like pews, weighty and substantial like pews. A significant part of our emotional investment in liturgy is wrapped up in the fixity and immutability embedded in the experience. We long for one hour in the week when at least some of the ground beneath our feet is not shifting sand. "Good old" hymns, sermons in the language of Canaan, prayers that soar on the sounds of more innocent years, sung responses fixed in our bones, become ingredients so many of us depend on for a questionable sense of stability in a runaway world. Even the order of worship promises protection from further disintegration. The new preacher in the parish who a few weeks after his arrival enthusiastically shifts the offering to a moment after the sermon and breaks the long pastoral prayer into several shorter prayers may find himself suddenly in the eye of a storm. We often want the order as it was, not because we care that much about the theology or history of the order, but because we feel the need for the stability that the repetition of that order brings.

Despite our natural anxiety in the face of future shock, the use of worship as a psychological crutch smacks of blasphemy. Surely the genius of authentic worship depends significantly upon the

therapeutic repetition of established sequences, sights and sounds. But when we and our people obsessively cling to those patterns and stimuli, therapy turns into compulsion, signalling a regression based on the fear of dealing with the present.

These misunderstandings by no means exhaust the issues that have been turned loose in the Church because of recent liturgical upheavals. Today liturgists are exploring a number of the dialectical tensions embedded in worship as a result of the questions posed by the Liturgical Revolution. Congregations' renewed experience of corporateness through liturgical experiments, for instance, raises again the question of how to maintain the tension between individual and corporate expression in worship. Or, the human potentialist accent on intimacy in our time elicits a concern for how to balance closeness among the worshipers with a sense of awe and transcendence. Again, our present fascination with the occult in Western society reaffirms the importance of a consciousness of mystery in worship to offset a Protestant predisposition toward rationality and intelligibility. Or, where the holy worldliness of the socially activist churches of the sixties has left a secular imprint upon the language and imagery of liturgy, where does holy irrelevance have its rightful place in worship? In all such pondering, amid restlessness in the sanctuary, we are simply asking in a multitude of ways what worship is. We are admitting, amid the tensions at the worship hour, that many of us have delayed too long in comprehending the richness and majesty of our praises.

The problem of untangling this skein of misunderstandings about the nature of worship challenges anyone bent on revitalizing the Church's worship. Which end of the string do we take up to begin unravelling the knots? Let's begin at the seminary. Fundamental corrections in the churches' worship presuppose seminaries that provide tomorrow's ministers comprehensive study and experience in liturgy. Yet, lay people at a weekend worship workshop, for instance, spend more hours studying corporate worship than many seminary graduates spend in classes on liturgy during the three or four years they seek their first degree.²¹ Add to this curriculum deficiency a chapel regimen sufficiently inconsistent and ill-planned as to confuse the student regarding the nature of his or her liturgical heritage.²² Faculty members and students are left to plan and conduct worship as they please without recourse to any established community guidelines for worship. Too often faculty and students bring to the campus the same liturgical disarray they inherited from the churches. And behind the churches' lack of liturgical integrity lies a previous generation's *laissez-faire* bias toward liturgy on

seminary campuses. The vicious circle is obvious. Until this neglect in the teaching and practice of liturgy is adequately dealt with at seminaries we can continue to look for that same neglect of liturgy in the parishes.

What lies at the center of this confusion in many seminaries and congregations? Although no simple answer surrounds the question, a partial explanation lies in a free church bias, linked to seventeenth and eighteenth century Puritanism and Pietism, that declares worship an experience more to be caught than taught, more to be felt than prescribed. Many of our founding fathers sailed to these shores in rebellion against oppressive state churches which designated with the authoritarianism of the state precisely how the people were to worship. When Puritan settlers erected simple meeting houses in the New England colonies they transplanted a growing tradition that rejected established orders, set responses, vestments, lectionaries and candles. Simplicity, individuality and spontaneity became the guidelines for early American worship. The nineteenth century horseback preachers tailored their fiery sermons and long, tedious extemporaneous prayers to the needs of the camp-town-of-the-moment. The absence of any established cultural or institutional patterns served as a seedbed for such spontaneity. To these rugged evangelists precision litanies, printed prayers and classical orders were irrelevant to the sawdust trail. In the voluntarism and democratization that pervaded Western culture in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries this ethos of liturgical *laissez-faire* received an impetus on the American frontier that still dominates the Protestant mind in this century. The average free church member, whether Baptist, Congregationalist, Methodist, or Presbyterian still carries in his or her psyche a deepset suspicion of established worship forms. In a word association test such Protestants respond to "liturgy" with parallels like, "high church," "printed words," "monotonous," or even "insincere." As Kenneth Phifer reminds us, "The heritage of the frontier still lingers. One peculiar feature of it, which is found again and again in the Ohio Valley, is a feeling that the preacher who does not pray extemporaneously lacks the true credentials a servant of the Lord should hold."²³

Just a decade ago some Presbyterian executives in planning manuals for each of the stated committees of the Session (ruling board) of each congregation, expressed strong feeling that little prescription should be offered to the worship committees of each parish. How a congregation worships (they reasoned) should be left to the desires of the minister and the worship committee; as if no tradition in worship were more sacrosanct than a specific tradition.

Although renewed interest over the past century in the historic liturgies of several Protestant denominations has produced denominationally approved service books with designated congregational participation, such established orders, litanies and prayers enjoy little popularity in free churches today. Offices of Worship and Music have had difficulty in getting started or supported in several such denominations because the need remains low on the list of denominational priorities. Until quite recently ministers and congregations simply have not felt the need to question what they have been used to doing on Sunday morning, nor have they sensed much desire within themselves to be informed and enlivened by their liturgical heritage.

For all the liturgical experimentation over the past decade, the average Protestant parishioner still comes to worship expecting the sermon to be the main event. Calls to worship, prayers, responses and readings serve mainly for such worshipers as preliminaries that lead to the sermon. In my first pastorate a middle-aged woman each Sunday purposely arrived at worship a half hour late. She asserted that she had no intention of putting up with all that “fol-de-rol” before the sermon. Since the initial Puritan influence on American worship three hundred years ago the sermon has dominated most Protestant worship,²⁴ creating in congregations the assumption that worship is mainly a matter of sitting and listening. Some communions betray this bias by calling the sanctuary the “auditorium,” namely a place of hearing. As James White points out, “The question we have been accustomed to hear from someone who missed church was, ‘what did he say?’”²⁵ indicating how closely identified free church worship has become with the sermon. With some Protestants attending worship is tantamount to “going to preaching.”

Sensitive liturgists today, however, strive not to downgrade the sermon as much as to restore it to its proper perspective in the service. During the middle third of this century biblical and systematic theologians have taken significant strides as to realign the sermon with Scripture, to help us see preaching as an event that uniquely turns Scripture loose in the lives of the hearers. Many seminaries now make it clear to their students that no one preaches a sermon *per se* who does not root and ground those words in God's Word in Scripture. We rejoice at the yeomanlike task many biblical theologians and homilecticians have accomplished over the past generation in recapturing the original biblical grounding of preaching. The task remains for most Protestants, however, to regain

the proper *liturgical setting* for the sermon. While preaching uniquely conveys God's Word to His people, the sermon cannot claim to be the sole vehicle of that Word. Calls to worship, hymns, prayers, litanies, responses, charges and benedictions, not to mention Baptism and The Lord's Supper, can significantly bear God's revelation of forgiveness and new life to the congregation. The sermon, both in the first centuries of Christendom and the first century of the Reformation took its place in a series of events in the liturgy through which the people acted out their response to God's grace in their lives. The sermon followed acts of praise and confession,²⁶ giving grounds for such acts, while also preparing the people by its inspiration and instruction for The Lord's Supper that followed. The medieval neglect of the sermon aside, preaching traditionally has lived at the center rather than at the end of the order, taking its place in the dramatic sweep of the liturgy rather than wholly dominating that drama. When parishioners begin to understand both the intent and setting of preaching, the other elements of the service begin to regain the importance they enjoyed prior to the Puritan reaction. Prayers, hymns and responses take on a value of their own rather than being made merely to serve as prelude or postlude for the sermon.

This free church bias, therefore, born of the Puritan's mistrust of established forms and his infatuation with the spoken word, explains much of the difficulty many seminary communities have in pulling together a liturgical life both faithful to deeper traditions and sensitive to contemporary experience. How important to strive to see how seminaries can better train their students in responsible liturgical leadership, not only through classroom instruction but also through the planning and leadership of worship services on campus. How, for instance, can seminaries help their students experience and understand the corporateness in worship that offsets the excessive accent on voluntarism in many of our churches? How can theological schools help their students see more in the priesthood of all believers than an excuse for each person to be his own priest? How on seminary campuses can we gain an appreciation for how structure in the service of worship actually makes possible genuine spontaneity? Or, take the use of visual images in worship. In the free church tradition the fear of making idols of visual images has made an idol of "simplicity" itself. How can seminary faculties and students relearn trust of the visual image in order both to enrich worship as well as to recapture a significant liturgical tradition? The worship of God's people in Scripture readily shows that God's praises were served by more than words alone.

At this point we have sought only to understand the need for altering the teaching and practice of worship at the seminaries so that tomorrow's parish leaders might stand a chance to deal more creatively with the problems of corporate worship outlined in earlier pages. But meanwhile, what of the thousands of seminary graduates already in the chancel who Sunday by Sunday lead worship either oblivious to any liturgical malaise or depressed by the congregation's torpor? How can these parish ministers be awakened to the life in the liturgy and be vehicles of the translation of some of that life into their people in the sanctuary? What of the multitude of worshipers who sense living death in their local worship but feel too confused or powerless to raise questions with the minister and church officers? How can we help these loyal concerned people to understand and involve themselves in public corporate worship as to enable the drama of salvation to become a reality for them when they enter the pews?

Such questions frighten as much as attract. No generation of Christians will surround, understand or surmount the complexities involved in its worship. Yet we address the subject with the assumption that more precise, profound educational strategies in worship than we have known before will help congregations discover new liturgical riches. For, since liturgy is "the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed," and "the fountain from which all her power flows" we owe the task of educating our people in worship no less than our inspired imagination and enlightened zeal.

FOOTNOTES

1. Lawrence Ferlinghetti, *A Coney Island of the Mind* (New York: New Directions, 1958), p. 51.

2. Paul Hoon, *The Integrity of Worship* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1971).

3. The term, "traditionalist," is used in these pages in the narrower sense of one who prefers those worship forms regularly practiced by a local congregation over recent decades. For a good discussion of the category, "tradition," see, *Ibid.*, p. 95.

4. Claude Welch, *The Reality of The Church* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958), p. 17.

5. See Hoon, *op. cit.*, p. 298.

6. Will James argued that physical actions determine feelings more than feelings determine physical actions. We are sad because we cry, not crying because we are sad. See E.R. Micklem, *Our Approach To God* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1934) pp. 19-21. "Action is consolatory," wrote Joseph Conrad. . . . "Only in the conduct of our action can we find the sense of mastery over the Fates." *Nostromo* (New York: E.P. Dutton and Company, Inc., 1957), p. 66. "I kiss my child not only because I love it," said Friedrich von Hugel, "I kiss it also in order to love it." *Essays and Addresses On*

The Philosophy of Religion, First Series (New York: E.P. Dutton and Company, Inc., 1921), p. 251.

7. "To equate liturgical action too simply with physical activity can be sterile. Such reductionism can let the worshipper off too easily and defend him from reality. Indeed, on important levels of his being, indiscriminate physical action can reinforce passivity," Hoon, *op. cit.*, p. 294.

8. See Hoon, *Ibid.*, p. 34.

9. Shirley Guthrie, *Some Reflections on the Theology of Worship*, (an unpublished paper), p. 1. See, also, Hoon, *op. cit.*, p. 52f.

10. Robert Worley, *Change In The Church: A Source of Hope* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1977), 1947.

11. See Hoon, *op. cit.*, Chapter III.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 267.

13. Robert Worley, *op. cit.*, p. 28f.

14. 1 Corinthians 14:40.

15. If liturgy is *what* we do in worship, ceremony is *how* we do it. See Howard Hageman, *Pulpit and Table* (Richmond: John Knox, 1962) p. 2.

16. See Roger Hazelton, *A Theological Approach to Art* (Nashville, Abingdon Press, 1967).

17. Exodus 15:19-21, 2 Samuel 6:16f, Luke 15:25.

18. Psalm 150.

19. The daimonic (from the ancient Greek word, "daimon"), akin to demonic or daemonic, is a fundamental, archetypal drive in human experience that can be just as creative as it can be destructive. See Rollo may, *Love and Will* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1969) pp. 122-180.

20. See William H. Whyte, Jr., *The Organization Man* (Garden City: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1956), p. 417.

21. A survey of 100 Protestant seminaries in the U.S. and Canada reveals that the average seminary graduate spends approximately 15-20 classroom hours studying worship while in his or her first degree program.

22. Only one seminary among those responding to the survey regarding the practice and teaching of worship on campus revealed a direct relationship between what is taught in class about worship and what is practiced in chapel.

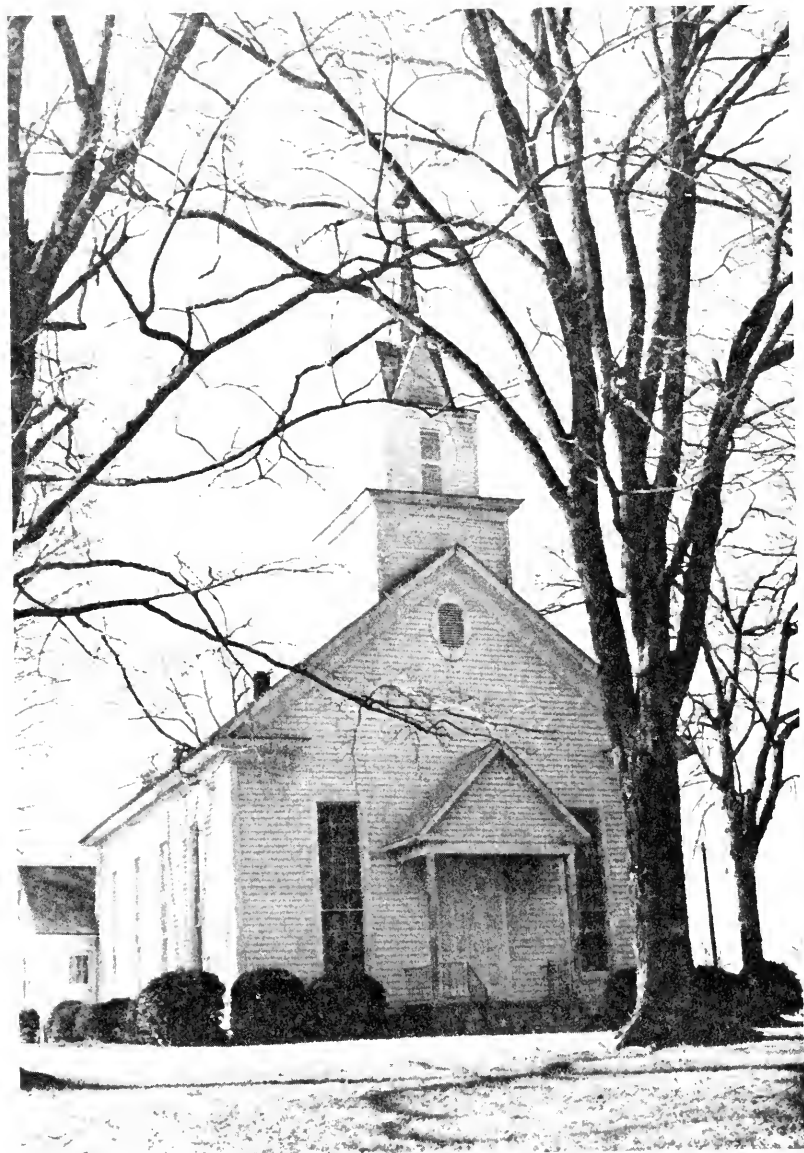
23. Kenneth Phifer, *A Protestant Case for Liturgical Renewal* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1965), p. 100.

24. See *Ibid.*, chapters 6-9.

25. James F. White, "Worship In An Age of Immediacy," *The Christian Century*, February 21, 1968, p. 228.

26. Not until the Reformation did the act of corporate confession become a regular part of the worship service. See Hubert V. Taylor, "The General Confession of Sin," *Reformed Liturgy And Music*, Vol. VIII, No. 3, Spring 1974, p. 27.

27. "Constitution On The Sacred Liturgy," *Documents of Vatican II*, p. 142.



Thanks, Papa Hippolytus

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"How, . . . can one account for the recent popularity of the liturgy of Hippolytus, except on the grounds that it happens to combine a fairly early date with features that are congenial to some contemporary ecclesiastics? The liturgy itself is undistinguished, and concerning Hippolytus my predecessor F. L. Cross has remarked that he was a 'reactionary' and 'not a master of his subject.'" John Macquarrie, *Paths In Spirituality* (Harper, 1972), p. 78.

When Bob Gregg dared to use the pages of this august *Review* to enable a second century heresiarch to advance the scandalous notion that even prostitutes have a place in the Kingdom of God, Dr. Gregg illustrated that our patristic past "is richer and much less predictable than we suspect."¹ In our uniquely a-historical milieu, sometimes the oldest truth has a strikingly contemporary ring. I am not a historian. I teach and lead Christian worship. But because I teach worship I am forced to become a historian at times. Modern liturgical experimentation has found that the path to meaningful liturgy usually requires us to journey again where the church has been before in order that we might arrive where we would like to be today.

I sympathize with those pastors and laypersons who are dismayed by recent innovations in their accustomed worship practices. Part of the power of the liturgy is its predictability, sameness, uniformity, and familiar words and gestures. The liturgies of the church, across nearly every denomination, have changed more in the last ten years than they changed in the last four hundred years. For the post Vatican II Roman Church, the change has been even more dramatic. The United Methodist who was comfortable with the old, restrained format of "The Number 830 Holy Communion," may encounter *The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper: An Alternate Text* and exclaim with John Wesley, "I like the old wine best!" Lutherans, long nurtured on *sola fide* and non-sacrificial communions, may find that when they participate in the new services of the Inter-Lutheran Commission on Worship they will recall Luther's rebuke of some liturgical innovators of his day who, "...act like unclean swine, rush wildly about and rejoice only in the novel, and as soon as the novelty has worn off forthwith become disgusted with it."

From whence did this worship innovation and liturgical experimentation come? The sources are many and the factors are complex; a desire to adapt our worship to the needs and realities of

the contemporary church, new discoveries in historical and biblical studies, ecumenism, pluralism, ethnic awareness, and dissatisfaction with the theological and biblical shallowness of most Protestant worship.

Oddly enough, a chief source of modern liturgical innovation is a third century ecclesiastical conservative and anti-pope who probably wrote to stem the tide of innovative worship in his own time. His name was Hippolytus. While he lived in pre-Constantinian Rome, it is difficult to know whether to classify Hippolytus as a third-century or a twentieth-century church leader. Few people have exerted as far-reaching influence on liturgical change in our time. This article will attempt to describe the significance of innovations in our celebration of The Eucharist by acknowledging our debt to our ancient father, Hippolytus.

Until the late nineteenth century we knew little about Hippolytus. Then, due to the work of Connolly and Cagin, a number of Hippolytus' works were pieced together and Hippolytus was discovered by the modern age.² Hippolytus was a presbyter of the church at Rome in the beginning of the third century. He wrote at least fifty books—all in Greek, for that was still the language of Roman clergy. He was a highly regarded theologian and exegete. But his teaching on the Trinity thrust him into a bitter controversy with Bishop Zephyrinus (197-217) in which Hippolytus showed his dour, irascible, meticulously traditionalist and rigorist nature. Hippolytus was the sort of person whom no one would accuse of possessing broad-mindedness or irenic disposition. He eventually instigated a schism from Zephyrinus' church, accusing Zephyrinus of promoting sexual immorality (because he allowed some divorced Christians to remarry) and dangerous laxity in church discipline. His loyalty to the "good old time religion" of Logos theology earned Hippolytus a trip to the deadly Sardinian mines at the expense of the Emperor Maximus. The old war horse died there about 235. It is demonstrative of the good humor and forgiving spirit of the Roman Church that it eventually made Hippolytus a saint with a feast day of August 13.

His writings ceased to be read in the West shortly after his death when the Western Church abandoned Greek as its official language. In the East, however, especially in Egypt and Syria, his work was accepted as having great authority—particularly in regard to the polity and liturgy of those churches.

In 1691, a work entitled *The Egyptian Church Order* was made known to the Western world. Its author was unknown, but it was recognized as a very early account of church discipline and liturgy. A theory among scholars that the work was apostolic in origin led to

some of the revisions in the *Book of Common Prayer* during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. John Wesley studied the work with much interest and came to some erroneous conclusions about early church worship by reading it.

But it was not until the early 1900's that the work was identified as the lost *Apostolic Tradition* of Hippolytus. Extensive textual work has given us a reliable reconstruction of its original liturgical directives. *The Apostolic Tradition* is one of the oldest examples of Christian prayer literature and the only detailed account of early church worship in this period. We think it was written by Hippolytus around 197 (when the "ignorant" and "unskilled" Zephyrinus became bishop).³ Here we have a record of the "correct" rites and customs that were part of the tradition in order that they might not be destroyed by mindless innovators. Because of the conservative purpose of *The Apostolic Tradition*, we are confident that we have before us, in Lietzmann's enthusiastic assessment, "the model of all liturgies known to us."⁴ How did the Ante-Nicean church worship? In *The Apostolic Tradition* we have a fairly detailed picture.

While *The Apostolic Tradition* has been influential in contemporary thought on the ministry and Christian worship in general,⁵ I wish to focus upon the significance of this ancient document for a contemporary understanding of The Eucharist.

In the Hippolytan description of The Eucharist, a number of details strike us at first glance. Only baptized and sufficiently instructed persons participate. The meal occurs as the usual climax of Sunday worship. The deacons collect loaves of bread and jugs of wine from the people and present them to the bishop who stands before the table.

The bishop alone recites the eucharistic prayer since, while there appears to be a definite outline of the prayer, as yet there is no fixed formula. What we have in the *Apostolic Tradition* is a model, not a fixed text. The presbyters, standing on each side of the bishop before the table, extend their hands over the offering. This is "concelebration" which was revived by Vatican II as a means of expressing the communal and collegial nature of ordination as opposed to the old individualistic and hierarchial nature of the clergy. The concelebrated liturgy is a sign of the whole people of God in unity. "They are the body of Christ, not many bodies, but one body," as John Chrysostom once said. (Concelebration has been used in recent years to overcome the problem of intercommunion when two churches are not in communion with each other, though one

wonders if this sometimes masks the more difficult problems of full intercommunion.)

After prayers, psalms, scripture lessons, sermon, baptism and/or ordination if there is one, an Introductory Dialogue (*Sursum Corda*) is spoken (probably derived from Synagogue practices) between the Bishop and the people:

Bishop: The Lord be with you.
 People: And with your Spirit.
 Bishop: Lift up your hearts.
 People: We have them with the Lord.
 Bishop: Let us give thanks to the Lord.
 People: It is right and proper.

Now follows what is variously called the Prayer of Thanksgiving, Anaphora (from the Greek, “to offer up”), or Eucharistic Prayer:⁶

THANKSGIVING	We give you thanks, O God, through your dear Child, Jesus Christ, whom you sent us in these last days to save us, redeem us and inform us of your plan. He is your Word, inseparable from you, through whom you created all things and whom, being well pleased with him, you sent from heaven to a virgin’s womb. He was conceived and took flesh and was manifested as your Son, born of the Holy Spirit and of the virgin. And he, accomplishing your will and acquiring a holy people for you, stretched out his hands as he suffered to free from suffering those who trust you.
NARRATIVE OF INSTITUTION	When he was handed over to undergo voluntary suffering, to destroy death and to break the chains of the Devil, to crush hell beneath his feet, establish the rule [of faith] and manifest his resurrection, taking bread, he gave thanks to you and said: Take, eat, this is my body broken for you. In the same way, taking the chalice, he said: This is my blood which is shed for you. When you do this, do it in memory of me.
ANAMNESIS (REMEMBRANCE)	Remembering then, his death and resurrection, we offer you this bread and cup, giving you thanks for judging us worthy to stand before you and serve you as priests.
EPICLEISIS (INVOCATION)	And we ask you to send your Holy Spirit on the offering of holy Church. In gathering them together grant to those who share in your holy mysteries so to take part that they may be filled with the Holy Spirit for the strengthening of their faith in truth.
DOXOLOGY	So that we may praise you and glorify you through your Child Jesus Christ, through whom be to you glory and honour with the Holy Spirit in holy Church now and throughout all ages.
	AMEN.

Note the commendable brevity and simplicity of the Hippolytan anaphora. Behind the eucharistic liturgies stands a long development in the course of which they became loaded with secondary elements which obscured their structure and essential parts. Here we see all of the main parts which found their way, in this order (with the exception of the mid-fourth century Egyptian Anaphora of Serapion), into all later eucharistic prayers. The parts of this prayer are set forth in a bold, straightforward manner.

To comprehend the Thanksgiving section of the anaphora, we must be reminded that, among the Jews, the “blessing” of food is always a “thanksgiving.” A Jew does not say, “bless this food” but rather “blessed be God who gave this food.” “God is great, God is good, let us thank him for our food.” *Eucharistein* (“to give thanks”) and *eulogein* (“to praise”) are used without great distinction in the New Testament (cf. Mk. 8:6-7).⁷ The basis for the thanksgiving is gratitude before the *Mirabilia Dei*. The opening, “Let us give thanks to the Lord,” sets the tone.

The basic form of this eucharistic prayer is modeled on those Jewish “eucharistic” prayers, the *berekah*, in the Old Testament (II Chron. 6:4, Neh. 9:5 f. *et alia*). The outline of these prayers is always the same: a series of thanksgivings, often in the form of blessings of God for divine mercies in the past which bear upon and justify certain petitions appended. In Hippolytus, as in the Jewish table prayers, the times of thanksgiving are four: action of the Word of God in Creation, the Incarnation, the Passion, and at the Last Supper. Gregory Dix notes that the prayer is Jewish, through and through, Jewish in form and feeling, saturated in Paschal conceptions and *heilsgeschichte*, Christianized, but recognizably Jewish.⁸

The content of the prayer corresponds directly to the Christological part of the Apostles’ Creed. Here we have a public proclamation of the deeds of God, a “Christological Hymn,”⁹ making known and recalling to the assembly what God has done and is doing. It has been shown that the Eucharistic Prayer was a principle form for passing on the faith in the early church.¹⁰ Liturgy is always education, catechesis, a re-telling of the old story. The theological and biblical leanness of much of our current Sunday morning worship could profit from a rediscovery of the liturgy as the principal way of reminding God’s people of things we do so easily forget. Liturgy is also proclamation. It is a witness to and an acting out of the Good News. In short, it is evangelism. The split in many Protestant churches between so-called “evangelicals” and self-styled “liturgists” might be healed if we could recover this sense of the liturgy as evangelism, an acted, visible Word to the world.

“He stretched out his hands” is undoubtedly an allusion to Isaiah 65:2, “Each day I stretched out my hands to a rebellious people.” The passage is repeated by Paul in Romans 10:21 as well as by the Epistle of Barnabas and in Justin’s *Dialogue* as a powerful image of divine compassion on the cross. But note that, unlike our later liturgies for the Mass and the Lord’s Supper, there is surprisingly little emphasis on the passion and suffering of Christ. The medieval doctrine of the Substitutionary Atonement, in which Christ becomes the Sacrificial Lamb to atone for the sins of humanity, is absent. The thundering words, “to break the chains of the Devil, to crush hell beneath his feet, establish the rule [of faith] and manifest his resurrection...” represent a mythical *Christus Victor* image of Christ’s saving work rather than the narrow focus on forensic and sacrificial images that was to dominate later Christian theology. The work of Christ is shown to be active, rather than passive, with decisive, continuing, saving significance for suffering humanity.

The tone in Hippolytus is one of joyful triumph at the victory of Christ in the war of human liberation. It is an eschatological prayer, a prayer which sings of a New Age in which the whole cosmos is redeemed, all things are being made new, and the chains which once bound humanity no longer enslave us. What a far cry this enthusiastic hymn of victory is from the traditionally sombre, restrained, funereal, penitential, passive, “memorials” into which our Communion degenerated during the Middle Ages and the Reformation. The prayer does not stop short with a sympathetic meditation on the pain of the crucifixion. Here, in Hippolytus, there is no doubt that Christians are partaking of a Resurrection Meal, not a wake for a departed hero. They are eating an Emmaus meal more than a Last Supper. This discovery has had profound implications for recent liturgical reform.

The Narrative of Institution is a simple and undeveloped free rendering of I Cor. 11:24 into the indicative form. There is no special emphasis on the words, no attempt to highlight them, they are merely an integral part of the entire salvation story.¹¹ The unfortunate medieval debates on the “moment of consecration” which seized upon these *verba* as the heart of the Mass and Luther’s misguided stripping of The Canon of the Mass until it contained nothing but these Words of Institution, impoverished our eucharistic theology for centuries. Luther, in his attempt to purify the Mass of its later accretions, followed his principle of *sola scriptura*, taking everything out of the Mass which he did not find in scripture, thinking that he was restoring the primitive tradition.¹² The

Narrative of Institution thus became the heart of the Reformation liturgies. *Sola scriptura* is not a bad liturgical guideline. The tragedy was that only this part of the Jesus story was lifted up. Only the Last Supper and Good Friday were recalled. In an odd way, Luther succeeded in accentuating some of the most limited aspects of the Late Medieval Roman Mass. The Eucharist became a mournful recalling of the Last Supper which overshadowed the other elements in the great sweep of salvation history. Christ became significant mainly as the God-man who had to die. Hippolytus reminds us that when the early church ate the Eucharist, it remembered the birth, life, teaching, actions, death, and resurrection of Jesus—not just the death of Jesus.

Immediately following the Narrative of Institution comes the so-called *anamnesis*. This is usually rendered in English as “remembrance.” Gregory Dix suggested that this should be translated, not as something remembered from the past, but as a “re-representation” or “re-enactment” of some past event, making it present.¹³ To recall something in the liturgy, as Dix reminded us, is not to focus on the dead past, it is to proclaim its presently manifested power. Recent studies have raised the possibility that, in the Jewish-Christian setting, *anamnesis* means more nearly “proclamation.”¹⁴ Once again, this stresses the evangelical, kerygmatic nature of The Eucharist. The “remembrance” here is something more dynamic and presently relevant than mere historical memory.

Note the offering within the *anamnesis*. The Reformers, in reacting against the late medieval emphasis on the Mass as a sacrifice, created liturgies which dropped the offering and obscured the fact that, in our worship, a true offering is being made. (Calvin did view worship as a “sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving.”) But we have no reason to doubt that a strong sense of offering, of our collective self-giving, was present in the church’s earliest worship. While the later emphasis on the offering as a sacrifice was probably overstated, Protestant worship today needs to recover the offering as a chief focus of public worship. In the offering we affirm that all our good things have come as gifts. We affirm, against the ever-present danger of Marcionites and Gnostics, that the material can be a bearer of sacred reality, that our gifts, our creations, and our lives are transformed in the very act of thanksgiving. As Tillich once said, “Thanksgiving is consecration; it transfers something that belongs to the secular world into the sphere of the holy.”¹⁵ Too much present day worship fosters a purely subjective, passive attitude on the part of the worshippers. A false “spirituality” has obscured the incarnation. There is too much talking, listening, sitting, thinking, and too little acting and

responding. The Offering is not an intrusion into our worship, it is the very core of our worship.

Then follows the *epiclesis* which asks for a divine response to the church's offering in the preceding *anamnesis*. The spirit is invoked upon the offering and upon the participants. Unlike later developments in the Eastern Church, the *epiclesis* does not ask for a change in the bread and wine into the body and blood—although this may be implied by the invocation. The Roman Church has no *epiclesis* for the elements in the strict sense of the word, as centuries of bitter controversy between East and West have shown. Recent recognition that the *epiclesis* was a part of early rites has been helpful in promoting Orthodox-Roman dialogue. For Protestants who are debating “The Spirit” and its assorted gifts, where the Spirit seems to be experienced by people more often outside the church (in some disembodied form) than in the church, this is a helpful reminder that a primary locus of the Spirit is in the gathered community at worship. The *epiclesis* also reminds us that true worship, like faith itself, is always a gift, a reminder which cannot be made in the Reformation liturgies where the Holy Spirit is not even mentioned!

The anaphora ends with a concluding Doxology, reinforcing the eucharistic nature of this prayer as a hymn of praise in response to our liberation in Christ. The final “Amen” of the people signifies their assent and participation in all that has gone before.

Karl Barth once commented that what matters most in the church's worship is not being up-to-date, but reformation. Reformation does not mean to go with time or let the spirit of the age judge what is true and false. It means to carry out better than yesterday the task of singing a new song unto the Lord. “It means never to grow tired of returning not to the origin in time but to the origin in substance of the community.”¹⁶ Or as Pius XII said in his encyclical on worship, “To return in mind and heart to the well-springs of the sacred liturgy....”¹⁷ The rediscovery of the *Apostolic Tradition* has helped us to recover much that we lost in our worship. Hippolytus has influenced all revisions of the Eucharist since the 1930's.

In the liturgical reforms of Vatican II, some suggested that the Hippolytan anaphora could be taken completely into the new Roman rite. The simplicity, conciseness, and clear patterns of the prayer were said to be valuable correctives for many weaknesses within the old Roman Canon. But the absence of the ancient *Sanctus*, the Intercessions, and the Lord's Prayer caused problems. The *Sanctus* is not a primitive feature of the anaphorae. But it has become a part of all later liturgies as a way of emphasizing that our praise is

united with the praise of all the saints in all ages.¹⁸ Added to this was the problem of the *epiclesis*. The 1968 Roman Eucharistic Prayer III transferred part of the Hippolytan *epiclesis* to a position before the Narrative of Institution. The rest of this new Roman anaphora is different from Hippolytus even if its tone and content are much the same. Eucharistic Prayer II is substantially the same as that in the *Apostolic Tradition*. It is intended for use, not for community Mass on Sunday, but for week days and special situations when a simplified form is desired.

The Lutherans, following Luther's drastic revisions of The Canon, have traditionally had no eucharistic formula between the opening *Sanctus* and the Lord's Prayer except the Words of Institution. The Inter-Lutheran Commission on Worship has now drawn upon Hippolytus and other early rites for a full eucharistic prayer which moves Lutherans out of their old rite's unfortunate limitation to the Words of Institution.¹⁹

The new Episcopal prayers follow more the outline of the Eastern rites (with the single exception of their retention of the Proper Prefaces), than their former Cranmerian adaptation of the old Roman Canon. Their choice of a full recital of thanksgiving for all God's acts in creation, redemption, and final consummation reflect their indebtedness to works like the *Apostolic Tradition*. The new Eucharistic Prayer B of the *Draft Proposed Book of Common Prayer*²⁰ is almost a duplication of Hippolytus.

As for the United Methodists, their liturgical revision parallels much that has gone on in other denominations with the additional stress, following Hippolytus (and Gregory Dix), that the Eucharist is not so much a set of words but rather a pattern of basic actions which allow for possible variations in the words. Like the anaphora of Hippolytus, United Methodist worship innovation has sought to produce basic patterns rather than fixed texts.²¹ As for the texts which they have produced, we need only compare the old *Order for Holy Communion*²² (which Methodists inherited, of course, from the *Book of Common Prayer*) with *The Lord's Supper: An Alternate Text*²³;

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, who of thy tender mercy didst give thine only Son Jesus Christ to suffer death upon the cross for our redemption; who made there, by the one offering of himself, a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the whole world; and did institute, and in his holy Gospel command us to continue, a perpetual memory of his precious death until his coming again:

Hear us, O merciful Father, we most humbly beseech thee, and grant that we, receiving these thy creatures of bread and wine, according to thy Son our Saviour Jesus Christ's holy institution, in remembrance of his passion, death, and resurrection, may be partakers of the divine nature through him: (Then follows the Institution Narrative.)

Unlike the old *Order*, the *Alternate Text* refers to its central prayer as “The Prayer of Thanksgiving” (rather than the misnomer, “Consecration”) thus calling attention to thanksgiving as the heart of the Lord’s Supper. By examining a portion of this new prayer (which is derived from the ICET texts ²⁴) we can readily see the differences between the new and the old:

Father, it is right that we should always and
 everywhere give you thanks and praise.
 Only you are God.
 You created all things and called them good.
 You made us in your own image.
 Even when we rebelled against your love,
 you did not desert us.
 You delivered us from captivity,
 made covenant to be our God and King,
 and spoke to us through your prophets.
 Therefore, we join the entire company of heaven
 and all your people now on earth
 in worshiping and glorifying you:
*Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
 heaven and earth are full of your glory.
 Hosanna in the highest.
 Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
 Hosanna in the highest.*
 We thank you, Father,
 that you loved the world so much
 you sent your only Son to be our Savior.
 The Lord of all life came to live among us.
 He healed and taught men,
 ate with sinners,
 and won for you a new people by water and the Spirit.
 We saw his glory.
 Yet he humbled himself in obedience to your will,
 freely accepting death on a cross.
 By dying, he freed us from unending death;
 by rising from the dead, he gave us everlasting life.

On the night in which he gave himself up for us,
 the Lord Jesus took bread.
 After giving you thanks,
 he broke the bread,
 gave it to his disciples, and said:
 Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you.
 When the supper was over,
 he took the cup.
 Again he returned thanks to you,
 gave the cup to his disciples, and said:

Drink from this, all of you,
 this is the cup of the new covenant in my blood,
 poured out for you and many,
 for the forgiveness of sins.

When we eat this bread and drink this cup,
 we experience anew the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ
 and look forward to his coming in final victory.

*Christ has died,
 Christ is risen,
 Christ will come again.*

We remember and proclaim, Heavenly Father,
 what your Son has done for us
 in his life and death,
 in his resurrection and ascension.

Accept our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving,
 in union with Christ's offering for us,
 as a reasonable and holy surrender of ourselves.

Send the power of your Holy Spirit on us,
 gathered here out of love for you,
 and on these gifts.

Help us know
 in the breaking of this bread
 and the drinking of this wine
 the presence of Christ
 who gave his body and blood for mankind.

Make us one with Christ,
 one with each other,
 and one in service to all mankind.

*Through your Son Jesus Christ,
 with the Holy Spirit in your Holy Church,
 all glory and honor is yours, Father. Amen.*

In returning to our heritage in worship we have been continually impressed by our commonality rather than our differences. In stripping away accumulated liturgical bric-a-brac, we now see more clearly what we are about. For this new spirit of liturgical development, for moving us off our age old debates about "sacrifice" and into new ecumenical affirmations of the whole cosmic saving work of Christ, for the new tone of joy and victory, for restoring a bold and clear statement of theological content to our once disordered and superficial rites, for helping us transform our sombre "Memorial Meal" into a celebration of praise and thanksgiving, we say, "Thanks, Papa Hippolytus."

FOOTNOTES

1. Robert C. Gregg, "Early Christian Variations on the Parable of the Lost Sheep," *The Duke Divinity School Review*, Spring, 1976, pp. 85-104.
2. R. H. Connolly, *The So-Called Egyptian Church Order*, Cambridge, 1916, Dom Paul Cagin, *L'Eucharistia: Canon primitif de la messe ou formulaire essentiel et premier de toutes les liturgies*, Paris, 1912.
3. This date is the opinion of C. C. Richardson, "The Date and Setting of the Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus," *Anglican Theological Review*, XXX (1948), pp. 38-44. For a differing opinion on the dating, see Gregory Dix (ed.), *The Treatise on the Apostolic Tradition of St. Hippolytus of Rome*, London, 1937.
4. Hans Lietzmann, *Messe und Herrenmahl*, Bonn, 1926. The belief that Hippolytus represents a very early form of the Roman Rite has recently been challenged by Louis Bouyer, *Liturgical Piety*, Notre Dame, 1968, pp. 188-191.
5. Bernard Cooke, *Ministry to Word and Sacraments*, Philadelphia, 1976, pp. 421-27, 537-53.
6. Translation by Dom Bernard Botte, *La Tradition Apostolique de saint Hippolyte. Essai de reconstruction*, Münster, 1963.
7. Burton Scott Easton, *The Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus*, N.Y., 1934.
8. Dix, *Treatise*, p. XI. See also Massey Shepherd, "Hippolytus.....," *Studia Liturgica*, June 1962, pp. 85f.
9. Lietzmann, *Messe*, p. 178.
10. Josef Jungmann, *The Mass*, Collegetown, Minnesota, 1976, p. 263. The educational function of the eucharistic prayer continues today. See the article by James White in this issue of the *Review*.
11. Gregory Dix, in *The Shape of the Liturgy*, London, 1946, p. 240, tried to prove that the Words of Institution were a later addition but his argument has been refuted. See Josef Jungmann, *The Early Liturgy*, Notre Dame, 1959, pp. 68-69.
12. Frank C. Senn, "Martin Luther's Revision of the Eucharistic Canon in the *Formula Missae* of 1523," *Concordia Theological Monthly*, v. 44, #1, 1973.
13. Dix, *Shape*, p. 245.
14. G. D. Kirkpatrick, "Anamnesis," *Liturgical Review*, Vol. V, #1 pp. 210-223.
15. Paul Tillich, *The Eternal Now*, N.Y., 1963, p. 179.
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Liturgy, Theology of the Laity: The Case of the 1972 United Methodist Communion Service

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One of the historic slogans of the twentieth-century liturgical movement has been that “liturgy is the theology of the laity.” This phrase stands almost as the motto for the life work of the great Belgian monk, Lambert Beauduin, a pivotal figure of the twentieth-century Christianity. I want to examine the truth of this slogan and what it implies for United Methodists today. I shall use the 1972 United Methodist Communion service as a case study to illustrate what seems to me to be a profound truth, that “liturgy is the theology of the laity.”

First of all, this short statement needs a bit of expansion. It means that those things which are said and done in the public worship of the Church are crucial means for shaping the understanding laity have of what it means to think and feel as a Christian. The words and actions of worship provide vehicles for perceiving what is ultimately real in life and for expressing our relationship to the Ultimate. Such words and actions help the laity form belief patterns that sustain and nourish life. All of this is true for clergy as well but the clergy have the additional resources of seminary education, constant reading, and Bible study.

If the statement “liturgy is the theology of the laity” is true for Catholics, I believe these words apply to Protestants equally well. Worship clarifies and articulates the theology of our laity as nothing else does. Frequently public worship is the only occasion our people hear theological statements made. Unfortunately Bible reading is the exception rather than the rule among Protestant laity today. Long gone is the day when the minister could assume that his or her people spent any time between Sundays reading God’s word. If, today, they are exposed to theological statements between occasions of worship, such statements come incognito in novels and films. Public worship is the sole event in the life of most people in the pews where Christian faith is put into actions and words in a conscious and deliberate way.

Such a situation places all the more emphasis on the unvarying texts used in Protestant worship since we have far fewer stable

elements than does Roman Catholic worship. Much of our service is devoted to extemporary prayers and sermons which are never repeated. Thus elements such as creeds, doxologies, hymns, and the Lord's Prayer have an even greater theological importance for us than in Roman Catholic worship where there is more stability. This takes on even more significance when the Lord's Supper is celebrated and the major portion of the service is unchanging. The unvariable nature of most of the communion service gives it definitive qualities as a theological statement that our efforts in preaching and education cannot duplicate, since they always word their contents in new and unrepeated ways.

Much of the power of liturgy as the theology of the laity is, then, due to the power of repetition. This is especially true of graphic phrases. The one prayer the laity of the Episcopal Church refused to give up was the prayer of humble access. How many Methodists, too, have had a strong image of their unworthiness reinforced by the repetition of such a graphic phrase as "we are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under thy table"? Unfortunately Reformation liturgies were so successful in composing such vivid penitential images that constant reinforcement of these has given the whole Lord's Supper a gloomy cast. Liturgical repetition is an extremely powerful means for making theological images become a part of life.

United Methodism has rarely grasped the importance of liturgical texts as basic theological statements. No other theological statements reach as many people as constantly as those we use in public worship. This is where the Church's real theological work gets done. Yet this is an area in which our trained theologians are scarcely involved. Of necessity, theologians talk to each other and to seminary students. And we liturgists talk to the people, Sunday after Sunday. The 1972 "Sacrament of the Lord's Supper" has sold over 1,310,000 copies, has been xeroxed and mimeographed many times that number, and has been used over and over in churches. Can we point to any other recent United Methodist theological document that has sold more than a few thousand copies? The 1976 "Service of Baptism, Confirmation, and Renewal" is probably the closest runner up with 130,000 copies in use. In United Methodism the liturgists are doing the theology of the laity with little or no direct contributions from the professional theologians. This is a frightening responsibility for liturgists. Can you imagine Rome turning loose a liturgical text without thorough scrutiny and approval by the Congregation on Christian Doctrine? To be sure, not all decisions by the old Holy Office were wise, but at least its approval was a necessity before any

liturgical texts were published. One looks in vain for a Methodist parallel. One suspects that theology is not terribly important in United Methodism.

But liturgists do not do theology in isolation. We are completely dependent upon pastors. This is a consumer's market. Poor and sloppy celebrations weaken the possibility that the liturgy can teach anybody any theology at all. On the other hand, good celebration of an inadequate liturgy can teach an unsatisfactory theology as when basic Christian doctrines, such as eschatology, are constantly omitted. But careful celebrations of well-balanced liturgies can be powerful tools in teaching good theology. So much depends upon the discernment and sensitivity of the local pastor who plans, prepares for, and conducts the actual services! Each of you must be, as Paul Hoon reminds us, a "liturgical theologian". And that is a very important responsibility.

I

I maintain that the repeated parts of liturgy are decisive in shaping the theology of the laity whether by actions such as the breaking of bread or by words such as the *gloria patri*. But there is one action that is supremely important in defining the Church's faith. This is the giving of thanks at the Lord's Supper, the great thanksgiving, the eucharistic prayer, the canon, or anaphora which since 1662 Anglicans and Methodists have mislabeled the "Prayer of Consecration." This prayer, which I shall call "the eucharistic prayer," is the key theological statement the Church makes in worship. A similar prayer has been recovered in our 1976 baptismal rite after having been totally absent for decades. Though sadly deformed and undervalued during most of our history, potentially the eucharistic prayer is the most important theological statement the Church makes within or without the context of worship.

If there is any consistent theme in recent liturgical studies, it is the necessity of understanding the Jewish roots of Christian worship if we hope to revitalize worship in our churches. There is no better example of this than in the eucharistic prayer. We have come to understand how thoroughly Jewish are the sources of this prayer both in form and in purpose. The return to our roots has made us realize how tremendously exciting the eucharistic prayer can be and how sadly we have ignored one of our chief treasures.

The early Christians followed the form of Jewish synagogue prayers with extraordinary faithfulness, simply changing the contents to those of the new covenant. But the basic concepts, the forms, the key words were all borrowed. For the Jew, the essence of

the formal fixed prayers of the synagogue was proclamation of and thanksgiving for God's mighty acts of salvation. It is a theology of recital of the *mirabilia Dei*. For the early Christians, the eucharistic prayer did exactly the same thing. It was a marvelous welling up of proclamation and thanksgiving for God's mighty actions from the beginning to the conclusion of time. Here the new Israel poured forth its joyful recital of those acts by which God had called the Church out of the world.

The early Church never seemed to question this function of the eucharistic prayer nor did obvious parallels between Christian eucharistic prayers and the synagogue benedictions seem a problem. In a sense, Paul overstated his case. One does in many ways have to become a Jew first in order to become a Christian, though, thank heaven, I do not have to teach students how to circumcise or how to kill chickens. But this point is crucial, the eucharistic prayer carries on the Jewish practice of thanking God by proclaiming God's mighty works on behalf of God's people. It is a think-thank process in which recalling what God has done becomes the highest form of praise that we can offer God. Making memorial is our most important sacrifice because it offers God's own actions as our most precious possession.

Since the eucharistic prayer performs such a supremely important function, the proclaiming of it is an action of great importance. Just as the synagogue designated respected officers of the congregation to lead its central prayers, so the Church early assigned this function to the president of the local congregation. After all, only a truly representative minister could be expected to have the competence and sensitivity to sum up those things for which the congregation gave thanks. Justin Martyr tells us that the "president similarly sends up prayers and thanksgivings to the best of his ability, and the congregation assents, saying the Amen." Much has been made of the phrase "to the best of his ability"; perhaps more ought to be made of "the congregation assents." The president performs a representative act for the people by summing up the memories the congregation has to offer God. Not anyone could do it, only someone who knew both theology and the people, a true "liturgical theologian."

The Church grew more cautious with time, just as Judaism had, and pushed the celebrants in the different parts of the world into following fixed patterns for proclaiming the thanksgiving. Our earliest example of this is Hippolytus, about 215 a.d., who tells us chief pastors are still free to devise their own form "only let him pray what is sound doctrine." Apparently skepticism as to the ability of

many pastors to do justice to the Church's faith and hopes plus the attacks of heretics pressured the Churches of the world to adopt fixed formulas. It is fascinating how the early liturgies of the different churches of the world reveal native expressions and thought forms of immense ethnic variety, yet at the same time enunciate precisely the same faith. For the eucharistic prayer was the Church's chief expression of its faith, already centuries old before councils began promulgating creeds. It is common to state that *lex orandi, lex credendi* but easily forgotten that the eucharistic prayer is the chief example of the *lex orandi*.

The eucharistic prayer functioned for centuries as the Church's chief summary of faith. Beside it a creed was redundant. It was a sign of decadence when the Church in the West finally incorporated the creed in the mass. It meant that the Church had forgotten what the eucharistic prayer was all about. In the early eleventh century, Rome yielded to pressure and added the Nicene Creed to the mass. By then no one sensed the redundancy of doubling the eucharistic prayer. It indicated that the Jewish roots of the prayer had finally shriveled up altogether. Even the basic trinitarian shape of the eucharistic prayer had become so concealed that the innovation of adding the creed, in Charlemagne's time in the West, was seen as a safeguard of orthodox Trinitarian faith. It ought to be a warning to us, today, that something is seriously amiss in any eucharistic rite where the proclamation of the eucharistic prayer is so weak or one-sided as to need to be propped up by a creed in the same service. Such presence may be a necessity in our 1964 rite, but it is an intrusion in the 1972 service. We are, at last, in the process of becoming better Jews, of learning to pray our creeds and to proclaim our prayers as Judaism and the early Church did.

Though the eucharistic prayer has been and potentially is the most important theological statement of the Church, it obviously has not been that for over a thousand years. Once we lost our Jewishness, we lost our understanding of how the eucharistic prayer functions as an act of proclamation. We continued to restrict it to clergy, but we forgot why it needed to be guarded by being entrusted only to someone truly representative of the community. Any sense of the priest as the one who sums up the community's corporate memories as its sacrifice, became replaced by alien concepts of sacrifice and presence. The loss of the function of proclamation is most vividly seen in the complete absence of any sense of a need to recall the old covenant. You must remember that these medieval losses are our losses too. But for over a thousand years, the Church in the West simply forgot to proclaim and give thanks for the old covenant. Scarcely less seriously, it forgot to mention the present and active

intervention of the Holy Spirit. And it blithely ignored the final culmination of all things in the messianic kingdom.

If the Protestant Reformers inherited a defective tradition, they nevertheless reinforced many of its worst aspects often under the illusion of recovering primitive elements. What they knew and had experienced as late medieval men was a rite heavily penitential, shot through with apologies in which priest and congregation constantly apologized for their sinfulness. If anything was proclaimed, it was not God's acts but humanity's sins. So Reformation liturgies became litanies of human sins, not recitals of God's acts. Could anything be more inverted than to substitute apology for proclamation? This was compounded by the Reformers' abandonment of the sacrament of penance. The human needs that penance served did not go away; they were simply transferred to the eucharist which ever since has had to do double duty. Many of our present problems are due to need to have to celebrate penance every time we make eucharist. We need to recover reconciliation as a corporate act of faith in order to let the eucharist do its own work once again.

Unfortunately, the exigencies of the times compelled the Reformers to deal with corrupted popular concepts of eucharistic sacrifice. Luther took the most drastic action—he simply threw out the whole eucharistic prayer. At least he was colorful in denouncing it as “that mangled and abominable thing gathered from much filth and scum.” The crowning irony is that Luther kept only the words of institution, apparently unaware that to a first-century Jew these words were about as heavily sacrificial as anything that could be spoken. Cranmer dealt with the same problem in a hardly more successful way. He gave us, instead, a prayer full of theological polemics, arguing with Roman Catholics by asserting that on Calvary Christ made “(by his one oblation once offered) a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, for the sinnes of the whole worlde.” And so Methodists have been refuting Roman Catholics every Sunday for the last two hundred years though I doubt many were listening. The tragedy was that we have had to settle for a negative statement of eucharistic sacrifice all these years.

Well, I hope you can glimpse the magnificent vehicle of praise the Church lost when it ceased to understand the form and function of the eucharistic prayer as the Church's supreme act of proclamation, and consequently, its chief statement of theological doctrine. Theology is far too important to leave just to the theologians. We are challenged today to overcome the medieval distortions, to remember what we have forgotten for a thousand years, to remember how Christians give thanks.

II

Well, what is our record so far? The 1972 United Methodist Communion service makes an important case study for it was our first major step in recovering those things we did not know that we had lost. I must say a quick word about the legal status of this service. It is an official alternative service of the United Methodist Church which in its 1970 General Conference authorized the former Commission on Worship to develop alternative services to those in *The Book of Worship* and *The Methodist Hymnal*. This mandate first bore fruit in the publication of the 1972 communion service. We now refer to this and the services that followed as "Supplemental Worship Resources." They do not abolish existing resources, they supplement them, giving us additional options and underscoring the pluralistic character of United Methodist worship. Perhaps more significant, since Methodists are nothing, if not pragmatic, is the *de facto* situation. The service was prepared with the anticipation that it would serve a minority of churches eager for change. Instead, it has been widely accepted in every segment of United Methodism and has virtually replaced the communion service in the hymnal for thousands of congregations representing wide differences of opinions and practices. In the weekly eucharist in the seminaries, faculty now have to insist that the 1964 service be used at least occasionally so as not to be forgotten. The widespread use of the new service and its replacement of the traditional rite is as surprising as it is gratifying to those of us who worked on the development of the 1972 communion service.

For the first time in our history, United Methodists have an official communion service which is not simply a revision of previous Anglican-Methodist efforts. John Wesley only ventured to change a single word in the 1662 Anglican eucharistic prayer; he removed a redundant "one." Though totally different in wording, our new eucharistic prayer is more Wesleyan than any we have ever had. The evidence for this statement occurs in the eucharistic hymns that the Wesleys produced. Scholars agree these are the chief statements of John Wesley's eucharistic doctrine.

How do we account for the tremendous popularity of the new communion service? Few lay people care that it has broader and deeper historical roots than any of its predecessors, that it is more Wesleyan, or that it is classical and ecumenical in shape [rather than narrowly Anglican-Methodist.] Probably not many people have been excited by its language. One critic called its language "undistinguished" and that was exactly what we desired. Cranmer, too, might have considered that a mark of success in the sixteenth century. Its

third keynote, greater flexibility has been disappointingly utilized. I fear most pastors simply read it as printed rather than try to make creative and imaginative use of the options suggested. No, I think its popular appeal has not been historical, linguistic, or because of flexibility.

I suspect its appeal has been largely due to clarity of function in teaching the laity how to think and feel about our relationship to God. Its imagery is balanced; nothing is overloaded nor underplayed. All dimensions of our relationship to God receive balanced expression. The service is, in short, a good school of theology.

It is time to examine briefly the theological statements the eucharistic prayer of our 1972 service makes. What is its theology? First of all, it picks up the basic trinitarian structure of all classical eucharistic prayers. Previous Methodist eucharistic prayers (excepting a strange Methodist Protestant one of the 1830's) do not even mention the Holy Spirit. It will be helpful to follow this trinitarian structure using three key greek terms: *eucharistia*, *anamnesis*, and *epiclesis*.

First of all, the eucharistic prayer is, as its name indicates, a jubilant proclamation of praise and thanksgiving to God for what God has done. To bless God means to recite God's works. "To bless" and "to give thanks" are synonymous terms for Jews and Christians. The opening dialogue calls us to give God "thanks and praise" and this is reinforced throughout the prayer. The prayer is addressed to God the Father from beginning to end. It differs greatly from any we have had previously by not limiting itself to thanking God only for the "passion, death, and resurrection" but in including the whole sweep of God's mighty actions from creation to second coming. The *mirabilia Dei* are recited in joyful acknowledgement that God has accomplished it all for us. Instead of the mournful passion piety, to which we have so long been accustomed, this prayer rejoices in the joyful mysteries which outnumber so greatly the sorrowful. The gospel, after all, is good news. The crucifixion is, of course, an important part of the Christian message but the 1964 service dwells so exclusively on the passion narrative that it is no wonder that congregations consider communion a gloomy occasion.

The goodness of God's creation, God's faithfulness despite the rebellion and captivity of God's people, and God's constant accessibility are elements of good news that we have long excluded from our great thanksgiving. All reaches its climax in the incarnation, the healing and teaching, and the creation of a new people. Even the resurrection is not the last word but rather the coming in final victory. A whole section of Wesley's eucharistic

hymns is entitled: "The Sacrament a Pledge of Heaven," few of which are in *The Book of Hymns* and none in the section of communion hymns. Hymn 93 acknowledges: "We now are at His table fed,/But wait to see our heavenly King;/To see the great Invisible/Without a sacramental veil," and continues: "Haste to the dreadful joyful day,/When heaven and earth shall flee away." So, in our 1972 rite, we declare we look forward to Christ's "coming in final victory" and acclaim "Christ will come again."

A major portion of the eucharistic prayer is *anamnesis* of what Christ has done. Unfortunately because of controversies in 1552, half of the eucharistic prayer got misplaced and occurs in the 1964 rite after the communion of the people, thus obscuring completely the function of those words. The least we can do is to reunite the two halves of the eucharistic prayer in the 1964 book. But we need even greater clarity than that supplies to express what *anamnesis* does. Why do we recall what Christ has done? It is closely, indeed inseparably, united to *eucharistia*. What we offer is also what we proclaim. We recite what God has done both as recalling and as thanksgiving. So *anamnesis* and *eucharistia* really are one. But the new service adds another important dimension to which we have been blind. What Christ "has done for us in his life and death, in his resurrection and ascension" is all we have to offer to God. The memorial of his actions is our true sacrifice. But Christ's work is not done. He continues to be our great "high priest," "to appear now before God on our behalf" (Heb. 9:24). As the worshiping Church we act "in union with Christ's offering for us." We are a priestly people through union to Jesus Christ. The language is reminiscent of Augustine but it is more emphatically akin to Wesley who, alone of the great Reformers, stresses the importance of seeing the eucharist as sacrifice. Part IV of the Wesleyan eucharistic hymns is entitled: "The Holy Eucharist as it implies a Sacrifice." Hymn 117 reminds us: "Parts of Thy mystic body here,/By Thy Divine oblation raised,/ . . . We now with Thee in heaven appear." Recent research has made us realize just how constantly the New Testament speaks of the eucharist in sacrificial terms. Now, for the first time, United Methodism has a positive statement of eucharistic sacrifice. It is, I believe, a stronger and more biblical statement of sacrifice than any I know of in any Protestant liturgy. Once again, we find John Wesley out ahead of us.

I have mentioned the total absence of any recognition of the work of the Holy Spirit in the Lord's Supper. It is a common blind spot in western Christendom until Post-Vatican II reforms. The constant

witness of the eastern churches, recognizable as early as St. Cyril of Jerusalem in the fourth century, has finally reached us. We now have a clear *epiclesis*, invoking the Holy Spirit to be present, to act, to bring us specified benefits: communion, consecration, recognizing the presence, and mission. The new baptismal liturgy makes parallel recognition of the activity here and now of the Holy Spirit. Once again there are good precedents, this time in Calvin's theology for stressing the agency of the Holy Spirit in the eucharist (though curiously absent in Calvin's liturgy). Wesley's hymn 72, "Come, Holy Ghost, Thine influence shed,/And realize the sign;/Thy life infuse into the bread,/Thy power into the wine," sounds like Calvin's theology set to music.

We have succeeded in articulating the presence in a dynamic sense, associating it with the "breaking of this bread and the drinking of this wine." This finds fulfillment in union with Christ, in Paul's words, "so that in him we might be made one with the goodness of God" (II Cor. 5:21). Our unity is in Christ through whom we are enabled to serve "all the world." The whole prayer ends in a doxological crescendo of praise of the Trinity, words constructed from those of Hippolytus in the third century.

Two items need brief mention. The service, I am convinced, makes a stronger statement of the Christian's responsibility for social action than any other denominational rite does. Methodism's historic participation in the struggle for justice rings out in the words just before the doxology, the prayer after receiving, and the dismissal.

What is missing is also important. Gone is the medieval-Reformation gloom of penitential elements calling attention to our unworthiness rather than to God's glory. If there is any place that sin is made irrelevant it is certainly at the Lord's table. There are no apologies here. All depends upon God; it is pure gift. And no irrelevancies about our not deserving these gifts intrude upon our thankful proclamation that first and last all depends upon God's work, not ours. The pervasive individualism of medieval-Reformation rites is gone too. The singing of hymns, recommended during communion, helps to overcome the tendency to individualistic introspection and meditation. This is no place for that kind of thing; we pray that the Holy Spirit makes us "one with each other." Wesley accomplished this by giving the people hymns to sing rather than silent meditation and this we can accomplish by avoiding divisive table dismissals and periods of silence.

Finally, though, so much depends upon the use pastors make of it. "Good celebrations increase and renew faith. Bad celebrations weaken and destroy faith." So much depends upon you! You must

understand it yourself; you must teach it to others. My last word to you is Paul Hoon's: You "cannot escape the duty" of "the minister's calling to function as a liturgical theologian." You are the only ones who can make it happen. If liturgy is really to be the theology of the laity, it is up to you. Make it happen!



Worship in the Black Church

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In an article entitled "Religious Education and the Black Experience" which was published in *The Black Church*, a journal of the Black Ecumenical Commission of Massachusetts, President Grant Shockley of the Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta wrote: "Being Black in the United States of America is a peculiar experience."¹ It is an experience and a condition whose roots are in Africa and whose history is a long and bitter night of slavery, segregation, discrimination, oppression, deprivation, excusion, alienation, and rejection in this country. This is the experience in which the black church had its beginning and has its continuing history and development. This is the experience out of which emerges a peculiar black theology and a distinct black worship tradition.

For the most part, black churches in America were established in three basic ways.

First, black churches were established on slave plantations where owners were, for one reason or another, sympathetic toward the Christianizing of slaves. In some cases, slaveowners were genuinely concerned about the religious development of their slaves and felt some moral or religious obligation to share the Gospel with these "heathens". In many cases, however, slavemasters used Christianity to further exploit their slaves. It was thought and it was taught that making slaves Christians would make them better slaves. Such evangelizing was usually conducted by white preachers; sometimes black preachers thought to be sympathetic toward the slave system were the evangelists; in both instances, such evangelizing was always under the strict control of the master.² It was designed to serve his goals and purposes. Other considerations were at least secondary and, more often than not taboo. This was the beginning of a long history of biblical misinterpretation and manipulation in American Christianity to support black slavery, segregation, discrimination, and oppression. And as recent as today, instances can be cited where the biblical faith is still misinterpreted and manipulated to victimize ethnic minorities in this country.

Secondly, black churches were established on plantations where slaveowners were opposed to the Christianizing of black Africans.

Religious exercise among them was prohibited.³ But, being religious as they were, slaves devised their own ways and forms of relating to deity. They stole away to Jesus and held secret meetings in their huts, or in the woods, or in other places of safety; they devised means to muffle their sounds so that unfriendly masters would not hear them as they worshipped their God, told him about their troubles, found assurance that it will be alright afterwhile, and prayed for strength to sustain them until the day breaks and their long and bitter night of sub-human condition and existence would be over.

And thirdly, black churches were established in direct protest of the subordinate and inferior status that was forced upon black people in white churches. Dr. D.E. King, writing in the book, *The Black Christian Experience*, describes how black people have always been denied the right and privilege of participation in white churches. Dr. King wrote:

From slavery until now blacks have been humiliated, embarrassed, harassed, brutally attacked, arrested, and imprisoned for even attempting to worship in white churches of all denominations. Even when they were admitted to worship and membership in a few white churches, they were relegated to the rear or to the balconies. They were also forced to wait until whites were served the Lord's Supper before they were served.

From the treatment suffered by blacks in the white church it is indeed, a miracle that they did not renounce Christianity altogether. Perhaps they would have if they had not, psychologically, separated Christ from the white church.⁴

Blacks did separate Christ from the white church. If God and his Son could condone the oppression and the inhumane treatment they experienced in the white church, the God of black folks had to be separated from that institution. Thus the failure of "American Christianity" to accord humanity to black people necessitated the establishment and development of black churches.

Obviously, this same failure of "American Christianity" inevitably precipitated a black interpretation of the faith and a black worship tradition. When the churches compromised the civil and spiritual rights of black people and yielded to the assumption that black persons were less than persons — less than human, the formation of a different church, a particular theology, and a unique style of worship ensued. If the God of "American Christianity" could deny blacks freedom and acquiesce in their slavery and brutal oppression, there must be some other interpretation of God, persons, and the world. Black people developed this particular interpretation through a combination of their African heritage and their daily experience of depersonalization with the Bible and the religion of their masters. They formed a church and forged a theology and fashioned a worship tradition to respond to their peculiar needs.

“Being Black in the United States of America is a peculiar experience”. The black church, through its interpretation of the faith and its worship, has been the most relevant and adequate response to that experience and that condition. In the “sermons, spirituals, prayers, and Sunday School teachings of the black church,” Shockley asserts that “Black people came to terms with their blackness, their expressional gifts and their social situation of slavery and brutalizing oppression in a white racist church and society.”

In their churches and in every other aspect of their existence, black people worshipped and proclaimed an Almighty Sovereign God in whose image they are made. They worshipped a God who was against slavery and oppression, and those who perpetrated this evil. They worshipped a God who wills liberation and sent his Son to be the Liberator of oppressed peoples. They worshipped a God whose Spirit works for the liberation and freedom of all peoples. It is said that a black preacher was heard to remark that it all began when a group of black people, in protest of the inferior and subordinate status forced upon them in a white church, left that church singing: “Ev’rybody talkin ’about Heab’n ain’t goin dere, Heab’n...” Do you know that spiritual?

I got a robe, you got a robe,
All God’s chillun got a robe.
When I get to Heab’n gonna put on my robe,
Gonna shout all over God’s Heab’n.

I got shoes, you got shoes,
All God’s chillun got shoes.
When I get to Heab’n gonna put on my shoes,
Gonna shout all over God’s Heab’n.

Heab’n, Heab’n.
Ev’rybody talkin bout heab’n ain’t going dere,
Heab’n, Heab’n,
Gonna shout all over God’s Heab’n.

The black experience and the black condition: we have to have some appreciation of that experience and that condition before we can begin to understand the worship tradition of the black church.

Nor can we begin to understand the worship tradition of the black church except we recognize and accept the reality that black people did not come to America bereft of any religious experience. This is important because Western historians and sociologists alike have accepted the myth that the black American has no meaningful past. E. Franklin Frazier, the celebrated Negro sociologist wrote the book, *The Negro Church in America*. In it he said:

...From the available evidence, including what we know of the manner in which the slaves were Christianized and the character of their churches, it is impossible to establish any continuity between African religious practices and the Negro church in the United States.⁶

Frazier goes on to describe how, in the process of enslavement, the Negro was completely stripped of his social, cultural and religious past. American Christianity became the “new basis of social cohesion” for black Americans; and, Frazier, concludes, “There was one element in their African heritage that was able to survive capture in Africa and the ‘middle passage’—dancing, the most primitive form of religious expression.”⁷

The tremendous contribution of “Black Power” has been its emphasis on black awareness and black identity. It has led black Americans to seriously question Frazier’s position; it has led to a new appreciation of the work of Melville J. Herskovits and others who assert that the prevailing attitude upon which this nation bases its racial policies is a “myth.” To believe that black Americans have no meaningful past; to believe that African religion has not had some influence on the black church in the United States is to embrace a myth, a fictitious imagination that cannot be supported by the facts of history.⁸

Alex Haley spent 12 years studying the seven American generations of his family. He researched the history of the slave trade, the slave ship crossings, and the history of the Kinte family in Africa. In *Roots*, Haley told the story of his family; but more than that, he told the story of black people in America. It is a story that declares for all time that African life and culture has influenced black life in America and African religion has impacted the black church in the United States.⁹

It is not to be doubted that very early in our existence in this country, black people were exposed to Christianity. The missionary efforts, and the warmth of the style and message of the Methodists and Baptists at that time won for those churches large followings from among the slaves. Nor can it be denied that those early religious communities provided the slaves some others prohibited social cohesion. But to think that the black church in America has ever been without some continuing African influence is to be mistaken.

At the turn of the century, W.E.B. DuBois published his findings on the Negro Church which was his report to the Atlanta University Conference for the Study of Negro Problems in 1903. DuBois wrote of the black church:

It was not at first by any means a Christian Church, but a mere adaptation of those heathen rites which we roughly designated by the term “Obe Worship” or

“Voodooism.” Association and missionary effort soon gave these rites a veneer of Christianity, and gradually, after two centuries, the Church became Christian, with a simple Calvinist creed, but with many of the old customs still clinging to the services.¹⁰

And more recently, within the decade, Professor Henry Mitchell has insisted that “Black Preaching and Black Religion generally are inescapably the product of the confluence of two streams of culture, one West African and the other Euro-American.”¹¹ Acknowledging the influence of Euro-American Christianity on the Black Church, Professor Mitchell goes on to say:

Black scholars now have proven beyond doubt that the religion of the black masses of the United States is so clearly distinguishable from the white Protestant tradition not only because of the unique experience of oppression but, even more so, because the basic culture/religion continuum from Africa was never broken... It is true that slavery was hard, but not quite that hard; and African religion is still alive and doing well in the Black Church and even the black street culture of today.¹²

Well, that’s the backdrop against which we must cast any consideration or discussion of worship in the black church. It is the black experience, a tradition which cannot be known nor fully appreciated except by those who have lived it. It is the black experience in America, with its roots in Africa and a history of dehumanizing oppression in this country.

In his book, *The Souls of Black Folk*, DuBois described preaching, music and frenzy as some of the distinctive “Characteristics of Negro religious life as developed up to the time of Emancipation.”¹³ Can you give a definition for “frenzy”? When black people have church today, when *black people* have church today, when black people have *church* today, the experience is still characterized by preaching, music and frenzy. One need only to recall the meeting in Memphis on April 3, 1968 where Martin Luther King, Jr. spoke and reported that he had been to the mountain top and had seen the Promised Land. He said “I may not get there with you, but my eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord.” And the resounding refrain was heard: “Glory, Hallelujah.” If you saw that meeting, or if you witnessed the choir at Hubert Humphrey’s funeral singing “Goin Up Yonder”, or if you visit a black church where black masses gather today; the distinctive features are preaching, music and frenzy.

Attention must be given to the acculturation of black “middle-class” worship before this article is concluded with some additional features of authentic worship in the black tradition. The writer served a “middle-class Negro church in a town where Sunday

worship was broadcast from several of the “leading churches in the city”. It was at the height of the civil rights movement and we were appalled that none of the black churches had ever participated. We approached the management of the radio station to protest this discrimination. They simply could not identify a “colored” church in the city that could fit the guidelines. They wanted the call to worship at 11:01 a.m. and the benediction at 11:58 a.m. They did not want long breaks, loud preaching and they could not broadcast shouting. Our church was insulted. We certainly fitted the guidelines; in fact, we could do it better than any of the churches that had had their worship broadcast. We became the only black church in that town that could participate. And we were proud of it. We were better than the other “colored” churches because we did things as well as, or better than, white folks.

I cited this incident to document how well black people have been taught that the right way to worship and do anything else in this country is the way white people do them. There used to be a saying in the black community: “If you’re white, you’re right; if you’re brown, stick around; if you’re black, get back.” “Black” was the term used to denote error, rejection and evil. “White” was used to denote truth, acceptance and goodness.

In an article “The Black Church in White Structures,” Gil Caldwell described the dilemma of many black churchpersons in predominantly white churches:

The Black Christian in a predominantly white institution has to make a decision early in his or her church life as to whether or not all that represents the white Christian experience will be internalized. Today around the nation there are black people in white Churches who assume that there is a rightness, a correctness, an historical validity to white Church life that is not present in a Black local church or denomination. They have been deluded into thinking that because their Black physical presence represents some form of racial desegregation... all might be right.¹⁴

Caldwell offered a possible solution to the dilemma:

There are other Black Church people (their number is increasing daily) who have not bought the false concept of the inherent rightness of white Christianity. They are devoted to instilling the best of Blackness into non-Black Church life and preserving the Black experience in other settings.¹⁵

We would be remiss if we ignored those who insist that there can be no authentic black church life in a predominantly white church structure. Some define the black church as that Christian community whose organization, administration and programs are originated, controlled and staffed by black people. Others insist that if black

people are going to remain in predominantly white churches, we should forget our blackness. This latter position led me to raise some questions about the black presence in my own United Methodist Church. Are we United Methodist black people? Or are we black United Methodist people? What claims our first priority, our blackness or our United Methodism? Black people must answer for themselves; and it makes all the difference in the world about how we see ourselves and how we fulfill our ministry and mission in and through the church. I happen to believe that I must be both black and United Methodist. That means that I must try to bring to bear upon this church the black heritage and the black experience. It means that my church can and must be relevant and responsive to the needs and aspirations of black people and the black community at the same time as it is faithful to the doctrines, beliefs and practices of the United Methodist Church.

What then are some additional distinctive features of authentic worship in the black church? I've already mentioned DuBois' distinctive characteristics — preaching, music and frenzy. I also alluded to the fact that authentic black worship may or may not be limited to a specific time schedule. When people have faced the experience of dehumanizing oppression all the week and in every other setting, they are not so anxious to get away from the one setting that gives them personhood and assures them that they are somebody.

If worship is designed to bring people into a conscious relationship with God and into a spiritual relationship with their brothers and sisters in Christ, then authentic black worship must be designed to bring black people into a conscious relationship with God and into a spiritual relationship with their brothers and sisters in Christ. And when you do that with black people, you cannot determine beforehand what is going to happen. Rigid rules of order give way to freedom — freedom of expression and freedom of movement.

Authentic black worship is celebration. Black worshippers celebrate the sovereignty of an almighty God. Life is hard. In all of our trials and troubles, God has been with us. God has brought us safe thus far. God is with us now. "If it wasn't for the Lord, what would I do?" God will give us the victory through Jesus Christ. We celebrate the sovereignty of our almighty God who "can do anything but fail".

Black people also celebrate our survival in a hostile environment. Before emancipation, the life of a black slave had worth as this nation built its economy on the blood and sweat and toil of black people. When emancipation struck down legal slavery, blacks lost their

worth as this country has never really found a need for free black people. It's alright to kill us, or for us to kill each other. Even our predominantly white churches have mixed feelings about a strong and viable black presence. But here we are! We have survived. Slavery, segregation, discrimination, injustice and bitter hatred. But here we are! We have survived! And we celebrate that.

How I got over,
 How I got over;
 My soul looks back and wonders,
 How I got over.

Authentic black worship is celebration.

And now abide, uniquely in authentic black worship, preaching, music, frenzy, freedom, celebration, prayer, ritual, emotion, etc. But the greatest of these, in black worship, is preaching. Preaching and the preacher is always at the center and core of the black church. Describing the black preacher's ability to tell a story, D. E. King recalls an incident in the ministry of John Jasper at Sixth Mt. Zion Baptist Church in Richmond, Virginia.

It is said that on one Easter Sunday morning, he was preaching and demonstrating how Jesus raised Lazarus from the grave. In the balcony was a white student from the Richmond Union Seminary with his son. John Jasper created an almost visible grave as he had Jesus bring Lazarus forth. Several times he said: "Jesus said to Lazarus, 'Come forth.'" The student's little boy said: "Dad, come on let's go." The student and the congregation were transfixed as Jasper had Jesus bring Lazarus forth. Finally, the son got up and said, "Daddy, let's go before he makes the man get up." That is spiritual creativity when a preacher is able to raise the dead on Sunday morning.¹⁶

Preaching the Gospel, telling the story and raising the dead, is at the heart of authentic worship in the black tradition.

This is but an introduction to any serious study of worship in the black church. It may well be concluded and summarized with a quotation from an address which Bobby McClain delivered at the National United Methodist Convocation on the Black Church in 1973.

Black worship...is based on the cultural and religious experience of the oppressed. Its liturgy and its theology are derived from the cultural and religious experience of black people struggling to appropriate the meaning of God and human life in the midst of human suffering. Worship in the black tradition is celebration of the power to survive and to affirm life, with all of its complex and contradictory realities. The sacred and the secular, Saturday night and Sunday morning, come together to affirm God's wholeness, the unity of life and his lordship over all of life. Such a tradition encourages responses of spontaneity and

improvisation, and urges worshipers to turn themselves loose into the hands of the existential here and how where joy and travail mingle together as part of the reality of God's creation. It is in this context that black people experience the life of faith and participate in the community of faith."¹⁷

In 1978, being black in America is yet a peculiar experience. Recent "progress" in race relations and the increased visibility of a black "middle-class" may delude many into believing that we have found the answer and that all will soon be well in this country. It just isn't so! Black people still live at the bottom of the employment and economic ladder. Justice is still not just as it relates to black Americans. In every relationship with white people, blacks are expected to assume an inferior and subordinate status. It is still a peculiar experience. It promises to be for some time to come. Thus it is still incumbent upon black churches to help black people come to terms with what it means to live and move and have our being in this oppressive society.

The renewal and enhancement of our worship, in terms of its music, its freedom, and its preaching, is but one aspect of the total renewal of the church for its mission and ministry with black people and the black community.

Didn't my Lord deliver Daniel,
 Deliver Daniel, Deliver Daniel,
 Didn't my Lord deliver Daniel,
 And why not every man?

FOOTNOTES

1. Grant S. Shockley, "Religious Education and the black Experience", *The Black Church Quarterly Journal* (Boston: The Black Ecumenical Commission of Massachusetts, 1972) Volume 11, Number 1, p. 94.

2. Leon L. Troy and Emmanuel L. McCall, "Black Church History," *The Black Christian Experience*, compiled by Emmanuel L. McCall (Nashville: Broadmen Press, 1972) p. 22.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 21.

4. Dearing E. King, "Worship in the Black Church," *The Black Christian Experience*, compiled by Emmanuel L. McCall (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1972) pp. 33-34.

5. Shockley, *op. cit.*, p. 96.

6. E. Franklin Frazier, *The Negro Church in America* (New York: Schocken Books, 1974) p. 13.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 86.

8. See Melville J. Herskovits, *The Myth of the Negro Past* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1941) pp. 1-2. He outlines the myth, which "validates the concept of Negro inferiority" in this country. It moves to the conclusion that "the Negro is thus a man without a past".

9. See Alex Haley, *Roots*, (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1976) This "saga of an American family", was long overdue and its impact on American race relations cannot now be measured.

10. W.E.B. DuBois, *The Negro Church* (Atlanta: Atlanta University Press, 1903) p. 5.

11. Henry Mitchell, "Two Streams of Tradition", *The Black Experience in Religion*, edited by C. Eric Lincoln (Garden City, New York: Anchor Books, 1974) p. 70.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 70.

13. W.E.B. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folks* (Greenwich, Connecticut: Fawcett Publications, 1961) pp. 141-142.

14. Gilbert H. Caldwell, "The Black Church in White Structures," *The Black Church Quarterly Journal* (Boston: The Black Ecumenical Commission of Massachusetts, 1972) Volume 1, Number 2, p. 14.

15. *Ibid.*

16. King, *op. cit.*, pp. 38-39.

17. William B. McClain, "What is Authentic Black Worship?" *Experiences, Struggles, and Hopes of the Black Church*, edited by James S. Gadsden (Nashville: Tidings, 1975) p. 70-71.

Songs of Salvation: Yesteryear's Music for Yesterday's Faith*

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*...some to church repair,
Not for doctrine, but the music there.
Alexander Pope, "An Essay on Criticism"*

*Jesus loves me, this I know,
For the Bible tells me so;
Little ones to him belong,
They are weak, but he is strong.*

*Jesus loves me—he who died,
Heaven's gate to open wide;
He will wash away my sin,
Let his little child come in.*

*Jesus loves me, loves me still,
Though I'm very weak and ill;
From his shining throne on high,
Comes to watch me where I lie.*

*Jesus loves me—he will stay
Close beside me all the way,
Then his little child will take
Up to heaven for his dear sake.*

A Hymn Reflects Theology

When St. Theresa read the *Confessions* of Augustine she observed, "I see myself in them reflected." This concept is the classic test of art—does it mirror or indirectly reveal the real life and faith of every man and woman?

But art also reflects culture. If we want to find out what a particular people who lived in a certain place and time believed, we can see it reflected in their art: literature, poetry, music painting, architecture, etc. Religious music is an art form. It expresses the

*Adapted from *I'm Saved, You're Saved—Maybe*, © 1977, with permission of John Knox Press, Atlanta.

theological convictions of the subculture that gave it birth. Thus, “Jesus Loves Me” reflects a time, a place, and a subculture: 1860s, America, evangelical Christianity. It was a time when parents took seriously the petition in the baptismal prayer for infants, “bring him safely through the perils of childhood,” because many children never made it.¹ It was a time in which Sunday School evangelism was flourishing and its evangelists, like Lewis Tappan, stated unashamedly, “You ask why I cannot keep my religion to myself? I will tell you, my dear brother. Because I see you are in danger of eternal damnation.”² As the times changed the “morbid” verses were dropped, but the song stuck. It is still the one song most associated with the Sunday school in evangelical circles. The song *reflects* the applied *theory* of the 1960s and it continues (in altered form) because...

A Hymn Is Also Reflex Theology

A “reflex” is a response controlled by the autonomic nervous system. You cannot control it directly. Just try to keep your leg from jumping when the doctor strikes it with the rubber hammer. Emotions too are reflex-like responses which get paired with persons, places, things, etc. After you’ve been to a great restaurant several times, simply thinking about it can cause you to get that good feeling inside and, like Pavlov’s dog, salivate.

Music is one powerful “conditioned stimulus.” Persons who were “soundly converted” when they sang “Almost Persuaded” will probably always feel some of those same emotions every time they sing or hear it. A whole segment of America and even the world had feelings of intense sadness associated with the Navy Hymn, “Eternal Father, Strong to Save,” because it was played repeatedly at President Kennedy’s funeral procession by the military band. Afterwards, every time they heard it they probably felt sad even though they couldn’t remember why. Thus, even though the death-fixated stanzas of “Jesus Loves Me” are eliminated, the music and chorus trigger the feelings of childhood in Sunday school for adults of all ages who grew up singing this song. These feelings can be good or bad, strong or weak.

When a congregation demands the “old” hymns, they aren’t referring to those written the longest time ago. They want the hymns that they enjoyed as they grew up, often regardless of the theology of the text. Hymns reflect the theology of the time and situation of their writing, but by association they become the reflexes of future generations of Christians who may have outgrown the theology of those hymns but not their emotional power.³

The Theological Critique of Religious Music

Dr. Alvin C. Porteous is only one of many theologians, hymnologists, and church leaders who decry the bad theology or heresy in hymns. In his article "Hymns and Heresy" this professor of theology and ethics attacked specific types of poor hymns. One type was the subjective hymn; here the worshiper's feelings and experiences are highlighted instead of the "objective" glory and grace of God. Porteous also condemns the sentimental hymn. In this type of hymn, the worshiper "gets familiar" with the God who is "high and lifted up," as is illustrated by the blasphemous remark of a movie star who referred to God as a "living doll." The escapist hymn, Porteous continues, is inadequate because it replaces human responsibility with a religion where God goes into hiding with the person to comfort and console. These neurotic souls should be roused, not indulged. Thus, we should be suspicious of hymns that center on "me" not "Him," "myself" not "Thyself," and "I" not "Thou."

This attitude is a familiar type of "high" church, theological or aesthetic evaluation. If equal time were allotted to those who still enjoy "those" hymns they'd probably say that they found the "other" hymns lacking the rhythm of the old favorites.

Moral Stage Theory

I would suggest that a fairer and more sympathetic way to understand religious music of all types is this: each reflects the beliefs and style of its moral Level (and stage) with all the strengths and weaknesses pertaining thereto. Lawrence Kohlberg, through his cross-cultural researches, found that all civilized persons develop in their moral understanding through a sequence of 6 stages which he groups into three Levels. How far one advances depends on a number of factors, but the sequence is always the same.

Children typically move through the Preconventional Level's (I) two stages: the first is reward and punishment, the second could be called "enlightened self interest." To use a clerical question: "Why *ought* one to be a good pastor?" Stage 1: because you will be liked, respected, and not hassled by your governing board (and *vice versa*). Stage 2: Because *if* you are you will get a raise each year, a good reputation, and be called to greater fields of service. Level I is a conditioned selfishness: "What's in it for me now, or in my future?"

Adolescence is when people typically enter Level II, Conventional (identification) Morality. Like adolescence, the frame of reference is one's peer group, its beliefs and behaviors. Stage 3, often called

“nice boy, good girl,” would answer, “You ought to be a good pastor because you will be respected by peers (fellow clergy), parishoners, and yourself.” Some older adolescents and adults move to stage 4, law and order, and would answer with what is an extension of stage 3’s reasons, “Because the standards of our profession specify this kind of behavior.” Most of the adults in a highly educated and developed country like ours do most of their moral reasoning at the Conventional Level: they are the “great silent majority.”

However, a small percentage (perhaps 10-15%) advance to Postconventional (principled) Morality (Level III). Its earlier stage (number “5”), “the social contract” does not see laws as ends or ultimate purposes but as means toward higher causes. Thus, the pastor’s answer from this stage would be something like, “I have contracted (Covenanted) with the church through my vows at ordination and with this congregation by accepting their call and so I must keep my word.” Stage 6 stretches to ultimate reasons which would motivate the same behavior even if the denominations were dissolved, the existence of the church were illegal, etc.: “God has called me: I believe this and so does the church.”

The Changing Conceptualization of Salvation

In *I’m Saved, You’re Saved — Maybe*, I put forth the thesis that the answer to the most important moral question, “Why ought I to be saved?,” is conceptualized at the moral stages. And, because the people in the Bible were at the various stages of faith development, a variety of Biblical arguments as to why God’s people *ought* to do or believe certain things can be found. The six stages with illustrative Biblical material are presented in the following table.

Perceptions of Salvation by Stages

Biblical illustrations of Stages

1. God My Rewarder-
Punisher

1. Now the earth was corrupt in God’s sight, and the earth was filled with violence. Gen. 6:11.

I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth. Gen. 9:11

2. God My Personal
Covenant Giver

2. “If my people . . . pray and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin . . . and heal their land.” 2 Chron. 7:14

“For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father also will forgive you; but if you do not forgive

- men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." Matt. 6:14-15
3. Christ Our Model 3. Abstain from all appearance of evil. I. Thess. 5:22 KJV
Give no offense to Jews or the Greeks or to the church of God, just as I try to please all men in everything I do, not seeking my own advantage, but that of many, that they may be saved. Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ. I Cor. 10:32-II:1
4. Christianity Our Belief-Behavior System 4. "A single witness shall not prevail against a man for any crime or for any wrong in connection with any offense that he has committed; only on the evidence of two witnesses, or of three witnesses, shall a charge be sustained." Deut. 19:15

But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised; if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. I Cor. 15:13-14

Do not be mismated with unbelievers. For what partnership have righteousness and iniquity? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? II Cor. 6:14
5. Christ, Redeemer of the World's Power Systems 5. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed." Luke 4:18

For we are not contending against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Eph. 6:12

They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. Is. 11:9
6. Christ the Universal Uniting Omega Point 6. So faith, hope, love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love. I Cor. 13:13

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or authorities — all things were created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the first-born from the dead, that in everything he might be pre-eminent. For in him all the fulness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross. Col. 1:15-20

If the moral stage salvation thesis is correct, we should expect hymns to reflect the six stages of moral reasoning and salvation conceptualization. However, we should remember that the moral Level of religious music is often *lower* than the moral Level of the singer if it elicits a reflex of childhood or adolescent experiences which were emotionally positive: yesteryear's music for yesterday's faith. On the other hand, people rarely like religious music above their moral Level unless the music itself attracts them. This attraction is most likely to occur in musical people in general, singers in particular. With the preceding ideas in mind, let us consider the music of the different moral Levels, each with its strengths and weaknesses.

Me, Myself, and I
Preconventional Morality
Developmental Level I

This moral Level operates at the emotional level: it stresses that which feels good now or later. It tends to be subjective and otherworldly, often with a survival mindset. What kind of art, specifically religious music, reflects this experience? It is the music of those who have been on the short end of life's proverbial stick. It may not be considered "good" art, but neither is much of the experience.

Consider "country" religious music today. Its ballads were "hurtin' songs" because the poor Southern whites who originated it were near the bottom of the social and economic heap and they knew it. The pre-agribusiness sharecropper and the pre-union (or union-influence) textile worker, coal miner, or trucker often spent his life just barely makin' it. Medical help wasn't sought till the tooth had to come out (if the moon was right), or the baby was startin' or "you hurt so bad you couldn't stand it." Red dirt, white lightnin', and blue songs when his girl was slippin' round were his trinity.

If that's what life was actually like, then the religious music of this moral Level could be expected to be as "earthy" in terms of religious feelings and rewards as country music's other songs were earthy about everything else.

Angel Band⁵

*My latest sun is sinking fast,
My race is nearly run,
My strongest trials now are past,
My triumph is begun*

*O come, Angel Band,
Come and around me stand,*

*Bear me away on your snowy wings to my immortal home,
Bear me away on your snowy wings to my immortal home.*

*I've almost gained my heavenly home,
My spirit loudly sings,
The holy ones, behold they come,
I hear the songs of wings.*

Of course, country music of all types has invaded the upper classes. The college generation as well as many middle-and upper-class persons have rediscovered bluegrass. The "Nashville sound" is even heard on FM. As lower class people have moved up the socio-economic ladder, they have taken their music with them. The tech school, college, and skilled-labor jobs may take the boy out of the country, but they haven't taken the country out of the boy.

The Negro spiritual also reflects Preconventional moral understanding. This music has been considered primitive, quaint, and even "good" art, but never good theology. These songs of salvation were too otherworldly, too unabashedly emotional; but they were great to sing, especially when one felt "down." Perhaps musical as well as racial factors put spirituals "in" and country "out" of good taste, but theologically it's hard to discriminate between the attitude in "Angel Band" (country) and that expressed in this authentic spiritual:

Carry Me Home⁶

*While trav'ling through this world below,
Where sore afflictions come,
My soul abounds with joy to know
That I will rest at home.*

*Yes, when my eyes are closed in death,
My body cease to roam,
I'll bid farewell to all below
and meet my friends at home.*

*And then I want these lines to be
Inscribed upon my tomb:
"Here lies the dust of S.R.P.,
His spirit sings at home."*

(Chorus)

*Carry me home, carry me home, when my life is o'er;
Then carry me to my long sought home where
pain is felt no more.*

“Carry Me Home” appears to be a far cry from the assertive and positive associations now linked with the spiritual “We Shall Overcome.” However, that civil rights rallying song had a peculiar adaptability; it could be interpreted at the Preconventional and Conventional moral stages. Black slaves could sing it as long as that “some day” was believed to be their reward in the next world, not this one. But the song was radically reinterpreted into the “our” Conventional mindset of the civil rights movement as the fulfillment of that hope in their time. The “we” now meant every “good” disenfranchised person, blacks especially.

Another source of Preconventional songs of salvation is evangelical Protestantism. Though many “gospel” hymn illustrations could be used that highlight “me,” and “my,” and “I” almost exclusively there are many others that can be sung, like “We Shall Overcome,” from either a Preconventional or a Conventional point of view.

Just as I am, Without One Plea

*Just as I am, without one plea
But that Thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou biddest me come to Thee,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come!*

*Just as I am, and waiting not
To rid my soul of one dark blot,
To Thee, whose blood can cleanse each spot,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come!*

*Just as I am, though tossed about
With many a conflict, many a doubt,
Fightings and fears within, without,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come!*

This “gospel” hymn elicits a Pavlovian response to evangelical Christianity, at least in America, because it is frequently sung when the invitation to come to Christ is given in revivals or crusades. It is not otherworldly, but like “Amazing Grace” it balances the singer’s personal condition, the “I,” with the gift of salvation through the cross of Christ. It was written by Charlotte Elliot, who was reared in the low or evangelical Anglican tradition. This woman, who was an invalid, wrote it out of frustration at not being able to “do something” to help her minister brother fund a school for the daughters of poor clergy. So she edited *The Invalid’s Hymnbook* and gave the income from the sale of this hymn, which was substantial, to help found St. Margaret’s Hall, Brighton. It is a song of salvation seen through the

eyes of a person with deep desire to help and to be relieved of her human misery. Perhaps the depression-associated inadequacy and conviction of sin are so closely related in this hymn that it says what thousands have felt and perceived since it was penned in 1834.⁷

A widow-senior-citizen received this letter from a forty-year-old pen pal:

Dear _____ ,

Many thanks for the thoughtful gifts and lovely cards for Christmas and birthday. Your kindness is surpassed only by your love for your Lord.

I'm glad to see that you are still quite active going hither and thither for your family and friends. I trust that the Lord will continue to give you the strength to carry on as you have for many years to come.

My holidays and special day were very blessed and happy. I'm most thankful for *this at this particular time in my life, for I seem to be buffeted each day by Satan. The period of trying seems to be an endless one, at least so long as we are in the flesh...*

This letter appears to be the expression of one who has turned into himself and now needs a good dose of God-centered, objective theology. However, this man had been paralyzed from the neck down for about 23 years and had spent all those years in an iron lung or on a rocking bed. From there he “witnessed” through spoken and written (dictated) correspondence. But he does get “down” and like many of the Psalms we read for consolation, he is honest about it. The content of his letter is similar to Psalm 88. Perhaps the Level or aspect of salvation you see depends not only on *who* but *how* you are.

We, Ourselves, and Us
Conventional Morality
Developmental Level II

With this Level we move from an emphasis on the singular (I) to the plural (us). Whereas faith was formerly motivated mostly by personal reward, now much of its drawing power is in Christ-the-model and then, faith-the-system. “Our” Jesus and faith are the supreme values, first because they are ours, and then because the system of belief and practice itself is worthy of our devotion.

Consider how country music responded to the Postconventional arguments about war and morality put forward by the flower generation. “The hippies are wrong”—not for any ideological

reason but because they don't think and act the way we do. Merle Haggard's "Okie from Muskogee," which sold over a million records, perfectly captured what many felt. In the verses the emphasis is on what "our group" doesn't do: use drugs, destroy draft cards, have love-ins, wear long hair, beads, or sandals. The chorus reiterates what "we" feel, value, and do:

*And I'm proud to be an Okie from Muskogee
A place where even squares can have a ball.
We still wave Ol' Glory down at the courthouse
White lightning's still the biggest thrill of all.**

Country and gospel music react against threats to the way they interpret the Bible in a similar fashion: with assertions about the validity of "our" way of interpreting the Bible and, by deduction, concluding that the other ways are wrong. Songs such as "The Great Speckle Bird" and "I Believe the Good Old Bible" assert that literal interpretation of the Bible (or at least the controversial portions) is what *our* kind of people proudly believe.

While the country boy was singing about the Speckle Bird, his middle-class equivalent might have been found in Sunday school singing about the "B-I-B-L-E, . . . the book for me." The mass of moral stage 3, songs, though, would be about Christ(ian)-the-model. Worshipers would pledge to be "true" to and be "like" Jesus, to follow him or his cross anywhere, and to be counted among his faithful followers. Military images with positive, rousing music are common.

Onward, Christian Soldiers

*Onward, Christian Soldiers, Marching as to war,
With the cross of Jesus Going on before:
Christ the royal Master leads against the foe;
Forward into battle, See, His banners go.*

(Chorus)

*Onward, Christian soldiers, Marching as to war,
With the cross of Jesus Going on before.*

The higher stage of Conventional morality, law and order, is also known by its songs of salvation. "Faith of Our Fathers!" "O Word of

*From the song OKIE FROM MUSKOGEE (written by Merle Haggard and Roy Edward Burris), Copyright © 1969 Blue Book Music, Bakersfield, California. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

God Incarnate," and songs about the Law of God where one finds salvation in the narrowest and broadest sense of that word are clearly stage 4. So are those hymns which express the substitutionary doctrine of the atonement.

There Is a Green Hill Far Away (stanza 3)

*He died that we might be forgiven,
He died to make us good,
That we might go at last to heaven,
Saved by His Precious blood.*

There Is a Fountain Filled with Blood

*There is a fountain filled with blood
Drawn from Emmanuel's veins;
And sinners, plunged beneath that flood,
Lose all their guilty stains.*

The World, the Universe, All
Postconventional Morality
Developmental Level III

At the final moral Level there first appears an awareness of Christian responsibility for complex social problems. Salvation, meaning freeing, preserving, and healing in all senses, includes claiming all peoples and systems for God. Chesterton's "O God of Earth and Altar" illustrates this broad application of salvation. Its author was reacting to the Boer War, which he viewed as naked aggression motivated by the discovery of diamonds, in addition to the already known presence of gold, in South Africa. The "prince and priest and thrall" (politicians and aristocracy, clergy, and commoners) were bringing damnation to themselves by either supporting this policy or by not speaking out against it—the classic division of sins of commission and omission. Read this song of salvation as if you were an English citizen around the turn of the century when newspapers were full of conflicting points of view about the Boer "problem."

O God of Earth and Altar

*O God of earth and altar, Bow down and hear our cry;
Our earthly rulers falter, Our people drift and die;
The walls of gold entomb us, The swords of scorn divide;
Take not Thy thunder from us, But take away our pride.*

*From all that terror teaches, From lies of tongue and pen;
From all the easy speeches That comfort cruel men;
From sale and profanation Of honor and the sword;
From sleep and from damnation, Deliver us, good Lord!*

*Tie in a living tether The prince and priest and thrall;
Bind all our lives together, Smite us and save us all;
In ire and exultation Aflame with faith, and free,
Lift up a living nation, A single sword to Thee.⁸*

If Britain specialized in the sins of colonialism, America excelled in the sins of economic exploitation (including slums) according to hymnwriter Walter Bowie. His "O Holy City, Seen of John," is a reminder that God's redemption includes the ghetto and the sweatshop.⁹

O Holy City, Seen of John

*O Holy City, seen of John, Where Christ, the Lamb, doth reign,
Within whose foursquare walls shall come No night, nor need,
nor pain,
And where the tears are wiped from eyes That shall not weep
again!*

*O shame to us who rest content While just and green for gain
In street and shop and tenement Wring gold from human pain,
And bitter lips in blind despair Cry, "Christ hath died in
vain!"*

*Give us, O God, the strength to build The city that had stood
Too long a dream, whose laws are love, Whose ways are
brotherhood,
And where the sun that shineth is God's grace for human good.*

*Already in the mind of God That city riseth fair.
Low, how its splendor challenges The souls that greatly dare—
Yea, bids us seize the whole of life And build its glory there.¹⁰*

During this period, the turn of the century, Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller were busy teaching Sunday school and bringing souls to Christ. The *New York Journal* and the *Pittsburgh Press* rejected Mr. Rockefeller's stage 3 and 4 limitation of what salvation was and what it demanded. From a stage 5 vantage point the *Press* said that "With his hereditary grip on the nation's pocketbook, his talks on spiritual matters are a tax on piety," while the *Journal* cartoonist depicted him teaching his class holding up a Bible, while ticker tape gushed from his mouth.¹¹

In stage 6, the higher level of Postconventional morality, songs of salvation emphasize Christ's uniting all things in himself. The

salvation orientation is not the substitutionary atonement, but Christus Victor,¹² Christ winning the world and the universe for himself, their ultimate source of unity.

God Is Working His Purpose Out

*God is working His purpose out As year succeeds to year;
God is working His purpose out, And the time is drawing near;
Nearer and nearer draws the time, The time that shall surely be,
When the earth shall be filled with the glory of God
As the waters cover the sea.*

*From utmost east to utmost west, Where's man's foot hath trod,
By the mouth of many messengers Goes forth the voice of God:
"Give ear to Me, ye continents, Ye isles, give ear to Me,
That the earth may be filled with the glory of God
As the waters cover the sea."*

*March we forth in the strength of god, With the banner of Christ
unfurled
That the light of the glorious gospel of truth May shine throughout
the world,
Fight we the fight with sorrow and sin To set their captives free,
That the earth may be filled with the glory of God
As the waters cover the sea.*

*All we can do is nothing worth unless God blesses the deed;
Vainly we hope for the harvest-tide Till God gives life to the
seed;
Yet nearer and nearer draws the time, The time that shall surely be,
When the earth shall be filled with the glory of God
As the waters cover the sea.*

Songs of Salvation

As we develop morally we move from feeling, to thinking, to doing; from personal subjectivity to group subjectivity to objectivity. This development can be seen in the gamut of songs of salvation. At one end are those in which God rewards the singer in some way in the present or in the future. In the middle the singer and his or her group affirm their faithfulness to Christ their leader, who has paid the just price for their sins. They elevate the Bible and its interpretation of that doctrine and aggressively move out to win others to this same victory over personal sin. Finally, salvation is widened to include the whole world and all its political, economic, and other systems. The worshipers sing their commitment to be a part of the war against social, economic, political, and any kind of injustice anywhere in the world. Who knows—maybe soon we will sing songs about salvation

which will say that God's law and justice should rule space. These Christians at the highest Levels are sure that God is at work winning ALL things, peoples, and systems to unity in himself. The Christian commitment to this task, not to nation, denomination, or self, is the highest loyalty.

FOOTNOTES

1. *The Book of Common Worship*, p. 124.
2. *The Big Little School*, p. 39.
3. Jack Renard Pressau, "Emotional Reactions to Innovations in Church Music," *Music Ministry* (January 1971), pp. 2-6, 42. Reprinted in *The Church Musician* (September 1971), pp. 46-52.
4. Alvin C. Porteous, "Hymns and Heresy," *Pastoral Psychology* (October 1966), pp. 46-47.
5. "Angel Band," text by Gaby I. Adams.
6. *Spiritual Folk-Songs of Early America*, ed. George P. Jackson (Locust Valley, N.Y.: Augustin, 1953), pp. 112-113. "S.R.P." are the initials of Professor S.R. Penick.
7. Albert Edward Bailey, *The Gospel in Hymns* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1950), pp. 182-183.
8. "O God of Earth and Altar" by G. K. Chesterton (1873-1936). By permission of Oxford University Press.
9. *The Gospel in Hymns*, p. 571.
10. "O Holy City, Seen of John" by Walter Russell Bowie. Used by permission of Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc.
11. Raymond B. Fosdick, *John D. Rockefeller, Jr.: A Portrait* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1956), pp. 126-127.
12. Some other hymns couched in the Christus Victor perspective are:
 "Welcome, Happy Morning!" by Venantius Fortunatus, 530-609
 "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God" by Martin Luther, 1529
 "Am, I am Soldier of the Cors" by Isaac Watts, 1724
 "Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus" by George Duffield, 1858
 "Onward, Christian Soliders" by Sabine Baring-Gould, 1864
 "Thine Is the Glory" by Edmond Budry, 1884.

Book Reviews

Mary, the Feminine Face of the Church. Rosemary Radford Ruether. Westminster, 1977. 106 pages. \$3.65.

"The *feminine* face of the church," "the *feminization* of American culture," these are catchy titles in a decade of growing awareness of women. But what do the authors mean by their key word, *feminine*? In Ann Douglas' book, the meaning derived from her use of it (she nowhere defines it), is pejorative. It is equated with *sentimental*, with *weakness*, with the "Total Woman" who gains secondary power through manipulation of that place declared hers, the home and the buyer's side of the cash register. Ruether begins using the word in its strongest sense. It is rooted in cosmic and biblical images which she sets against the stereotypical sentimentalized "feminine." In her chapter on protestantism, however, Ruether agrees that the image of Jesus is feminized, and here Ruether and Douglas agree: "This feminized Christ may have something to do with the secularization of public power in modern society. [74] Ruether is not satisfied with such a distortion, however, and finishes her book with a strong appeal for a reevaluation of women in the church and the role of feminine symbols. Ruether's last two chapters pick up the cosmic theme of the first chapter and suggest, rightly I think, that a just evaluation of the feminine provides a needed corrective to basic theological models. Briefly, the nurturing matrix, from which are derived both male sky and female earth gods, is a model of empowerment rather than of demanding power, of mediation and service rather than domination and enslavement. In such a context, Jesus is also better understood. The revolution

Jesus inaugurated was an effort to break down patriarchal models. Jesus taught true meditation and service that is not servile.

Lest I become subject to my own criticism, I describe the archetypal feminine as matrix, as power at its purest, that is, as potency which is simultaneously enabling. Both action and passion then arise from it. When action is ascribed to the male and passion or suffering to the female, the basis is laid for stereotyping men and women. Ruether, in barest outline, traces the history of western patriarchal religion, a religion in which men act, think, dominate, and women passively receive. The figure of Mary acquires images through which men choose to regard women. Nevertheless, the ancient nurturing power, early ascribed to Mary, remains. Mary and the Church mirror each other. The fundamental feminine image is too strong, too real, to be lost, however much it may have been overlaid. That image is there, suggests Ruether, to help men and women to develop more fully. It is there also to teach a receptivity that is not merely passive, but itself enabling of growth. Ruether concludes:

...women as the church represent that whole of redeemed humankind which can only be liberated and reconciled when the victims have been empowered to be persons and when power itself has been transformed.[86]

The book is intended to be used in study groups. The twelve chapters average five brief pages followed by two questions for discussion. Page 89-106 comprise a section by D.M. Stine, "For the Leaders of Study Groups." There is no bibliography and the readers are expected to be very busy and about junior

high level. Not much more is expected of the leaders. Those who want to know more about any chapter receive no bibliographical assistance beyond *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, and further biblical references. A bibliography of five books per chapter would enrich this handbook. Especially useful would be references to such fundamental works as Raymond E. Brown's *The Birth of the Messiah* [Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Co., 1977], to Charles Long's *Alpha* and Mircea Eliade's *Primitives to Zen*.

The book is, nevertheless, challenging in spite of oversimplification and simplistic theological errors. [On pages 59-60, Ruether speaks of the Chalcedonian formula as advocating a "mingling" of the two natures of Christ, and on 70, she attributes this doctrine to Luther and Calvin. Luther's language occasionally lends itself to such a notion, e.g., his infamous sugar-water analogy, but Calvin insisted upon the absolute distinction of the two natures and the non-communicability of their attributes.] Historians of religion will probably object to the telescoping of various cosmological myths into one simple pattern. Biblical scholars will find Ruether's discussion lacking in the full-range of feminine images. Biblical theologians will take issue with Ruether's treatment of the Incarnation [35]. She argues that the virginal conception was "substantially the same as that of...great heroes of Israel." Was it not, rather, substantially different since all of Israel's heroes had human fathers, however "miraculous" their conceptions? The virginal conception of Jesus provides the basis for the two natures Christology as against the adoptionism that Ruether advocates.

These points, however, provide further matter for scholars to dispute. The questions and projects at the ends of the chapters are more practically oriented and are directed to lay-people. The proof of the integrity of the book in its primary theses will lie in parish use. The weakest

portion is the Study Guide which ought to provide greater breadth and depth for those leaders who wish to prepare themselves thoroughly.

Ruether asked three basic questions: "Is there any basis for feminine symbols in Christianity [11]?" "How is the veneration of Mary related to Biblical religion?" And lastly, has Protestantism overlooked ideas important for the integrity of the church? [12] This last question includes a challenge to Roman Catholics and Orthodox who have used mariology to keep women "in their place." Ruether challenges all Christians to reevaluate the mother of Jesus and consequently, the feminine face of the church. Ultimately, not only the Christian lives of men and women, but the foundations of theology, that is our thought about God, will be enriched.

—Jill Raitt

U.S. Foreign Policy and Christian Ethics.
John C. Bennett and Harvey Seifert.
Westminster, 1977. 235 pp. \$7.95.

Reluctantly this reviewer recently removed from the curriculum a course entitled "Christian Ethics and International Relations." It was probably a mistake, at a time when apathy and even isolationism afflict our society and our churches despite increasingly inescapable global interdependence. Students, alumni—and faculty—have a powerful substitute in this persuasive, provocative collaboration.

Those who know the authors, in person or in print, will acknowledge their expertise in both poles of the title. Those who know them well will recognize divergent interests and perspectives beneath their common commitment. In the Preface, Bennett and Seifert identify their respective contributions and claim that "there are differences of emphasis between us only on how close an approximation to Christian goals can be expected of nations even in the long run..." (12). In point of fact, the authors wrote only one chapter jointly, the one on "Personal Options and Modern War,"

and their assignments are as significant as the obvious tensions between modified pacifism and Niebuhr realism.

This volume is invaluable for its "Theological and Ethical Presuppositions," for its "Evaluation of Military Deterrence," for its "Political Structures of Interdependence." It is invaluable for its factual data on international economics, on Western exploitation of physical and human resources, on "America's Political Role in the World." It is of course invaluable for its insights into "Morality and National Interest:" e.g., "Beyond the social and economic and political and strategic reasons for the rich aiding the poor is the simple motive of humanitarian conscience" (Sen. Fulbright) (84).

Three conclusions emerge with compelling force: (a) "the desirability of a *material* standard of living lower than the developed nations now have" (209)—in exchange for more creative, personal, spiritual values; (b) the conviction "that the emergence of a new world system (built on cooperation) is a matter of necessity, not preference" (205); and (c) the incredible hope, the impossible dream, that the church—for all its lassitude and pious platitudes—can yet inspire "vast unused resources in both individuals and society" (216) to save the world from itself.

—Creighton Lacy

Decision Making and The Bible. H. Edward Everding, Jr. and Dana W. Wilbanks. Judson, 1975. 160 pages. \$5.95.

In *Decision Making and The Bible* Everding and Wilbanks present a clearly written handbook for relating biblical study and ethical reflection to practical decision making. The readable and unassuming format of the text belies its sophisticated biblical and ethical methodologies. Drawing heavily upon the work of H. Richard Niebuhr in the formulation of a "response style" for relating biblical text and decisional situation to the individual decision

maker, the authors develop a "case study" strategy for affecting the biblical-ethical connection for decisions made within the Christian faith community.

In brief but well supported dismissals of two all too common decisional styles, Everding and Wilbanks opt for a relational mode of decision making. Both the prescriptive/rules style and the formal/rationalization style deal in a "linear" mode with the text, decision maker, and situation. This mode, they judiciously claim, preempts valued dialogic interaction with both text and situation. The response style, they argue, facilitates a dynamic interpenetration of biblical resources and situation setting in the decision making self.

Written for use with groups most often calling for such a practical tool for biblical/ethical reflection, groups within the typical parish church, the authors speak with equal clarity to persons in the ranks of the professional clergy. It should be noted that in neither content nor methodology do the creators of this manual condescend to their reading and practical audience.

One of the strengths of this text is to be found in the balance achieved between practical application and technical methodology. Exegesis of both text and situation becomes an inviting task for the decision maker, a task which necessarily precedes in both reason and function the decisional act. Another strength, seen from our personal point of view, stands in the authors' tolerance of both biblical and moral ambiguity while evidencing no lessening of methodological clarity. A subject index at the end of the text reveals the topical inclusion of many grating ethical issues in contemporary church life. Inclusion of each within the context of specific decisional situations serves to illuminate the response style of biblical/ethical hermeneutic. In this rests an additional strength of the text.

It would be unfair both to the authors and to text itself to present a critical assessment of this work without identifying what we believe to be a

singular shortcoming of the book. The treatment of the response style stands without fault. Appropriate space and concern focus on the crucial elements of this style: the centrality of faith, informing images of God and human responsibility, and the communal context and reference for Christian deciding. The shortcoming is one of omission rather than of commission: the authors do not provide the readers with a clear grasp of the constituent elements of an actual decisional moment. We mean by this those ingredients which adhere to form the value engendering decisional act itself: conscience, assessment and ranking of values, guessing, motivation, intention, potential consequence, evaluation of actual consequence and subsequent reexamination of the decision, and a theological notion of "grace." To be certain, the text deals effectively with several of these elements in discussions of case studies related to the response style. Still, this work would increase in practical value with the inclusion of a brief analysis of the decisional moment itself and its appropriate constituent elements. Perhaps this is planned for a second edition. This single deficiency notwithstanding, *Decision Making and The Bible* deserves the considered attention of professional clergyfolk and the enthusiastic use by laity of the Church. We have here a practical and timely tool for constructing a healthy biblical/ethical style of decision making in the Christian context.

—William M. Finnin, Jr.

**THE
DUKE
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The Future of Monogamous Marriage From a Christian Perspective*

by JAMES H. PHILLIPS**

Professor Emeritus, Duke Department of Religion

It is quite apparent that monogamous marriage in this country is in a perilous state. Indeed, as the renowned Joseph Fletcher warned, "In the opinion of some, it is actually getting close to terminal illness."¹ Another interpreter, a psychiatrist who has spent a lifetime in the field of marriage and family therapy, states, "From where I sit, the picture of marriage and family in present-day society is a gloomy one."² Dr. Urie Bronfenbrenner of Cornell University, recognized as one of the foremost educators of our time, was referred to in a recent *New York Times* article as seeing monogamous marriage and the family in a "desperate decline."³

Perhaps the most obvious evidence of the troubled condition of marriage is the divorce factor. For every three marriages performed in this country in 1972 there was one marriage terminated by divorce. Prof. Max Lerner of Brandeis University predicted in that year that "the national rate in the decades ahead will probably become one out of two."⁴ Actually the rate was more accelerated than he could know because only four years later that proportion had almost been realized.⁵ Vance Packard's startling prediction ten years ago may prove to be more realistic. On the basis of his very extensive survey of college students and young adults, reported in *The Sexual*

*This essay was originally presented as a lecture in the University's Continuing Education program. In preparing it for publication I am greatly indebted to the editor, Charles K. Robinson, for his encouragement to expand this essay and his own contribution of helpful editorial revisions, especially on Paul and Jesus.

** Ed. note: James H. ("Jay") Phillips may not be personally known to many readers of the *Review*. He is, however, very "personally known" and gratefully remembered by hundreds of Duke undergraduate alumni who treasure "what" they learned—and perhaps even more from "whom" they learned. (See also Dr. Phillips' review article, "Religion and Human Sexuality" in Book Reviews section.

1. Harold H. Hart, ed., *Marriage: For and Against* (New York: Hart Publishing Co., 1972), p. 189.

2. Nathan B. Ackerman in *ibid.*, p. 13.

3. "The Family in Transition: Challenge From Within," Nov. 27, 1977.

4. *Marriage: For and Against*, p. 98.

5. *Statistical Abstracts of the U.S.*, Bureau of the Census, 1976, p. 51.

Wilderness,⁶ he concluded that the marriages made in the U.S. in the late 1960's have about a 50-50 chance of remaining nominally intact. I should add hopefully, however, that some authorities believe that the current rate is leveling off.

But even the current divorce rate does not tell the whole story. William J. Lederer⁷ reports in *Marriage: For and Against* on a research project which used as test cases 601 couples, who on the average had been married 8.7 years. Husbands and wives were interviewed separately and confidentially. Here are several key questions they were asked with the author's corresponding conclusions:

The first question was: "Do you love your spouse?"

Only 11 percent of the sampling answered unhesitating, "Yes, I love my spouse."

The next group, consisting of 12 percent of the total, delayed for considerable time, hemmed and hawed, and then said approximately, "Well, let's say we get along better than most."

The largest segment, 43 percent, gave what Dr. Jackson called "defensive replies." For example, "I don't like Mary because she's mean and vindictive. But I appreciate the fact that she works hard at looking after the kids."

The wife, Mary, said, "Harry and I have lots of arguments. He drives me and the kids crazy. But I can't deny he's a good provider and is generous with what he makes."

Members of this group (the 43 percent), when required to list what they liked and what they disliked about their spouses, listed more bad characteristics that good.

The remaining 34 percent frankly said that their marriages were unsatisfactory.

All the couples—from the "happy" ones down to the outspokenly discontented—were asked the following as the last question: *If you could wave a magic wand which would divorce you and your spouse immediately, without inconvenience, without suffering to anyone in the family, without social censure or expense, would you wave the magic wand and get a divorce?*

Almost three quarters of them answered in the affirmative in some degree.

6. Vance Packard, *The Sexual Wilderness* (New York: David McKay Co., 1968), p. 284. Cf. Chs. 1-4 and especially Ch. 18.

7. Dr. Lederer is co-author, with Don D. Jackson, of *The Mirages of Marriage* (New York: W.W. Norton Co., 1969), which is considered by many psychiatrists and psychologists to be the most realistic and helpful work on marriage published in recent years. The research project referred to above was one of the results of a 4½ year study for the publication of this book.

The survey concluded that over half of all married couples stay together, not because they love each other, but because divorce is too painful, difficult or expensive; and that three quarters of all married couples frequently and seriously think about divorce.⁸

Little wonder perhaps that Mervyn Cadwallader explodes:

Contemporary marriage is a wretched institution. It spells the end of voluntary affection, of love freely given and joyously received. Beautiful romances are transmuted into dull marriages: eventually the relationship becomes constricting, corrosive, grinding and destructive. The beautiful love affair becomes a bitter contract.⁹

And one commentator, Kathrin Perutz, gives a less than subtle hint to her treatment as she entitles her book *Marriage is Hell!*

Are these commentaries accurate? Is marriage hell? Is it anachronistic? Is monogamous marriage on the way out? What are the marriage and family authorities saying? I can only summarize at this point, although I shall be documenting opinions later when I deal with specific subjects. The views of most of these authorities can be generalized as follows: They do not believe that marriage and the family are headed for extinction, but they are convinced that they are experiencing changes in terms of new forms, and many of them have gone beyond the role of social scientists and have become apologists, sometimes even zealots, in endorsing and prescribing those changes. For example, Herbert A. Otto, Chairman of the National Center for the Exploration of Human Potential, affirms with confidence:

After five thousand years of human history, man is now at the point where he can create marriage and family possibilities uniquely suited to his time, place, and situation. It is my suggestion that the 'option to pluralism' offers a compelling challenge; namely, that we develop new forms of marriage and family which might conceivably add more warmth and intensity to human existence than we ever dreamed possible.¹⁰

Or as Sidney Jourard, Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Florida, puts it:

Polygyny, polyandry, homosexual marriages, permanent and temporary associations, anything that has been tried in any time and place represents a possible mode for existential exploration by men and women

8. *Marriage: For and Against*, pp. 135-36.

9. Quoted from *Current*, February, 1967, in *The Family in Search of a Future*, by the editor, Herbert A. Otto (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1970), p. 3.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 9.

who dare to try some new design when the conventional pattern has died for them. Not to legitimize such experimentation and exploration is to make life in our [plural] society unlivable for an increasing proportion of the population.¹¹

Alvin Toffler in *Future Shock* puts it more shockingly. Referring to the debate between extreme pessimists who predict the monogamous family's demise and optimists who argue that the family is at the beginning of a Golden Age he concludes that neither is likely but rather that the family "may break up, shatter, only to come together again in weird and novel ways."¹²

In order to bring this contemporary picture into focus on my topic, let me raise this question: What is the relation of the *Christian* tradition to this *cultural* phenomenon? As would be generally acknowledged, the Christian tradition has been largely responsible for, and supportive of, Western culture's monogamous family pattern. Indeed, to this tradition are attributed many of the faults in that pattern, and critics from all directions attack this tradition, especially its support of a patriarchal structure, its demands for permanence, and its claims for sexual exclusivity.

Now, how shall those of us who are in the Christian tradition respond? Shall we concede the traditional monogamous family pattern to be anachronistic, and thereby accommodate the winds of change? Or shall we probe further the traditional Christian claims for the validity of monogamy, and firmly resist the advocates of change who assault its integrity? These questions are the main inquiry of this paper. It is hoped that a juxtaposition of opinions and convictions on these matters may help us come to grips with the vital issues and lay a basis for further reflection and response by readers beyond the scope of this paper.

First, let us consider the *patriarchal* structure of traditional monogamy. Here the Western family tradition, up until the modern age, had a tap root in the biblical tradition. "Since marriage was patriarchal—*i.e.*, father-centered—among the people of the Bible, the family was a community of persons, related by ties of marriage and kinship, and ruled by the authority of the father."¹³ Marriage, by divine ordinance, was a covenant between two families and was maintained by its high sense of corporate responsibility, which in

11. *Ibid.*, p. 46.

12. Alvin Toffler, *Future Shock* (New York: Random House, Bantam Books, 1971), p. 239.

13. *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, Vol. II (Nashville: Abingdon, 1962), p. 240.

turn was sanctioned and supported directly by four of the Ten Commandments. A premium was placed upon female virginity before marriage; and adultery by the wife was a crime so serious that it warranted the death penalty. The central issue involving both virginity and adultery was the assurance to the husband that any male child born to him was his own, for the continuity of the blood line.

The woman's destiny was in truth—as Freud was later to reaffirm—tied to her anatomy and a barren womb was regarded as a curse. One recalls the poignant cry of Rachel, “Give me children, or I shall die!” Yet, while subordinate to her husband, the fruitful wife commanded respect and esteem in the family system. And in certain instances, she even commanded equal status with her husband: The Fifth Commandment required honor from her children—“Honor thy father and thy mother.” And the proverbial wife who was “far more precious than jewels” and whose “children rise up and call her blessed” has come resounding down through the centuries as the female image most desired, *i.e.*, until mid-20th century! In this society children were cherished, female as well as male. It is a significant fact that there is not one shred of evidence that female infanticide was ever practiced, as it was in some other ancient societies—notably Canaanite and Roman.

These were the central features of the Israelite family system, a way of life which, with significant qualifications, has gained the plaudits of distinguished authorities, such as D. Sherwin Bailey, who comments that “in spite of manifest imperfections, the Jewish sexual ethic and conception of marriage and family life were never surpassed in antiquity, and were maintained with remarkable consistency.”¹⁴ And most of these features passed into Christian practice.

It can be argued plausibly that the relative scarcity of teachings of Jesus on the family, in contrast to the proliferation of family references in the Old Testament, can be viewed as evidence of Jesus' *general* affirmation of this tradition, with several notable *exceptions* regarding adultery and divorce, which we shall refer to later. Though

14. *Common Sense About Sexual Ethics: A Christian View* (New York: Macmillan, 1962), p. 19. Dr. Bailey's two initial books, *The Mystery of Love and Marriage* (New York: Harper & Row, 1962) and *Sexual Relations in Christian Thought* (New York: Harper & Row, 1959), are widely regarded as creating a breakthrough toward a more sensitive and constructive Christian theological understanding of sexuality. Bailey's interpretation moves toward complementarity and coequality in a Christian view of the marriage relation.

remaining unmarried himself, Jesus in one of his most significant teachings endorsed the sanction of complementary coequality in marriage as the will of the Creator: “*God made them male and female. For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife and the two shall become one flesh. So they are no longer two but one flesh.*” (Mk. 10:6-8) This teaching was taken by the Church to preclude polygamy. But contemporary theological reflection has also seen in this teaching the key to the “one-flesh doctrine” of human sexuality. Bailey comments: “On the finite plane Man, the image or reflection of God, is found to be essentially a ‘being-in-relation’—just as true human existence is essentially ‘existence-in-community.’ The ‘adam’ is not a single human individual, but a mysterious sexual duality of which man and woman are the relational poles.” And he concludes significantly: “Here is the clue to the meaning of human sexuality.”¹⁵

If we add to this salient teaching the illuminating and radical insight of St. Paul when he declared, “There is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:28)—a teaching set within the broader context of his treatment of freedom and equality in Christ—we have a significant biblical frame of reference that can provide a positive basis for ethics on human sexuality and man-woman relationship. It is, in my estimate, one of the great tragedies of history that neither teaching became a part of the legacy that formed the Western sexual tradition.

To the contrary, the Church, under the impact—note you well!—of non-biblical influences for the most part, became pro-celibate and anti-sexual in its teaching of a “higher” way. And the Church, even in its Protestant forms, perpetuated a patriarchal family system involving subordination of female under male—a system that has had lasting effects, many of them, admittedly, ill effects.¹⁶

15. *Ibid.*, p. 80. Bailey’s theological interpretation is supported by the sensitive nuances of the Hebrew language (*‘adam*=humankind; *‘ish*=male; *‘ishshah*=female), especially as employed in the Priestly creation story. See Madelon (Micki) Nunn, “Christology or Male-olatry?” *The Duke Divinity School Review*, Vol. 42, no. 3 (Fall 1977), p. 147, n. 3.

16. This statement does not intend to minimize the gains to marriage from the Reformers’ attack on the celibate ethic. For an illuminating treatment of these gains see “Theological Reflections on the Reformation and the Status of Women” by David C. Steinmetz, *The Duke Divinity School Review*, Vol. 41, no. 3 (Fall 1976), pp. 197-207. But in a footnote Prof. Steinmetz admits that Protestant theology taught “the subordination of women to men within the context of family and the home” while claiming that this theology moderated traditional practice—i.e., for Protestants—and formed inherently the rationale for women’s eventual liberation.

St. Paul has been pointed to by many writers as the chief culprit. A writer in a *Newsweek* issue¹⁷ quoted this passage from I Timothy 2:11-14: "Let a woman learn in silence with all submissiveness. I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over men; she is to keep silent. For Adam was formed first, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. Yet, woman will be saved through bearing children." Then, the writer added: "Among today's liberated women, of course, St. Paul rates a high place on the list of all-time male chauvinists—and for good reason."

Admittedly, any honest and appropriate "defense" of Paul will be partly ambiguous. And unfortunately a full consideration of Pauline teachings relevant to our concerns here obviously cannot be undertaken in this essay; but a few observations may at least help us toward getting a realistic and fair perspective on Paul that is much needed.

In the first place, there has been a wide consensus among scholars that Paul is *not the author* of I Timothy. It is scarcely fair to Paul to hold him responsible for what later interpreters, such as the unknown author of I Timothy, have made of Paul's teaching. Secondly, while there is still legitimate room for debate concerning the authorship of Ephesians, we may in any case note the ironical fact that interpreters—mostly males—have over the centuries been more prone to emphasize "Wives, be subject to your husbands" (5:22), and have tended to neglect emphasis on "Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church" (5:25) and "Let each one of you love his wife as himself" (5:33)!

Thirdly, we need to note that in the passages in I Corinthians in which Paul himself is indeed setting forth a *subordinate* role for women, Paul is not appealing to the authority of a revelation from Jesus Christ. Rather he appeals to his own personal right to prescribe standards for church life in the churches he has established (not unlike Wesley's prescriptions of rules for his societies!) and to other kinds of "authority" which are *not as such Christian*: "nature," "the (Old Testament) law" and "the traditions." Consider respectively:

Judge for yourselves; is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered? Does not *nature* itself teach you that for a man to wear long hair is degrading to him, but if a woman has long hair, it is her pride? For her hair is given to her for a covering. (11:13-15)

17. November 2, 1970, p. 8.

As in all the churches of the saints, the women should keep silence in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak but should be subordinate, *even as the law says*. (14:33b-34)

I command you because you remember me in everything and maintain *the traditions* even as I have delivered them to you. But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a woman is her husband, and the head of Christ is God. (11:2-3)

If these passages are viewed on their own terms and in their own context, it should be clear that in assigning a subordinate role to women Paul was neither claiming to express a directly Christian revelation nor prescribing binding legislation for all future time.

Finally, and most importantly, any over-arching perspective on Paul should focus on the point that at the center of Pauline theology is the *vision of a liberating community* of faith and love in which each person—male, female, husband, wife—has equal status before Christ and neighbor. Paul accordingly depicts a completely *co-equal* and *complementary* pattern of sexual relationship *as given by God* (I Cor. 7:3-4): “The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and *likewise* the wife to her husband. For the wife does not rule over her own body, but the husband does; *likewise* the husband does not rule over his own body, but the wife does.”¹⁸ It is indeed striking to see that in the very midst of arguing from “the traditions” and the teachings of “nature,” Paul feels constrained to remind his readers that “nevertheless” in the Christian understanding of man-woman relationships there is co-equality and *fully reciprocal interdependence* between male and female (I Cor. 11:11-12): “Nevertheless, *in the Lord* woman is not independent of man nor man of woman. For as woman was made from man, so man is now born of woman. And all things are *from God*.”

Jesus expressed the view (Mk. 10:5) that the hardness of male hearts—contrary to the revelation of the will of God—lay behind the

18. The theme of mutual rights in sexual relationships is a prominent one in current secular literature on sexuality, although it is likely that most authorities would be amazed to learn that, of all writers, St. Paul antedated them by nearly twenty centuries! The famed team Masters and Johnson in *The Pleasure Bond: A New Look at Sexuality and Commitment* (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1974), describe this generation’s progression in a knowledgeable husband’s sexual responsibility from “doing something *to* his wife” to “doing something *for* her” sexually. But in their sexual therapy they insist upon one further step toward sexual fulfillment, namely, the *mutual* attitude of achieving fulfillment “with each other, not to or for each other.” (Pp. 5-10) This book is highly recommended also for its emphasis upon the essential need of commitment and the benefits of fidelity in facilitating “the pleasure *bond*” in marriage.

Jewish law (Deut. 24:1) for divorce as a uniquely male privilege. Perhaps similarly the hardness of male hearts may have had something to do with the fact that over the centuries Paul has predominantly been seen as the vehicle of a divine revelation establishing once-and-for-all the rightful dominance of men over women. A more just view of Paul will recognize him as a man of his time who, in part, accommodated his teaching on man-woman relationship to his own inherited Jewish traditions and the existing conditions of society in the Roman world. But it will also more strongly contend that, through his understanding of and faith in Jesus Christ, Paul became a man beyond his time who has offered, for those with eyes to see, an *egalitarian vision of male-female complementarity as the gift of God in Christ*—a vision that may still lure us toward fulfillment.

With this biblical background, let me become contemporary and make a few observations about the relevance of this egalitarian vision to the diagnoses and prescriptions of several modern secular “prophets.”

One of the sanest treatments of marriage, in terms of “the way it really is, was, and will be,” is *The Future of Marriage* by Jessie Bernard, widely recognized as one of America’s leading sociologists. “The what it is” is aptly summarized as his and her marriages, “His, not bad, and getting better: hers, not good, and badly in need of change.” And she cites the evidence:

Because we are so accustomed to the way in which marriage is structured in our society, it is hard for us to see how different the wife’s marriage really is from the husband’s, and how much worse. But, in fact, it is. There is a very considerable research literature reaching back over a generation which shows that: more wives than husbands report marital frustration and dissatisfactions; more report negative feelings; more wives than husbands report marital problems; more wives than husbands consider their marriages unhappy, have considered separation or divorce, have regretted their marriages; and fewer report positive companionship.... Understandably, therefore, more wives than husbands seek marriage counseling; and more wives than husbands initiate divorce proceedings.¹⁹

This evidence propels her to her task: “So now to the first order of business: [the reader hears it as a shout!] To upgrade the wife’s marriage.” And that is what this book is all about.

And I am moved to say that I see nothing but full support from the biblical egalitarian vision for that! Equality, personhood, self-fulfillment,...these are all legitimate claims and concerns. And

19. Jessie Bernard, *The Future of Marriage* (New York: World, 1972), pp. 26-27.

especially consistent with this egalitarian vision is Bernard's "shared-role pattern," which she prefers to "role-reversal," especially where children are involved. But she warns that it takes a considerable amount of sophistication to understand, let alone to accept, the logic and the justice of the shared-role ideology, and a considerable amount of goodwill to implement it. To the fear that this ideology would depolarize the sexes she provides this very interesting rejoinder:

If we are thinking in terms of maleness and femaleness rather than masculinity and femininity, we have no cause for alarm. I am convinced that women and men are intrinsically so different that nothing we do will obliterate or even reduce the differences. I do not think men have to worry that women will become unsexed or women, that men will. In fact, the freer we become in allowing both sexes to be themselves, the more the fundamental and ineradicable differences will show up. I think that women will find maleness better than masculinity and men will find femaleness better than femininity.²⁰

Though Jessie Bernard probably would be astounded at the comparison, I think this is a profound modern—secular, to be sure—exegetical treatment of the biblical text, "God made them male and female," and that her "shared-role ideology" is a practical implementation of becoming "one-flesh."

In many important respects, I think this can also be said about the O'Neill's best seller *Open Marriage*. (There are some exceptions to this over-all assessment. Several qualifications will be introduced later in this essay, and the most notable exception will be dealt with in the final section on the exclusivity of traditional monogamous marriage.) Contrary to a spate of current books that denigrate monogamous marriage, the O'Neills, after coming to grips with the question, "Why Save Marriage at All?" (the title of Chapter 1), reaffirm monogamy and proceed to build a model they call "open marriage," which "is expanded monogamy, retaining the fulfilling and rewarding aspects of an intimate in-depth relationship with another, yet eliminating the restrictions we were formerly led to believe were an integral part of monogamy."²¹ especially intriguing is their concept and development of "synergy," which is defined as "one plus one equals more than two, that the sum of the parts working together is greater than the sum of the parts working

20. *Ibid.*, pp. 255-56.

21. George and Nena O'Neill, *Open Marriage* (New York: M. Evans & Co., 1972), p. 43.

separately.”²² The following paragraph demonstrates the working of synergy. Open marriage is:

a relationship in which the partners are committed to their own and to each other's growth. It is an honest and open relationship of intimacy and self-disclosure based on the equal freedom and identity of both partners. Supportive caring and increasing security in individual identities makes possible the sharing of self-growth with a meaningful other who encourages and anticipates his own and his mate's growth. It is a relationship that is flexible enough to allow for the change and that is constantly being renegotiated in the light of changing needs, consensus in decision-making....and openness to new possibilities for growth. Obviously, following this model often involves a departure, sometimes radical, from rigid conformity to the established husband-wife roles and is not easy to effect.²³

Again, this is what I would call the biblical egalitarian vision in a new idiom! The intrinsic virtues of that vision reappear here: equal freedom within the context of interdependence; equal worth that assures individual identity and the satisfaction of essential personal needs, but a worth that is placed under a higher goal larger than either one's desires would command alone; and growth, both self and mutual, toward that goal that is supported by deep and persistent caring.

A major criticism, for me, of *Open Marriage* is that its focus is on the married couple *alone*. How to picture *children* within their model appears, by omission, to be of no concern. Neither does the role of the family within the larger context of *society* emerge as a matter of concern. Apparently the authors themselves were sensitive to these omissions, for in a later publication they had this to say:

Children cannot be taught the value of supportive love and caring, responsibility, problem-solving, or decision-making skills unless the parents have first developed these qualities in their own relationship. The inadequacy of our organized institutions to instill these values and skills is only too apparent. Therefore, intimate, long-term relationships such as those of marriage and the family must provide them. ... Building from within strengthens the individual, the couple, and then the family unit, and thus the entire social structure, since the fundamental unit of society is the family. Whatever forms the family unit may take, its strength will still depend on the rewards gained from interpersonal relationships. It is in this sense that the individual and the married couple can become not only a

22. *Ibid.*, p. 41.

23. "Open Marriage: the Conceptual Framework" in James and Lynn Smith, eds., *Beyond Monogamy: Recent Studies of Several Alternatives in Marriage* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1974), p. 62.

fulcrum for change but also a key factor leading to the strengthening of the social structure. ... It is hoped that open families can evolve to an open society and eventually to an open world.²⁴

When I finished reading *Open Marriage* I exclaimed: "So help us God!" I only wish the O'Neills had said *that*, because what they envision in *Open Marriage* calls for rare wisdom, personal character and mutual growth that, in my estimate, *transcend mere human effort*. But still, I thank God for these modern, albeit secular, prophets who, in a confused time, see egalitarian visions for monogamous marriage and point the way. I, for one, have learned much from them; but what has especially excited me is that these writers are reaffirming—in a new idiom, to be sure—basic biblical values supportive of monogamous marriage in a time when the rejection of any and all biblical "norms" is taken for granted by many critics. Perhaps the popularity of *Open Marriage* should renew our faith in the persistence of some, at least, of the verities of past revelation and make us grateful for what appears as "secular rediscovery," after centuries of partial repression within official "Christendom."

Let us turn to the *second* feature of traditional monogamous marriage now under attack: the claim to *permanence*. I can—and must—treat this more briefly because a case for commitment to permanence has been partly made in our preceding reflections.

For many young people today the case for impermanence appears far more compelling. Many have experienced the trauma of the wrecked marriages of their own parents. To be sure, I have heard students from such homes declare their determination to make their own marriages succeed, in spite of their parents' failure, but they are the exception. The majority, either from experience or observation, find the current rate of marriage failure just one more strike against monogamous marriage.

But divorce is not the only compelling factor. There is a change in mood, in expectations. Whereas in the past the ideal was characterized largely by fixity, stability, security, these are the last things many young people seek today. According to Jessie Bernard, the motif of those who are "with it" is freedom. Consequently, many are turning to other directions. Increasing numbers do not see marriage as fitting into their life style at all and are opting for the single life. Most students who co-habit, I'm told by students, are not marriage-oriented in their co-habitation. Others turn toward "group

24. *Ibid.*, p. 66.

marriage,” which characterizes at least some of the current communes. Still others (usually males!) theorize about sequential or serial marriages, with a new mate to fulfill changing needs as life develops.

Some students who are more seriously oriented toward enduring commitment are intrigued by Margaret Mead’s “Marriage in Two Steps,” first published in a popular magazine in 1967. Let her explain:

Such a marriage would be a licensed union in which two individuals would be committed to each other as individuals for as long as they wished to remain together, but not as future parents. As the first step, it would not include having children. In contrast, the second type of marriage, which I think of as parental marriage, would be explicitly directed toward the founding of a family.²⁵

As she goes on to elaborate, the first step is designed to be exploratory and maturing. While commitment is called for, this step could be terminated easily. But every parental marriage would have as background a good individual marriage. “And as a parental marriage would take much longer to contract and would be based on a larger set of responsibilities, so also its disruption would be carried out much more slowly.”²⁶

She notes that her proposal has some similarities to Judge Lindsey’s “companionate marriage” as it was proclaimed in the ‘20’s. I remember well as a young boy the storm that was stirred in public and church circles by Lindsey, and I see by vivid contrast not even a ripple on the surface provoked by Mead’s proposal! Such has been the change in the public mood.

Even the churches, traditionally the main source for public and legal resistance to divorce, are changing their position—and I think generally for the better. Most Protestant churches no longer interpret Jesus’ stringent teachings on divorce (in the Jewish context of an exclusively male prerogative!) as legal proscriptions binding on church members. And I have been personally predicting for some time now that the Roman Catholic Church, for which divorce has been anathema—barring divorced members from communion—will increasingly be forced to place this subject on its agenda for debate and revision. Recent official actions have begun to confirm this expectation. One such action, approved by the Vatican, extends the traditional limited basis for annulments—i.e., finding so-called

25. *The Family in Search of a Future*, p. 80.

26. *Ibid.*, p. 83.

marriages invalid—to include “psychic irregularities, lack of due discretion, and plain immaturity.”²⁷ In fact, Monsignor Stephen J. Kelleher, who served as Chairman of the Committee of the Canon Law Society of America (which authored “The American Procedural Norms” [on annulments], approved by the U.S. Bishops and the Pope), reported during the past year: “As things now stand, in some tribunals, a good canon lawyer can obtain an annulment for any person whose marriage has broken down.”²⁸ But Monsignor Kelleher is highly critical of the tribunal process for “annulment” as “a dehumanizing process” and proceeds to counter the continuing proscription of the category of “divorce” by affirming its necessity:

The only alternative to annulment is divorce. As a lawyer, I think a couple whose marriage ceases to be existentially alive should get a divorce and, if they desire, marry again.—The Church is out of order in forcing persons to submit to psychiatric examination or psychological tests under the threat of denying them the right to re-marry and to continue to receive Holy Communion.²⁹

What, in essence, all this points to is that the churches are finding that legal proscriptions are not the solution to the human problems involved in marital breakdown, and that the mission of the churches in this area is to be expressed principally in preparation for marriage that leads to informed commitment, in educational and counselling services that strengthen good marriages and aid to those that are faltering, and finally, when marriages fail, to minister redemptively, making possible what one family scholar calls “realized forgiveness.” Restoration of a sense of personal integrity is a deep need in the lives of the separated and divorced, whether or not they later enter into a new marriage—as in fact most do.

What the churches institutionally and Christians individually should do in the public sector toward influencing needed legal reforms is a matter for serious study and dialogue. Various proposals are now under public discussion: the establishment of specialized courts for divorce; no-fault divorce; “do it yourself” divorce; compulsory marriage counselling—these constitute a few. Should marriage be made easier, indeed easy, to terminate? This is an important question. A more permissive answer is certainly gaining

27. *The Durham Morning Herald*, July 1974.

28. “Catholic Annulments: A Dehumanizing Process,” *Commonweal*, Vol. CIV, no. 12 (June 10, 1977), p. 366. Msgr. Kelleher is also author of *Divorce and Remarriage for Catholics* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1973).

29. *Ibid.*, p. 365.

ground. Some serious students say, "Yes, easier to terminate but made more difficult to enter upon." With discernment, they deplore the fact that it is easier in most states to secure a license for marriage than for driving. Their call is for family-life education in public schools from kindergarten through high school, in churches and even in college, though that is a bit *late*.

I have no blueprint to offer. But I am urging that churches and their members need to get involved in these issues much more than we have. While Christians may differ on precise interpretations of Jesus' stern teachings about divorce—some saying they constitute irrevocable law; others saying, not law but an ideal—it seems to me that there is a minimal Christian stand: that we take those teachings with deep concern, as Jesus certainly taught them; that we regard divorce as human failure; and that we reform and work beyond the current legal entanglements, that so often deepen emotional scars, toward humane procedures that foster renewal and new beginnings.

After much serious study, I am persuaded that we need to give far more attention to *prevention* than we have to the "cure," if we can call it that. I agree strongly with those who have pointed out that the fundamental defect in our legal system is that our present matrimonial statutes are concerned primarily with the rules of terminating, rather than preparing for and preserving a marriage. Far more appropriate is the cardinal principle underlying most of the standard college texts designed to prepare students for marriage: the principle of mutual commitment for making marriage succeed. That is the lesson to be understood, appreciated and applied.

In concluding our consideration of permanence in marriage, I remain convinced, while some may scoff, that there is a world of "common sense" (and also, implicitly, a trusting invocation of the grace of God beyond any merely "autonomous" human capabilities) in the old traditional vow: "to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death us do part, according to God's holy ordinance; and thereto I plight thee my troth."

Now, let us turn to the *third* and final problem in this presentation. Perhaps no claim of traditional monogamous marriage has come under more acid attack than its claim to sexual *exclusivity*. From all directions we are engulfed by evidence that increasingly appears to make that claim a pious pretension: the evidence of sex researchers from Kinsey in 1948 to Morton Hunt³⁰ in

30. Morton Hunt, *Sexual Behavior in the 1970's* (Chicago: Playboy Press, 1974). Cf. Ch. 5.

the mid-seventies; daily “triangle” themes in movies, TV, magazines and paperbacks; the sensational accounts of mate-swapping (“wife-swapping” is “out” because of its chauvinistic ring!) and swinging (no longer hinted at in news releases but treated at length in scholarly books) with an estimated one-half to eight million couples involved.

It appears self-evident that extra-marital sex is on the increase with new and, to some, fascinating forms of expression. To raise the question of “why?” would demand attention to a complex of causes far beyond the scope of this essay. But I want to call attention to one source that is having increasingly persuasive influence among college students. That source is what many “authorities” are now saying in contrast to what most “authorities” used to say.

A review of the outstanding college texts on marriage and the family of only a decade ago will reveal, almost invariably, a “pro-bias” supporting fidelity in husband-wife relation. Today, there is a strong trend toward the opposite: a “pro-bias” justifying extramarital sex (rarely called “infidelity”—that’s a loaded and “outdated” term)—referred to by Albert Ellis, a longtime crusader for sexual freedom, as “civilized adultery.” Jessie Bernard admits this trend as a significant fact: “One of the most interesting indications of change now taking place is the apologia which is becoming fashionable among researchers in discussing extramarital relationships. It has now become the positive, functional aspects which are increasingly emphasized rather than, as in the past, the negative and dysfunctional aspects. ...The current trend seems sometimes to be, in fact, not only in the direction of tolerance but even, in some cases, of advocacy.”³¹

A plethora of statements can be found from a number of writers. But for our purposes here the recent collection of essays, *Beyond Monogamy* (from which a few quotations have already been given) may, with a few exceptions, be taken as representative. The editors, James and Lynn Smith, who are co-directors of a Self-Actualization Laboratory, wrote the introduction and a chapter entitled, “The Incorporation of Extramarital Sex into the Marriage Relationship.” I have selected the following quotations from the Introduction:

The consequences [of “transmarital”—note the term!—permissive-ness] for marriage are significant and dramatic. By eliminating or at least reducing the deceit associated with conventional adulterer’s behavior and by transcending the inramarital demands of sexual exclusivity, and at the same time achieving new levels of candor and freedom about sexuality, the

31. *Beyond Monogamy*, pp. 149-150.

conjugal relationship can be transformed into something very different which may be more trying and challenging but also more rewarding and fulfilling.³²

We remain more impressed with the way in which monogamous heterosexuality denies the multiplicity and latitude of sexual and interpersonal experience that are available to healthy and mature persons than with the dire warnings that sexual freedom will always and everywhere be twisted into sexual license and unchecked promiscuity. From an interpersonal point of view, living in a monogamous relationship is not unlike having sex with one's clothing on: it diminishes sensitivity and restricts movement.³³

Monogamic marriage is, in its own macabre way, a legitimized and normalized form of emotional and erotic bondage, as evidenced by its obligatory character, intended as a matter of course to insure social and familial stability against the wild winds of sexual passion. Historical and social conditions, especially the current rate of divorce and the increasing frequency of extramarital sexual contacts, now suggest that this grand strategy may have backfired. ... There is the aching feeling abroad that something is wrong, not with marriage per se, but with the monogamic system of institutionalized customs and habits that has its prime expression in contemporary western culture. There is a recognition that monogamy pushes as many persons apart as it brings together and that this 'forsaking-all-others' and 'til-death-do-us-part' business is neither realistic nor humane.³⁴

The increasing frequency and incidence of swinging and swapping (as forms of consensual adultery) could...be viewed not as evidence of the decline of western civilization or Christian morality through promiscuity and debauchery but as restless... attempts which presage a new era in sexual and interpersonal relationship.³⁵

This permissive stance had already received expression in other widely-read sources. Let me refer to two examples. In *Open Marriage* the O'Neills redefined fidelity in broad terms³⁶ as "loyalty and faithfulness to growth, to integrity of self and respect for the other, not to a sexual and psychological bondage to each other," and they then proceeded to say that in a marriage

in which each partner is secure in his own identity and trusts in the other, new possibilities for additional relationships exist, and open [as opposed to limited] love can expand to include others. ... These outside relationships may, of course, include sex. That is completely up to the partners involved. If partners in an open marriage do have outside sexual relationships, it is on the basis of their own internal relationship—that is, because they have

32. *Ibid.*, p. 19.

33. *Ibid.*, p. 33.

34. *Ibid.*, p. 35.

35. *Ibid.*, p. 38.

36. *Open Marriage*, pp. 256-57.

experienced mature love, have real trust, and are able to expand themselves, to love and enjoy others, and to bring that love and pleasure back into their marriage, without jealousy. We are not recommending outside sex, but we are not saying that it should be avoided, either.

It is significant to note (perhaps not merely parenthetically) that Nena O'Neill, in a very recent syndicated series of five articles on marriage, "has done an about-face in her views on marital fidelity," according to the editor. In the second article, entitled "More People Choose Marital Fidelity,"³⁷ she concludes: "The ideal of equality for men and women has permeated every aspect of our relationship, and has become in turn an affirmation that sexual fidelity is to our advantage. *Sexual fidelity as a positive and personal choice* will always be more valuable than when we are cowed into it."

In the second example, Della and Rustum Roy's *Honest Sex* (which the authors claim to have written from a Christian perspective, and which for the most part, in my judgment, has considerable merit), the authors see as an extension of agape love the inclusion of a lonely person—especially a single woman or widow [one might wonder: why not also especially a single man or widower!—into a co-marital relationship which would afford that person's fulfillment, including, if desired, sexual involvement. Indeed, they confidently declare, "Such relationships can serve as the vehicle of faithfulness to God."³⁸ For relevant critique of this ostensibly "Christian" position, one is not limited to the pronouncements of traditionally-oriented Christian theologians. Masters and Johnson have employed penetrating psychological insight in analysis and scathing judgment on this, and similar, "Christian justifications" of sexual "inclusiveness."³⁹

Again, we raise the question, what should be the response of the Church, and of individual Christians, to this increasing contravention, both in theory and practice, of sexual exclusivity in marriage? The position of the Church has certainly been clear and strong. "Thou shalt not commit adultery" is probably the best known of the Commandments. Are there strong reasons for "holding the line?" My answers will be brief but pointed.

Many Christians would say that the teachings of Jesus make mandatory calling adultery what he called it: a sin against God's

37. *The Durham Sun*, Nov. 29, 1977 (italics mine).

38. Roy, Della and Rustum, *Honest Sex: A Revolutionary New Sex Guide for the Now Generation of Christians* (New York: Signet Books, 1968), p. 121.

39. *Op. cit.*, pp. 187-191.

purposes for human sexuality. That Jesus was emphatic about this is clear. In fact, he was more emphatic than the traditional Jewish view of adultery. Jesus went beyond identifying adultery with the behavioral act and equated it with lustful intention. He placed his chief emphasis (perhaps as a reaction against the male-dominated ethos of his culture) on male, rather than female, sin. And he extended adultery to sexual relations (in act or intent) with any woman, not just “another man’s” wife, as the traditional view interpreted the Commandment—a view that sanctioned the double standard of some sexual freedom for the husband and none for the wife. And finally, he taught within the context of his teachings on divorce that a man could commit adultery against his own wife and not simply against another husband’s rights—another radical extension of the meaning.

I cannot see how the Church or any Christian could disavow or fail to take seriously these teachings without compromising Christian moral integrity. At the same time, these teachings should certainly be kept in proper perspective, as Jesus himself did. To make the Seventh Commandment the central one and to preach it negatively with stern “thou shalt nots”—and the Church has been guilty of this—is to misread him. It is noteworthy that Jesus was far more lenient with adultery than with spiritual pride, and that adulterers were among his followers, while religiously proud men were his enemies. And he proclaimed his primary mission as not to condemn but to save, to make life whole.

And this leads me to my second answer. The majority of authorities are commonly agreed that the function remaining distinctively and, in some ways, uniquely with marriage and the family is the affectional and volitional function; and that as life becomes more automated and impersonal, this function increases the continuing need, indeed, the imperative need, of marriage and the family. Furthermore, it is commonly agreed that this function makes central the factor of interpersonal relationship. The O’Neills declare that “the central problem in contemporary marriage is relationship.”⁴⁰ If this is so—and I think unquestionably it is—then in marriage the paramount need is to utilize those means that enrich and deepen the one-to-one relationship and resist those attitudes and acts that erode and destroy it.

Let me quote to you two authorities who place the question of extramarital sex in striking contrast. From the O’Neills:

40. *Beyond Monogamy*, p. 58.

If outside companionships are to be more than casual ones, and might involve sex, then those relationships too should be approached with the same fidelity to mutual growth, and with the same measure of respect that you would show your partner in open marriage.⁴¹

A quotation in contrast is from Rollo May in reaction to “generalized love” as characterized by the free-sex movement. Such love:

ends in something which is not fully personal because it does not fully discriminate. Distinctions involve willing and choosing, and to choose someone means not to choose someone else. ... But what of fidelity and the lasting quality of love? Erotic passion not only requires capacity to give one's self over to ... the power of the immediate experience. But it also requires that one take this event into one's own center, to mold and form one's self and the relationship [with another] on a new plane of consciousness which emerges out of the experience. This requires the element of will.⁴²

These statements suggest the popular question so often raised by students: “Can you love—in a full, intimate sense, including sexual love—more than one person at a time?” The O'Neills say “Yes”; Rollo May says “No.” It is at least suggestive, I think, to recall that the O'Neills are anthropologists and Rollo May is a practicing psychoanalyst.

Support for May's position comes, perhaps unexpectedly, from another significant secular source. Masters and Johnson conclude their treatment on “Extramarital Sex” as follows:

It is true that when one partner finds satisfaction in extramarital relationship, this may turn a potentially destructive marital relationship into a cautious friendship, or a supportive ‘acquaintanceship’ and in that sense it is better than open marital warfare with all its attendant bitterness and destructiveness. But this *is not marriage in the sense of two human beings with full regard for each other, sharing the wish to negotiate differences between them and developing mutual pleasures to the fullest extent possible. Making do in marriage is not fulfillment through marriage. Even if infidelity represents the first step in a positive direction—toward making do instead of making war—it is still a long distance away from the goal of becoming committed: true to oneself and loyal and vulnerable to one's partner.*⁴³

I believe the Christian answer to the question would be much closer to May and to Masters and Johnson rather than to the O'Neills,

41. *Open Marriage*, p. 258.

42. Rollo May, *Love and Will* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1969), p. 279.

43. *Op. cit.*, p. 139.

not only because the affirmation of sexual exclusivity has a hard-nosed practicality about it (that is astonishingly overlooked by the O'Neills), but also because of the implied affirmation of a mysterious sexual duality, polarity or complementarity between husband and wife that finds its deepest needs fulfilled in the "one flesh" union of a one-to-one marriage relationship. This is the positive approach to the Christian claim of exclusive sexual fidelity.

What is the future of monogamous marriage from a Christian perspective? As we have seen, the current rate of marriage failures and other negative data constitute for some authorities compelling evidence for a pessimistic outlook or motivate others to advocate blueprints of extreme alternatives. My own reflections, on a more comprehensive basis that includes Christian insights as treated above, have led me increasingly to a primarily optimistic—or at least hopeful—position. Realistically there remain, of course, not only deep concerns, not only blatant causes for temporary pessimism, but also complex problems, for which there are no easy answers. But I am persuaded that there is a significant trend in attitudes toward a meaningful understanding and mutually-fulfilling realization of the (God-given) possibilities of monogamous marriage, which presents Christians and the Church with a unique opportunity. This trend consists of an increasing *correlation* of a great deal of *secular* research findings with authentic *Christian* teaching. If the distinctive cohesive factor that enables marital life not only to survive but to build toward fulfillment is *the quality of interpersonal relationships*, as many secular marriage authorities are urgently affirming,⁴⁴ then equality, commitment, fidelity and a dedication to marital success are not only imperative components of that quality, they are *inherent* components of our Christian faith. Hence, the way for cooperative endeavors between concerned secular and Christian marriage authorities toward strengthening our marriage system is widening. But more importantly, the Church has a distinctive function for its opportunity and responsibility in that it now has a reconstructed *positive biblical base* to provide a faith dynamic to this endeavor. In my view, this is the salient factor for hope, for even optimism.

44. Cf., e.g., James Leslie McCary, *Freedom and Growth in Marriage* (Santa Barbara: Hamilton, 1975), especially Ch. 5.

“Valley of Shame”*

by H. SHELTON SMITH**

Professor Emeritus of American Religious Thought

Last January the Senate of the United States lost by death its most distinguished champion of human rights. Ever since 1948, when Hubert Humphrey electrified the Democratic Convention at Philadelphia, he had fervently pleaded with the nation to eradicate racial discrimination and grant equal rights to all Americans. That dramatic speech sparked the Dixiecrat revolt, but it also generated a legislative movement that culminated in the passage of the landmark Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Quite appropriately the Senator's last public message to America reiterated his favorite thirty-year theme. Failing health had prevented him from traveling to Atlanta to accept a special tribute from a conference which was to commemorate the birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr., the matchless crusader for human rights. Shortly before his death, however, Senator Humphrey had written an acceptance message to be read on that occasion. A former aid read that message at the famous Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta on the night of January 14th, while the Happy Warrior's body lay in state in the nation's Capitol Rotunda.

“Fourteen years ago,” said the Senator, “Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. shared with us his dream for America. That cherished dream of what our nation could and should be became our dream as well To be linked to Dr. King in the battle for equal rights is a distinct honor.” Having cited several important achievements in civil rights, the Senator then added the following realistic words: “We must face the facts, for despite our progress, a huge valley of shame separates black and white America.”¹

That grave evaluation of our racial situation invites a serious question: Is it true? Not a few informed observers would agree with

*An address given at the opening of Durham's “Human Relations Week,” Feb. 12, 1978, at St. Joseph's A.M.E. Church.

**Ed. note: Divinity School and Graduate School alumni over several decades, who recall with appreciation—as well as fear and trembling—the “Happy Warrior of Duke,” will be delighted to see herein that, while the flesh may grow weaker, the spirit and mind are still going strong! Dr. Smith was honored at the Convention of the North Carolina Council of Churches at Duke on May 2, 1978 with a special Citation of Merit in recognition of his crucial role in promoting ecumenical relations and his long-continued battle for Christianly humane inter-racial relations in North Carolina.

Senator Humphrey. Furthermore, many black leaders suspect that a growing number of white leaders are losing their zeal for bridging the valley of shame. Indeed, the new executive director of the NAACP, Dr. Benjamin Hooks, recently said to a conference of prominent blacks: "You are not going to get the help from the white community that once you got."²

As we launch our Human Relations Week this Sunday afternoon, it is important to examine candidly the current status of human rights, especially in the South. But before addressing that subject directly, I want to indicate the ethical perspective that informs my exposition and evaluation.

For me, the biblical doctrine of the *imago Dei* is supremely important. According to that doctrine, God created all humankind in his image. From this basic doctrine, I derive the guiding principle, that all human beings are of equal worth in the sight of God, and are consequently entitled to equal rights in the human family.

Now let me explore the implications of the doctrine of the *imago Dei* with respect to human rights in three areas.

I

If there be any such thing as a human right, it is the right to work, the right to earn one's daily bread. In our work-ethic oriented society, to hold a job is a mark of responsible personhood, a badge of self-worth, and a means of human fulfillment. To put its meaning in popular jargon, to have a job is to be "somebody."

Yet we Americans are confronted with a melancholy fact: In the richest nation on the globe, some six million men and women are jobless, and probably several million of them will never get a steady job unless our economic system is radically transformed.

Shortly before his death, Senator Humphrey urged the passage of the Humphrey-Hawkins Bill, saying that it would "commit the government to full employment in a politically accountable manner that has never existed in the past." That bill has already been considerably weakened, but even if it could be adopted in its original form it would require five years to reduce the rate of unemployment to 4 percent.³

A further important fact is that joblessness is not distributed evenly. Its major victims are the poor and the powerless. "Black unemployment," for example, "has been about double the white rate for more than two decades [,] and recently the gap has widened. Since 1958, black teenage unemployment has never fallen below 25 percent."⁴ In the slum areas of the inner cities, probably 50 percent of black teenagers are jobless.

Such chronic unemployment does far more than reduce the nation's economic growth. It undermines faith in the free enterprise system; it weakens political and social democracy; it pits whites against blacks in the marketplace; it strains family relations; it breeds crime, alcoholism, drug addiction, and other social pathologies. For all these reasons, the country must expand the job market or it will undergo a deepening economic and moral crisis.

II

Next to the right to work is the right to learn, the right to develop one's native, God-given talents. This is especially important in a democratic social order.

The Old South knew that if it was to keep the slaves in their subservient place, it must exclude them from the school house. Although the post-reconstruction South opened the school room to black children, it segregated them from white children. Finally, in 1896, the U.S. Supreme Court legalized this anti-black dual system in *Plessy v. Ferguson*. From 1896 to 1954 the Plessy doctrine of "separate but equal" governed the educational policy of the South. The separatist part of the Plessy mandate was strictly enforced, but the equality part was never fulfilled by any southern state. Meanwhile, Jim Crow reigned supreme in all other public facilities. In some court rooms, white witnesses kissed one Bible, and black witnesses kissed another.

Fifty-eight years later, the Supreme Court in *Brown v. the Board of Education of Topeka* (1954) ruled that "Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal." The South raised an uproar. In March, 1956, one hundred U.S. Congressmen from the South, including nineteen Senators, issued a *Declaration of Constitutional Principles* in which they charged that the Brown decision was a "clear abuse of Judicial power," and they pledged themselves "to use all lawful means to bring about a reversal" of that decision.⁵

North Carolina and all the other states of the old Confederacy adopted various devices designed to prevent school desegregation, but all of them ultimately failed to preserve the Plessy policy. Hence, for some twenty years the desegregation movement gained momentum in the South.

In recent years, however, judicial roadblocks have largely halted the integrative process in the public schools in all sections of the nation. A highly significant example is the 1974 Detroit case, in which a bare majority of the Supreme Court, in *Bradley v. Milliken*, overturned the ruling of two lower courts which had authorized a metropolitan school system. Speaking for the majority, Chief Justice

Burger held that the disparate treatment of black children took place within the Detroit school system alone, and he therefore concluded that corrective measures “must be limited to that system.”⁶ The decision elated suburban whites, but it spread gloom among Detroit’s school officials, who found it impossible to achieve significant desegregation within a city system that was nearly 70 percent black.

The Bradley ruling has already had far-reaching educational and racial effects. Legal efforts, as in Durham, to merge urban and suburban school systems have been defeated in many cities. Thus masses of blacks and poor whites have been bottled up in inner-city areas, where it will be increasingly difficult to provide the nation’s most deprived children with a quality of education equal to that in the suburban communities.

The white academy movement is generating the spirit of racial separatism in many communities. In 1975, according to one report, some 3,500 white academies were operating in the South, with a total enrollment of 750,000.⁷ Some of them are probably makeshift enterprises, but many others are believed to be academically superior to the public schools. Certainly the better so-called Christian academies are recruiting the children and youth of many middle-class white families, and thereby weakening the public school system. Would it not be a near miracle if these academies did not engender white racism? In any case, a white youth at Briarcrest Baptist High School (Memphis, Tenn.) probably expressed a common sentiment among his fellow students when he said: “I left the public schools to get away from blacks.”⁸

III

A third fundamental human right, particularly in a democracy, is the right to equal participation in the political process. If this right is denied or abridged, the foundation of democratic government will be eroded.

Yet the post-reconstruction white South was determined to prevent most black citizens from sharing in the political activities of the region. Two of the most effective weapons used to disfranchise black people were the literacy test and the white primary.

North Carolina, for example, adopted a literacy test in 1900 with the avowed purpose of drastically limiting the black vote. Governor Charles B. Aycock is generally lauded for his advocacy of public education, but it should not be forgotten that he also ardently fought for a literacy requirement for voting. After that requirement became law, thousands of black citizens were cheated out of their suffrage

rights. Other southern states employed the same instrument with similar results. The late V.O. Key, Jr., the best historian of southern politics, was entirely right when he declared: "No matter from what direction one looks at it, the southern literacy test is a fraud and nothing more."⁹

Precisely when the white primary came into use seems uncertain, but by 1930 it was politically operative throughout the South. Until 1944, when the Supreme Court outlawed the white primary, that weapon proved highly effective in preventing blacks from voting in a crucial decision-making process.

Political white supremacy in the South suffered a fatal blow with the passage of the Voting Rights Act in 1965. After that act became law, black voter registration increased dramatically. By 1975, more than 3.5 million blacks were registered voters. Significantly, Jimmy Carter would not be president today if black southerners had not voted for him in overwhelming numbers, for roughly 51 percent of the southern white vote went to Gerald Ford.

In recent years, an increasing number of black southerners have been winning state and local elections. Whereas only 565 got elected in 1970, that number rose to 1,652 in 1975. Of the latter number, 94 were state legislators. The black South is also beginning to contribute significantly to political leadership on the national level. Two prominent examples are Representative Barbara Jordan of Texas, brilliant keynote speaker at the last Democratic National Convention, and Andrew Young of Georgia, ambassador to United Nations. Nevertheless, black southerners by no means share equally with white southerners in holding elective offices. In 1975, they numbered only 2.1 percent of the South's elected officials, although black people comprised 17.8 percent of the region's voting-age population.¹⁰

This brief survey, therefore, leaves me with one firmly rooted conviction: although black southerners are making progress in some areas of human rights, they still have a long distance to go before sharing full equality with whites. Hence we of the white South must rededicate ourselves to the urgent task of eradicating the shameful valley that divides black and white people in our section of the nation. When the valley is removed, both races will walk side by side in equal dignity. And then will be fulfilled the magnificent dream of Martin Luther King, Jr.

FOOTNOTES

1. *Durham Morning Herald*, Jan. 15, 1978.
2. *New York Times*, Jan. 8, 1978.
3. Helen Ginsburg, "Jobs for All the Jobless," *Christianity and Crisis*, Jan. 16, 1978, p. 327.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 326.
5. *New York Times*, March 12, 1956, p. 19.
6. *New York Times*, July 26, 1974, p. 17.
7. *Time*, Dec. 15, 1975, p. 54.
8. *Ibid.*
9. *Southern Politics in State and Nation* (New York, 1949), p. 576.
10. Jack Bass and Walter De Vries, *The Transformation of Southern Politics* (New York, 1977), p. 51 (Tables 3-1 and 3-2).

The Negro Spiritual: Examination of Some Theological Concepts

by PRESTON L. FLOYD
Duke M. Div. middler

*By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down,
yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion.
We hung up our harps upon the willows
in the midst thereof.
For there they that carried us away captive
required of us a song,
And they that wasted us
required of us mirth, saying,
"Sing us one of the songs of Zion!"
How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?*

Psalm 137:1-4

With a few minor alterations, the lament above could easily be viewed as a passage from the annals of the Black experience. Of course, it tells of the Israelites seeming loss of inspiration during their captivity in Babylon, and it is most certain that bondage, in any form, is not conducive to singing, especially not "songs of Zion" or praise. Furthermore, one would be even less inspired to sing while in bondage in a "strange land." This, of course, was the condition of the slaves in America, as well as the "Children of Israel" in Babylon.

The Hebrew poet posed the query, "How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?" After several hundred years of the Black presence in America, one wonders how the slaves were able to "sing the Lord's song in a strange land" under the mind-boggling oppression in which they existed daily. This phenomenon opposes rational explanation and appears to overshadow any simple statement of faith. While one seems lost for an answer as to "how," it is quite obvious that they did indeed sing, as evidenced by the numerous extant songs and song fragments that have been transmitted, orally and in writing, to posterity.

There has been voluminous work done on the spirituals; however, most of the work has centered on the spirituals as they relate to the social context from which they sprang or their musicality. But until recently, there has not been a great deal of study done that has focused strictly on the theological aspects of the spirituals. Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to examine some of the theological concepts that appear in the spirituals.

However, an adequate analysis of the spirituals could not be attempted without speaking, even if briefly, of the historical or social milieu to which their nascence is attributed. This paper will begin with a few observations on the African heritage of the slaves before turning to the significance of Christianity in the context of American slavery. The paper will then consider the theological implications of the development of spirituals, illustrated by some specific examples.

It is the contention of the writer that any phenomenon being considered at a particular point in time must be viewed as a gestalt that has been formed or affected, directly or vicariously, in some small way by all that has gone before it. Thus, one could not properly speak of history as it relates to the spirituals or the originators of the spirituals, without beginning in Africa.

*What is Africa to me;
Copper sun or scarlet sea,
Jungle star or jungle track,
Strong bronzed men, or regal black
Women from whose loins I sprang
When the birds of Eden sang?
One three centuries removed
From the scenes his fathers loved,
Spicy grove, cinnamon tree,
What is Africa to me?*

—Countee Cullen

It is now considered general knowledge that Egypt was the “cradle of civilization.” However, few know or care to know that the Egyptians were a race made up of an intermixing of many racial stocks, Semitic nomads from the east, groups from the north and Ethiopians, of dark and light extraction, from the south.¹ Even more importantly, there was very strong Ethiopian influence in the government of Egypt, both male and female.² As Lerone Bennett observes, “. . . the beginning was an African as well as Asian achievement.”³

There were many powerful states in ancient Africa with highly sophisticated economic systems based on manufacturing and international commerce, as well as agriculture. These states also had various forms of centralized governments and maintained armies of professional soldiers. Ghana, Mali and Songhay were three such states.⁴

Many of these states evolved into greater centers of education and culture. For instance, Timbuktu drew to its doors Moslem youth to study law and surgery at the University of Sankore, as well as North African and European scholars who came to confer with erudite historians and authors of the black empire.

Consequently, the Africans also had an intellectually appealing *weltanschauung* much akin to contemporary “process philosophies.” Africans viewed “being” as constantly in flux or process, not static, and spoke of the essence of entities “in terms of force or energy rather than matter.”⁶

For the Africans, the quintessence of religion was life itself. They believed in a creator, who is the high God, and whose “life-force” is a component of all existing things. Subordinate to God the creator, they believed there was “a pantheon of lesser gods identified sometimes with terrestrial objects.”⁷ There was a definite belief in life after death; the Africans held that the “life force,” which was a part of the nature of the supreme God, present in each individual, persisted in existence subsequent to the individual’s earthly life.⁸

From this world the slaves came, bearing the tradition of numberless tribes and racial extractions—Mandingos, Ashantis, Fantins, Ibos, Efiks, Yorubas, etc.—from the West Coast of Africa spanning about three thousand miles.⁹ To the shores of America this people of such rich heritage came via the bloody Middle Passage, which still stands as one of the darkest spots in the history of human civilization and cruelest acts of “man’s inhumanity to man,” to be sold on auction blocks like farm animals. The slavetraders sought to strip the slaves of all vestiges of African culture and destroy social cohesion by separating members of the same tribes or families. Once the slaves were on the plantations, the slaveholders continued to maintain stringent vigilance over their activities.¹⁰

Some slaves were soon introduced to Christianity via baptism. History records that the Anglicans began baptizing slaves at the very inception of slavery in the colonies during the seventeenth century. However, there was opposition to the baptism, for fear this would serve as sanction for manumission. Of course, this was rectified by a law that made it clear that baptism did not change the status of a slave.¹¹

Systematic proselytizing did not begin until the eighteenth century, at which time various denominations began their attempts to Christianize the slaves and many slaves responded warmly to the attempts. Some scholars hold that this ready response was the result of the slaves’ African heritage. However, Dr. E. Franklin Frazier contends that the slaves responded warmly because Christianity offered the slaves a “new basis of social cohesion.”¹² It is the position of this paper that it was possibly a combination of both, because, in spite of the efforts of the slavetraders and slaveholders to strip the slaves of their cultural ancestry, psychology has taught us that this is not accomplished that easily. (Not to speak of the story of Kunta Kinte in *Roots* by Alex Haley.)

In many instances, the slaveowners not only allowed this Christianizing, but encouraged it, because they felt this would make the slave more content with his condition. Of course, many of the preachers who preached to the slaves were very selective in their use of the Scripture. They used such passages as the Ten Commandments and the Lord's Prayer, as well as certain biblical stories.¹³ There was a definite avoidance of those passages that would make the slaves more sensitive to the injustices, or aware of the biblical injunctions against the injustices they were suffering.

In spite of this, ". . . Blacks were able to see themselves and the powers of a liberating God in the stories and models of Moses, Daniel, Joshua, the three Hebrew boys in the fiery furnace, John and Jesus."¹⁴ Therefore, the slaves discovered in Christianity a new outlook on life in general and on themselves specifically. Of course, what the slave had done, inadvertently, was to adapt "the Christian religion to his psychological and social needs,"¹⁵ without consciously distorting the meaning of the Scriptures. Nowhere is this more evident than in the spirituals.

Dr. Mays observe that "The creation of the spirituals was hardly an accident in Negro life. It was a creation born of necessity in order that the slave might more adequately adjust himself to the new conditions in the new world."¹⁶ The writer tends to agree that it was this and a little more, for often the spirituals aided the slaves in rebelling against conditions or in adjusting conditions to their own needs.

*O black slave singer, gone, forgot, unfamed
You—you alone, of all the long, long line
Of those who've sung untaught, unknown, unnamed,
Have stretched out upward, seeking the divine.*

*. . . You sang far better than you knew;
The songs that for your listeners'
Hungry hearts sufficed
Still live, — but more than this to you belongs:
You sang a race from wood and stone to Christ.*

—James Weldon Johnson

The spirituals to be examined in this work were not chosen on the basis of any particular theological concepts they seemed to exemplify. Rather, the more familiar ones were chosen on the basis of the writer's personal preference, and the less familiar ones were chosen for the very reason that they are rare and do not often appear in print, thus giving the writer a chance to develop his own interpretation.

Dr. Mays, in his book *The Negro's God*, argues that the spirituals are basically compensatory; that is, they neutralize or offset the evil effects of slavery by dealing with or singing about a time and place where this evil will not exist. Of course, there are many spirituals which on surface would support such a notion. However, the interpreter must be careful about making judgments on the surface or superficial appearance, because the slave narratives are full of stories of the dualistic existence of the slave. One "life" was displayed before massa in the field and the "big house," while another was seen at night or in the clandestine meetings in the slave quarters. Moreover, there are numerous spirituals, the first two examined below being most notable, that openly defy the idea of a "compensatory pattern."

Joshua Fit de Battle ob Jericho

Refrain: *Joshua fit de battle ob Jericho,
Jericho, Jericho.
Joshua fit de battle ob Jericho,
An' de walls come tumblin' down.*

Verses: *You may talk about your king ob Gideon,
You may talk about your man ob Saul,
But dere's none like good ol' Joshua
At the battle ob Jericho.*

*Up to de walls ob Jericho,
He marched with spear in han',
Go blow dem ram horns, Joshua cried,
'Cause de battle am in my han'.*

*Then the lam' ram sheep horns began to blow,
An de trumpets began to soun',
Joshua commanded dem chillun to shout,
An' de walls come tumblin' down.*

There is nothing in this spiritual that could be clearly and truthfully considered compensatory. This song recounts the biblical saga of Joshua's leading the Israelites against Jericho and by the power of God conquering the city. The slave had a way of paraphrasing biblical stories or recasting them in slave vernacular, and it is the stance of the writer that this definitely indicates that in some way the slave is saying, "This is my story," or I can identify with this. Thus, in the spirituals, God is seen as a warrior or the strength of a warrior. There is evidently some hope or belief that as God helped Joshua break down the walls of Jericho, he would also help the slave break down the walls of slavery and oppression. It might be added that with the driving percussive beat and up tempo with which this

spiritual is sung, the song would certainly give those singing it the feeling of being able to conquer.

In the next spiritual it is easily inferred that God was viewed as a liberator who was not only against human bondage, but would do something about it.

Go Down Moses

Refrain: *Go down Moses,
Way down in Egyptland,
Tell ol' Pharoah,
"Let my people go!"*

Verses: *When Israel was in Egyptland,
Let my people go!
Oppressed so hard they could not stand,
Let my peopel go!*

*"Thus spoke the Lord," bold Moses said,
"Let my people go!
If not I'll smite your first-born dead.
Let my people go!"*

The constant repeating of "Let my people go!" with the use of the possessive pronoun "my" seems to indicate that slaves definitely recognized themselves as the children or people of God and that their Father would certainly not let them suffer in bondage forever, but in his own time, as with the Israelites in Egypt, he would deliver them.

Also there is a strong belief exhibited here, and in countless other spirituals, that even though God is powerful he is equally personal. Indeed, he communicates with his own and he will draw close to one, if one will draw close to him.

One would have to agree with Dr. Mays' observation that the spirituals project the idea that God is omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent and also that God is not only the creator of heaven and earth, but he is the sovereign ruler of both.¹⁸ There are very few spirituals that incorporate all of these concepts so well in a few stanzas as does the one entitled, "God is a God."

Refrain: *God is a God! God don't never change!
God is a God! An' He always will be God!*

Verses: *He made the sun to shine by day,
He made the sun to show the way,
He made the stars to show their light,
He made the moon to shine by night, sayin'*

*The earth his footstool an' heav'n his throne,
The whole creation all his own,*

*His love and power will prevail,
His promises will never fail, sayin'*

The title itself, "God is a God," which is the first phrase in the refrain, speaks very clearly of the omnipotence of God. As many old black worshippers today in a moment of ecstasy might be heard to say, "God is God right by Himself" or "He is my all in all." The above spiritual projects the same idea, that God is sovereign Lord, and what is more, His status is established eternally. "An' He always will be God." Just as God's rule is founded eternally, so is His love. And He can be trusted in spite of all else, because "His promises will never fail."

The following spiritual demonstrates the slaves' strong belief that God is indeed omniscient. Also, he calls for righteousness with stringent exactitude and none can evade God's righteous judgment.

No Hiding Place

Refrain: *There's no hiding place down here,
There's no hiding place down here.*

Verses: *Went to the rock to hide my face,
Rocks cried out, "No hiding place,"
There's no hiding place down here.*

*Boatmen, boatman, row one side,
Can't get to heaven 'gainst wind and tide,
There's no hiding place down here.*

*Sinner man, sinner man, better repent,
God's going to call you to judgment.
There's no hiding place down here.*

It is the writer's contention that the idea of "judgment" appears extensively in the spirituals because the slaves were daily experiencing judgment, usually with punishment at the hands of their masters. Thus, the thought of the "terrible day of the Lord" was even more awe-inspiring or fear-provoking. In examining this spiritual, one cannot help but realize that the idea of "no hiding place" was driven home for the slaves by the fact that they were plagued with "high visibility"; due to their skin color, it was impossible for them to run away and be able to blend into the larger community. So, indeed, for slaves there was "no hiding place down here."

A most interesting phenomenon is what the slaves believed about Jesus as disclosed by the spirituals. It had been argued in years past that the slaves did not believe in the "incarnation" of Jesus. However,

nothing could be further from the truth; in fact, it would be very difficult to find a corpus of Christian literature which manifests such unapologetic acceptance of the “incarnation” as does the body of Negro spirituals. For the slaves, Jesus was truly “Emmanuel — God with us.”

Come Down

Refrain: *Come down, Come down, my Lord!*
Come down, Way down in Egyptland.

Verses: *Jesus Christ, He died for me,*
Way down in Egyptland;
Jesus Christ, He set me free,
Way down in Egyptland.

Born of God I know I am,
Way down in Egyptland;
I'm purchased by the dying Lamb,
Way down in Egyptland.

Peter walked upon the sea,
Way down in Egyptland;
And Jesus told him, "Come to me,"
Way down in Egyptland.

While it is evident from the most perfunctory investigation of this spiritual that “Egyptland” is synonymous with slavery, one cannot help but be intrigued with the way this spiritual blends an Old Testament saga with a new Testament phenomenon, Jesus. This is a strong identification of Jesus with the liberating God of the Old Testament, which is a lucid demonstration of a belief in the “incarnation.” Also, it would be ludicrous for one to ask Jesus to “Come down in Egyptland” if one did not believe that his presence would make a difference.

This spiritual also discloses a definite belief in the “Atonement.” “Born of God I know I am...I'm purchased by the dying Lamb.” There are numerous other spirituals that affirm Jesus as “God in flesh,” as well as the “suffering servant.” Finally, one notices that these two views of Jesus are used interchangeably in many spirituals. As James Cone wittily observes, “It is safe to assume that black slaves did not know about the proceedings at Nicea and Chalcedon.”¹⁷

The next spiritual adds a little levity, yet reveals several interesting points.

My Good Lord's Done Been Here

Refrain: *Oh, my Good Lord's done been here!*
Blessed my soul and gone away.
My Good Lord's done been here!
Blessed my soul and gone away.

Verses: *When I get up in Heaven*
And all my work is done,
Goin' a sit down by Sister Mary
And chatter with the darling Son.

Hold up the Baptist finger,
Hold up the Baptist hand.
When I get up in Heaven
Goin' a join the Baptist Band.

You may be a white man,
White as the driftin' snow,
If your soul ain't been converted,
To Hell you're sure to go.

First, it is quite apparent that there is no single theme, neither does the refrain relate in any logical manner with the verses. However, this is not unusual, given the way some of the spirituals were composed. For instance, sitting around in a social gathering or at a religious meeting, someone could have started singing the refrain above and then several people in the room could have joined in, adding new verses in the same rhythmic scheme without regard for unity of theme.

Nonetheless, verse one reveals that the slaves not only viewed heaven as a place where human toil would end,¹⁸ but also as a place where they would “be somebody” and would be able to “sit down by Sister Mary and chatter with the darling Son.”

Verse two gives great credibility to the idea of strong allegiance along denominational lines, which was said to exist among the slaves. Of course, this adamant denominational allegiance was another way for the slaves to affirm themselves as persons rather than property.

Finally, verse three supports the notion, previously mentioned, that the slaves believed in the ultimate righteousness and impartiality of God. In this world “Whiteness” is often equated with “rightness” or worth; however, the slaves are saying in this song that righteousness, as evidenced by conversion, is God’s only criterion for judgment.

The Black experience in America has been dubious at best and apparently hopeless at worst. But in spite of this, the Black Christian, slave and free, has—through an inexplicably transcendent faith¹⁹ in a caring and liberating God—shown forth a remarkable capacity to “sing the Lord’s song in a strange land.”

*O Black and unknown bards of long ago,
How came your lips to touch the sacred fire?
How, in your darkness, did you come to know
The power and beauty of the minstrel’s lyre?
Who first from midst his bonds lifted his eyes?
Who first from out the still watch, lone and long,
Feeling the ancient faiths of prophets rise
Within his dark-kept soul, burst into song?
Heart of what slave poured out such melody
As “Steal Away to Jesus”? On its strains
His spirit must have nightly floated free,
Though still about his hands he felt his chains.
Who heard Great “Jordan roll”? Whose starward eye
Saw chariot “swing low”? And who was he
That breathed that comforting, melodic sigh,
“Nobody knows de trouble I see?”*

James Weldon Johnson

FOOTNOTES

1. John Hope Franklin, *From Slavery to Freedom* (New York: Knopf, 1967), p. 3.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 7.
3. Lerone Bennett, Jr., *Before the Mayflower* (New York: Penguin Press, 1976), p. 5.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 13.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 19.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 26.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 25.
8. *Ibid.*
9. *Ibid.*, p. 38.
10. E. Franklin Frazier, *The Negro Church in America* (New York: Schocken Books, Inc., 1974), p. 10.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 14.
12. *Ibid.*
13. *Ibid.*, p. 18.
14. Latta K. Thomas, *Biblical Faith and the Black American* (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1976), p. 17.
15. Frazier, *op. cit.*, p. 19.
16. Benjamin E. Mays, *The Negro’s God* (New York: Atheneum, 1973), p. 19.
17. James H. Cone, *Spirituals and the Blues* (New York: Seabury Press, 1972), p. 47.
18. Mays, *op. cit.*, p. 21.
19. Charles L. Helton, “The Tragic in Black Historical Experience,” *The Duke Divinity School Review*, Vol. 38, no. 2 (Spring 1973), pp. 78-87.

The 'Wisdom' of John Updike

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Most critics dealing with John Updike's novels and short stories have noted his religious interest. Rachel Burchard, for example, views Updike as searching "for religious definitions to fit the present."¹ John Hill believes that the theme of Updike's novels is the "quest for belief."² And Alice and Kenneth Hamilton in their controversial book *The Elements of John Updike* understand Updike to give an "unambiguous" and "Christian" answer to the question: "Does the universe, blindly ruled by chance, run downward into death; or does it follow the commands of a Living God whose Will for it is life?"³ Rabbit Angstrom, perhaps Updike's best known character, has been labeled a "religious sufferer," an "absurd man as saint," and a person in "search for God."⁴ Both the Hamiltons and S.A. Zylstra have written on the parabolic nature of Updike's fictive world, while Daniel Morrissey has noted the "subtle religious perspective" of Updike's works.⁵

In spite of the fact that a religious undercurrent is widely recognized in Updike's novels and short stories, determining its precise nature has proven bothersome. Richard Fisher is not alone in concluding "...it is difficult to see exactly what Updike wants to say about it [religion]."⁶ Although the Hamiltons have found Updike unambiguous in his historic Christian perspective, others have wondered whether the theological position which the Hamiltons have uncovered "is specifically Updike's or whether it belongs jointly to him and the Hamiltons."⁷ John Aldridge, who has, perhaps, been the most critical of the Hamilton's work, believes that they have created an "imaginary writer who in certain particulars is very much like Updike, but who resembles far more strikingly Kierkegaard, Karl Barth, St. John of the Cross, and the prophet Isaiah."⁸ At the opposite end of the critical spectrum from that of the Hamiltons, Wayne Falke has located Updike's hope for redemption purely in the secular. Falke concludes: "Updike's fiction is calling for a humanism that has little justification in theology. Its elements are rather simple: joy, love, warm family ties, beauty in our lives, social justice."⁹ What Falke ignores in this statement is Updike's belief that without the divine presence (or at least its "blessing"), life's simple values prove vacant.

Updike is not straightforwardly "Christian" in his portrayal of human life and its meaning, but neither is he "non-religious" in his approach. Perhaps his fictional world's religious perspective is best suggested by Updike himself who wrote these words concerning Robert Frost's poetry: "While there is nothing in his vision as grotesque and ungainly as the God of orthodox theology, yet his poems at their eloquent best provide the vague sense of reassurance which this God at His best provided."¹⁰ Neither an advocate of orthodoxy nor of rationalism, Updike is not a sectarian or a secularist. His humanistic vision reflects a marginal but vital religious belief. It is the nature of this belief which is the focus of this essay.

I. A CAREFUL OBSERVATION OF LIFE ITSELF

Christian and secular-humanistic models serve as foils in Updike's fiction to his observations on life's meaning. Neither Zimmerman, the high school principal in *The Centaur* who criticizes George Caldwell's teaching for slightly "humanistic values," nor The Reverend March, whose faith is intact but baked to "an enduring hardness," have anything to offer Caldwell in his search for ways to live with dignity in the midst of life's uncertainty (pp. 86, 176).¹¹ Similarly, Jack Eccles, the humanist minister, and Fritz Kruppenbach, the orthodox Lutheran clergyman, prove in *Rabbit, Run* to be unhelpful to Harry in his quest. Eccles' God remains merely theoretical and salvation is reduced by him to a matter of good works. Kruppenbach's belief in Christ causes him to reject Eccles' "decency and busyness" as "nothing," but his faith proves equally sterile, not allowing him to muster any compassion for "one childish husband leaving one childish wife" (p. 143).

It is not in these caricatures of our contemporary approaches to life's meaning, but in a renewed dedication to the complexity and ambiguity of life itself, that Updike has discovered faint lines pointing to life's mystery. Sensing the current shallowness both of a directly "religious" mode of existence, and of a carefully reasoned, but foundationless, "ethical" stance, Updike has become an explorer of the "aesthetic" possibilities of life. He has attempted to give voice in his fiction to the world "as he sees it, unamended and whole."¹² Not wishing, in his own words, to make his fiction "any clearer than life," Updike has refused to resolve fully the tension he has observed between the value and the vanity of creation.¹³ Lacking any direct and clear supernatural verification as to life's purpose or meaning, and sensing the vacuousness of the professional do-gooder's life without such knowledge, Updike has turned his attention to a careful and

common sense observation of life itself, in the hope of discovering some sure place on which to root his own existence.

What has Updike seen? Critics have concluded that he is a "chronicler of American anxiety," a prophet in "our stainless steel wilderness" showing "the sadness and emptiness of American life."¹⁴ On the one hand, Updike observes man doomed to die and threatened by oblivion, and yet he finds "moments that shine, and joy."¹⁵ One critic has concluded that Updike writes of the ways we exist "with dignity and honor in an enigmatic universe."¹⁶ In our oftentimes drab existences, and without denying that very drabness, Updike seeks to "keep a fertile space open."¹⁷ In the majority of his fiction, Updike's characters are peeled away, "exposing a pulp of indecision, a core of wonder."¹⁸ With descriptions such as these, Updike's critics have viewed his fictive world as presenting to the reader "a distinguished balancing act over a void, a major image of precarious life being true to itself."¹⁹

II. ECCLESIASTES AS AN ANALOGUE

In seeking to understand the exact religious nature of Updike's continuing "balancing act over a void" an analogue can perhaps be useful. There is always the danger in such an approach of imposing an interpretative design upon a body of fiction, not letting the novels and stories reveal their own patterns of meaning. But Updike has himself suggested such a procedure in at least two ways. In his interview in the *Paris Review* Updike allows that there are in his fiction "certain basic harmonies, certain congruences with prototypes in the Western consciousness" that he is happy to accept.²⁰ For example, he agrees with a critic that there are illuminating parallels between his book *Couples* and the *Don Juan* legend, though the similarities were unintended. Secondly, in his novels and short stories, Updike has consistently set the stage for understanding what is to follow by providing his readers an interpretive key in the nature of an epigraph, usually taken from religious sources. It is one such epigraph that is useful for our purposes.

In *Museums and Women and Other Stories*, Updike prefaces his collection by quoting Ecclesiastes 3:11-13:

He has made everything beautiful in its time; Also he has put eternity into man's mind, yet so he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end.

I know that there is nothing better for them than to be happy and enjoy themselves as long as they live;

Also that it is God's gift to man that every one should eat and drink and take pleasure in all his toil.

Here, in the writing of that unknown Hebrew sage (designated in the text only by the term "Qoheleth," meaning "the preacher—the Ecclesiastic"—thus the name of the book), we are given an interpretative guide, one with "certain basic harmonies," or parallels, with Updike's stories. The epigraph can serve as a key to comprehending the theological center of this collection of stories, as well as of the Updike corpus more generally. For Updike stands in the tradition of this Old Testament wisdom writer, observing life carefully, debunking those who would naively categorize it, chronicling both its vanity and its mystery, but nevertheless affirming, however tentatively, its real value as the divine creation.

Museums and Women was not the first occasion in which Updike has made explicit reference to Qoheleth's writing. In his first novel, *The Poorhouse Fair*, the narrator (Updike?) comments:

Today was not the day for talk of bad health. As the Preacher saith, to everhing there is a season and a time to every purpose under Heaven. This way the day intended for rejoicing (p. 80, Knopf).

But the rain that had come threatening the poorhouse's annual fair had made rejoicing problematic, and it was impossible to know what God willed for the hours ahead. Again, in *Rabbit Redux*, Babe, the black singer in Jimbo's Friendly Lounge, sings "in a voice that is no woman's voice at all and no man's, is merely human, the words of Ecclesiastes. A time to be born, a time to die. A time to gather up stones, a time to cast stones away." The narrator reflects: "Yes. The Lord's last word. There is no other word, not really" (p. 115).

To these direct references might be added the allusion to Ecclesiastes found in *Rabbit, Run*. In that book, Eccles, the ecclesiastic, is perhaps meant as a parody on the original Preacher, refusing to rest in the preciousness of the divine creation. More like a social worker than a priest, and having lost his faith in God, Eccles specializes in counseling, seeking to help people adjust to their situations. But where the original Preacher pointed out the vanity of our toil, Eccles tells Rabbit: "We must work for forgiveness; we must *earn* the right to see the thing behind everything" (p. 234). Both Qoheleth and Eccles counsel man to: "Be a good husband. A good father. Love what you have left" (p. 233). But their motivations for such action are different. Eccles would have us attempt to master life; Qoheleth realizes the need to respond gratefully to it.

It is not in the direct citations or indirect allusions, however, that the case for Ecclesiastes as an analogue to Updike's corpus of fiction

depends. These are but indicators. The validity of the suggestion rests in the overall congruence of their worldviews. In particular, one notes the following similarities. Updike, like Qoheleth, (A) focuses on the pseudowisemen of his age who seek to *work* at mastering (manipulating) life. Again as with Qoheleth, Updike (B) portrays the wiseman as one who recognizes life's vanity. Given death as man's limiter, given the seeming indifference of the universe, given God's silence—man's toil is mere busyness. Nevertheless, despite the uncertainty, Updike, like Qoheleth, (C) affirms the gift of life as being from God. Our lot, therefore, is to enjoy God's creation while we can.

A. Today's Pseudo-Wisemen

I said to myself, 'I have acquired great wisdom, surpassing all who were over Jerusalem before me; and my mind has had great experience of wisdom and knowledge' (Ec. 1:16, RSV).

A wisdom motif is prominent throughout the Updike corpus. From the neon owl on a signboard which advertises pretzels (*The Centaur*), to Jimmy, the Mouseketeer, who reduces Socrates' aphorism "Know thyself" to a self-help slogan (*Rabbit, Run*), to young Richard Maples' collection of Batman cards ("Your Lover Just Called"), parodies on our contemporary sources of wisdom are scattered throughout Updike's works. Beyond these humorous referents, Updike also creates a succession of characters who are thought wise by contemporary standards, but who nevertheless lack real understanding. Bech, the writer, amidst a fever of self-importance, is honoured by the Bulgarians though his writing has been a failure for a decade ("The Bulgarian Poetess"). Tothero, the derelict ex-basketball coach ("*Tot*" means "dead" in German) who once led Rabbit's high school team to victory, now embodies the final product of his philosophy—the sacredness of achievement (*Rabbit, Run*). Reverend Pedrick, the "businessman's" minister who preaches that Jesus offers us *present security*, four-and-a-half percent compounded every quarter!" (*Couples*, p. 26); Eccles; and Reverend Dobson, who tells young David Kern that heaven can be compared to "the way the goodness Abraham Lincoln did lives after him" (*Pigeon Feathers*, p. 95), equally betray to their listeners the vacuousness of their wisdom. Joey, the advertising man who seeks a life of pleasure but who doubts its wisdom (*Of The Farm*); Conner, the administrator of a poorhouse who superimposes his sterile theories on his rightfully antagonistic wards (*The Poorhouse Fair*); Ken Whitman, the scientist who is an expert in photosynthesis, but who is

nevertheless further away from knowing life's mystery than his less educated neighbors (*Couples*)—the list could be expanded.

Working at life in order to wrest some meaning from it, these characters in Updike's novels and stories seek life's significance in pleasure, wisdom, possessions, success, or decency. But together, they betray the vanity of such an approach. Life does not yield its secrets to our manipulations. As Ken Whitman reflects:

He thought of photosynthesis and it appeared to him there was a tedious deep flirtatiousness in nature that withheld her secrets while the church burned astronomers and children died of leukemia. That she yielded by whim, wantonly, to those who courted her offhand, with a careless ardor, he, Ken lacked. The *b-b-bitch* (*Couples*, p. 106).

B. Life's Vanity

Then I considered all that my hands had done and the toil I had spent in doing it, and behold, all was vanity and a striving after wind, and there was nothing to be gained under the sun (Ec. 2:11, RSV).

In an interview in *Life* magazine in 1966, Updike commented:

My novels are all about the search for useful work....So many people these days have to sell things they don't believe in, and have jobs that defy describing. It's so different from the time when men even took their names from the work they did—carpenter, farmer, fisher. A man has to build his life outward from a job he can do. Once he finds one he's got eight hours of the day licked, and if he sleeps eight more, he's two-thirds golden.²¹

Although useful work might be the goal of much of Updike's fiction, such involvement is shown to be increasingly problematic in our technological world. As Rabbit recognizes while watching on the six o'clock news the astronauts' work at landing on the moon: "They keep mentioning Columbus but...it's the exact opposite: Columbus flew blind and hit something, these guys see exactly where they're aiming and it's a big round nothing" (*Rabbit Redux* p. 28). Yet, most in American society refuse to recognize that their lives' efforts are directed toward "a big round nothing." It is for this reason that Updike has become in his fiction "less a maker than a dismantler." D. J. Enright, who coined this apt description, wonders if such an "anatomist" shouldn't have smething more to show at the end of (his stories) than "a stripped skeleton and a bucket of waste flesh and blood."²² But this is to miss Updike's vision. Given life's mystery, and given our penchant in America to reduce it to a variety of mistakenly straightforward programs, Updike has sought to give voice to the sham.

Rabbit knows enough about life's possibilities to see that they all lead to dead ends (*Rabbit, Run*). Bech realizes that poetry and love (the "Roman" and the "romance") are merely "twin attempts to make the best of a bad job" (*Bech: A Book*, p. 145). *The Poorhouse Fair* reflects the total boredom and passivity most people face, whether old or young. Ace Anderson must drown his meaninglessness by dancing ("Ace in the Hole"). Jerry Conant realizes the emptiness of his affair with Sally Mathias apart from some "blessing" being given to it from above. And such blessing remains absent (*Marry Me*). As Updike has stated in an interview:

My books feed, I suppose, on some kind of perverse relish in the fact that there are insolvable problems. There is no reconciliation between the inner, intimate appetites and the external consolations of life. You want to live forever, you want to have endless wealth, you have an endless avarice for conquests, crave endless freedom really, and yet, despite the aggressive desires, something within us expects no menace.²³

Updike's fiction, like Qoheleth's work, exposes with biting effect those *menaces* to our vain desires. Chief among these are (1) death's ubiquity, (2) life's mystery, and above all (3) God's silence.

(1) Death's Ubiquity

For the fate of the sons of men and the fate of beasts is the same; as one dies, so dies the other. They all have the same breath, and man has no advantage over the beasts; for all is vanity (Ec. 3:19, RSV).

Updike understands the central fact of existence to be death itself.²⁴ In his short story, "The Blessed Man of Boston, My Grandmother's Thimble, and Fanning Island," Updike makes use of Pascal's allegory concerning "a number of men in chains, and all condemned to death..." Viewing one after another of their fellow inmates executed each day, these prisoners look on with sorrow and no hope, realizing that this is their fate as well. Pascal concludes with these words: "C'est l'image de la condition des hommes" (It is the image of the condition of man) (*Pigeon Feathers*, pp. 165-166).

Some in the Updike corpus try to forestall death, like the poorhouse's administrator, Conner, whose promotions are tied up with the longevity of his wards. Others seek vainly to minimize it, like George Kern who responds to his son's fear of death by cavalierly saying:

Is the kid worried about death? Don't give it a thought, David. I'll be lucky if I live till tomorrow, and I'm not worried. If they'd taken a buckshot gun and shot me in the cradle I'd be better off....Hell, I think death is a wonderful thing" (*Pigeon Feathers*, p. 99).

Still others come to accept it. George Caldwell, in *The Centaur*, who transfers his fear of death at various times to his family, his school, and his farm, knows he is not ready to die. Even “a ninety-nine-year-old Chinaman with tuberculosis, gonorrhoea, syphilis, and toothache” is not ready to die, he says. But as the book proceeds, George comes to the painful, but paradoxically joyful conclusion, that only “in giving his life to others” can he enter into total freedom (p. 220). From a fear of death, he turns to embrace life on its way to the grave.

George is the exception, however. More typically in Updike’s writings, death’s imminence is almost compulsively feared by his characters. “Bech Panics” for “his death gnawed inside him” (*Bech: A Book*, p. 126). All Mrs. Robinson can do, in *Of The Farm*, is smash several plates on the kitchen floor “to remind us that she was there,” as her son says. “She’s afraid we’ll forget her. It’s a fear people have when they’re her age” (p. 86f., Knopf). The young divinity student who watches the beach in “Lifeguard” thinks “young as I am...I wake at odd hours and in the shuddering darkness and silence feel my death rushing toward me like an express train” (*Pigeon Feathers*, p. 148). In the story “The Dark” death is compared to being trapped in a locked room (*The Music School*, pp. 152-156). In *Marry Me*, Jerry Conant is obsessed with death, as is Piet Hanema in *Couples*. At one point in the book, for example, Piet dreams, reciting an endless litany of death:

The Chinese knife across the eye. The electric chair dustless in the tiled room. The earthquake that snaps cathedral rafters....The knotted silk cord. The commando’s piano wire. The crab in the intestine. The chicken bone in the windpipe. The slippery winter road....The limp-limbed infant smothered in his crib. The rotting kidney turning the skin golden (p. 273).

The narrator comments that “revolving terror (scoops) the shell of him thin” until Piet awakens his wife and asks her to help him forget this obsession (p. 273). But forgetting death’s ever present reality proves difficult for Piet amid such reminders as the abortion of his unborn child, the death of John F. Kennedy, and the terminal cancer of John Ong. As in Updike’s other novels, death provides the continuing backdrop to the events of life.

(2) Life’s Mystery

For who knows what is good for man while he lives the few days of his vain life, which he passes like a shadow? For who can tell man what will be after him under the sun? (Ec. 6:12, RSV)

For Updike, life presents itself to man as a surd seeking comprehension: It seems to have “no seasons, only changes of weather” (*Rabbit Redux*, p. 171). Wanting to capture the seasons, but reduced to chronicling the changes in weather, Updike’s fiction reflects in its pages the mystery of creation.

Seasonal references are scattered throughout Updike’s work, as might be expected of a careful observer of life’s ways. When Rabbit flees at the end of *Rabbit, Run*, for example, it is both literally and symbolically down Summer Street. The narrator says Rabbit came to the curb and stepped down, wanting “to travel to the next patch of snow” (p. 255). Rabbit is moving toward the winter of his life. By the time of *Rabbit Redux*, he has weathered a great deal more and it is now, both figuratively and actually, the end of autumn. “Be November pretty soon,” he apologizes as his wife shivers in his arms as the novel closes (p. 349). In *Couples*, the chapter headings reveal a similar concern for nature’s cycle. Once the reader is “(Welcomed) to Tarbox,” he observes the residents skating on “Thin Ice,” hoping for that “Breakthrough” when “It’s Spring Again.”

Updike’s interest in life’s pattern is apparent not only in his references to the seasons, however. It is also made evident through his fascination with the differing stages of man’s life. Updike writes of youth (particularly his youth in small town Pennsylvania) and of old age (using his grandfather as a model, for example, in *The Poorhouse Fair*). And increasingly, he has concentrated on life’s midpoint, the summer that is turning to autumn all too quickly.²⁵ Joey Robinson in *Of The Farm*, is thirty-five, at the midpoint of his life, as is Rabbit Angstrom, Piet Hanema, and Jerry Conant. The Reverend Mr. Thomas Marshfield is slightly older at forty-one and George Caldwell has a teenage son, but they too live in the middle of their allotted days.

The problem each of these men face is the seeming indifference, if not outright hostility, of the universe around them. It is not simply that time is passing, but that its meaning is proving elusive. What can be held onto as significant? Using his observations of the sea as a parable of man’s general inability to comprehend life’s mystery, Updike writes:

All I expect is that once into my blindly spun web of words the thing itself will break: make an entry and an account of itself. Not declare what it will do. This is no mystery; we are old friends. I can observe. Not cast its vote with mine, and make a decree; I have no hope of this. The session has lasted too long. I wish it to yield only on the point of its identity. What is it? Its breadth, its glitter, its greenness and sameness balk me. *What is it?* If I knew, I could say (“The Sea’s Green Sameness,” *Museums and Women*, p. 141).²⁶

Lacking any sure knowledge of life, Updike's characters often seem paralyzed. Hook, for example, can only stand motionless at the end of *The Poorhouse Fair* "groping after the fitfull shadow of the advice he must [wants to] impart to Conner, as a bond between them and as a testament to endure his dying in the world. What was it?" (p. 185, Knopf) In *Marry Me*, Ruth Conant and Sally Mathias both want Ruth's husband, Jerry, to decide whether he is going to divorce Ruth in order to marry Sally. But Jerry cannot. He is waiting for a revelation, a "blessing" from above (pp. 53, 190, Knopf). As he tells Ruth: "'Men don't like to make decisions, they want God or women to make them'" (p. 286, Knopf). Believing that man is not able to make firm decisions, given life's ambiguity, Updike consistently ends his novels on an ambiguous note. Interestingly too, in his short stories, Updike has tended increasingly in the direction of "still-life paintings," cameo observations on life devoid of any real plot or character development (compare the collection in *Pigeon Feathers* with *Museums and Women*, for example). Life's significance eludes Updike; though in portraying something of its resonance he suggests such meaning is not nonexistent—merely hidden.

(3) God's Silence

I have seen the business that God has given to the sons of men to be busy with. He has made everything beautiful in its time; also he has put eternity into man's mind, yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end (Ec. 3:10-11, RSV).

In *Rabbit Redux*, Peggy tells Harry (Rabbit), "Living is a compromise between doing what *you* want and doing what *other* people want." To which he responds, "What about what poor God wants?" (p. 102) Unfortunately, what God wants is an unanswerable question for Rabbit, just as it is through most of the Updike corpus, and this radically qualifies his characters' judgments on life. For example, we find Rabbit in *Rabbit, Run* seeking God on a mountain top. He thinks, "It seems plain standing here that if there is this floor there is a ceiling, that the true space in which we live is upward space." Rabbit's thoughts turn to death and he seeks some evidence of God's favor. But the narrator comments, "Silence blasts him." Terrified by this void, Harry turns to his lover, Ruth, for some assurance: "Put your arms around me" (p. 96).

In *Rabbit Redux*, Janice tells her husband:

It's the year nineteen sixty-nine and there's no reason for two mature people to smother each other to death simply out of inertia. I'm searching for a valid identity and I suggest you do the same (p. 98).

But Rabbit can only continue to do nothing, given his inability to know what God would have him to do. Jerry Conant, in *Marry Me*, reacts similarly. Unwilling to either get a divorce or end his affair with Sally Mathias, he is told by Richard Mathias, her husband:

But for Chrissakes, Jerry, you should've either broken it off or run off with her. You've put that woman through hell....Well you have to pick. In our society you have to pick (p. 14, Knopf).

But Jerry cannot, for as he has already told his wife, Ruth, "I've been waiting I suppose for God to do something" (p. 171, Knopf). Peter Caldwell in *The Centaur* and Joey Robinson in *Of The Farm* seem equally paralyzed. Must they, like Chiron in *The Centaur*, "wander forever beneath the blank gaze of the Gods" (p. 219)?

Wary of searching, some turn cynically away from God, their vision being redirected to earth. Conner, for example, openly belittles Hook's belief in God, saying that visions of God can be chemically induced (*The Poorhouse Fair*, pp. 114-115, Knopf). Ruth Conant is similarly skeptical of her husband's faith (*Marry Me*). For Freddy Thorne, the agnostic dentist in *Couples*, the only God that exists is "Big Man Death" (p. 387). Unable to live consistently with such a fatalistic posture, however, he turns to others for consolation. After all, "People are the only thing people have left since God packed up." And Freddy continues, "By people I mean sex" (p. 155).

The Reverend Marshfield is unlike Conner, Ruth, or Freddy, in that he still believes in a God; but he is "the utterly *absconditus Deus*" (p. 255). Marshfield is like Jerry Conant, Piet Hanema, Harry Angstrom, Peter Caldwell in this regard. As with these other Updike characters, Marshfield's response is to make a substitute "God," something more tangible and real, out of women. Marshfield writes in his diary:

I told Jamie Ray, giving myself the pleasure of confession, how in my despair and bewilderment at being unable to fuck Frankie, I prayed God for the power to have an erection; I begged Him to be my accomplice in adultery, and believe that, had not events intervened, the prayer would have been answered. Our God is a fertility God (p. 237).

Marshfield continues in his diary, accidentally writing "ompotent," for "impotent." He notices his mistake and adds the footnote:

Dear Me. My suggestion of omnipotence in impotence reminded me of Meister Eckhardt, with his cyclical assertions that Everything is God, that all things merge so that everything is nothing, that god is nothing. The triumphant atheism of mysticism. Give me Thomistic degrees instead. There is *something*, dammit. Damn It? (p. 240).

That “something” is a succession of lovers which he fears might damn him. As he reflects on his life in which adultery has become all-consuming, he asks, “God, the sadness of Creation! Is it ours, or Thine?” (p. 242) The question is largely rhetorical, but not entirely. God’s role in human affairs, given his apparent absence, is indiscernible.

The majority of Updike’s characters are vitally interested in, perhaps even obsessed by, the need to know God. But increasingly as each novel has been written, Updike’s characters have found such knowledge perplexing. In varying degrees they are like Freddy Thorne commenting on Jesus’ miracle at Cana:

Christ. I’d love to believe it...any of it. Just the littlest bit of it. Just one lousy barrel of water turned into wine. Just half a barrel. A quart. I’ll even settle for a pint (p. 156).

Given the absence of any such clear revelation of God’s presence today, and given man’s subsequent turning to the human—for sexuality—for assurance as to his significance, true belief is shown to be more and more problematic. From *The Poorhouse Fair*, Updike’s first novel, to *Marry Me*, his latest, the reader senses that man’s reaction to God’s silence is making faith even more tenuous. For Hook, “There is no goodness without belief. There is nothing but busy’ness” (*The Poorhouse Fair*, p. 116, Knopf). And in Updike’s subsequent novels and stories, it is increasingly “busy-ness,” not “belief” which seems the order of the day. Where the narrator can conclude *Rabbit, Run* by saying, “...He runs. Ah: Runs. Runs” (p. 255). In *Rabbit Redux* the hopefulness of “Ah: Runs” has been exposed to be a chasing after wind. Life’s futility is all too apparent in the pages of Updike’s works.

C. The Gift of Life

Behold, what I have seen to be good and to be fitting is to eat and drink and find enjoyment in all the toil with which one toils under the sun the few days of his life which God has given him, for this is his lot. Every man also to whom God has given wealth and possessions and power to enjoy them, and to accept his lot and find enjoyment in his toil—this is the gift of God (Ec. 5:18-19, RSV).

In a situation where death cancels out what small gains have accrued in life, where the universe denies man any real insight into its meaning, and where God is known only as a presence which remains silent, it is easy to despair. But there is also another possible response, one which Updike portrays in certain of his works. In some of his novels and short stories there is reflected a sense of assurance

concerning life, despite life's problematics. At times, Updike's positive affirmations are extremely tenuous, as in "The Carol Sing" which concludes:

Why do we? Come every year sure as the solstice to carol these antiquities that if you listened to the words would break your heart. Silence, darkness, Jesus, angels. Better I suppose to sing than to listen" (*Museums and Women*, p. 127).

But in other of his works, Updike forthrightly portrays life's paradoxical joy.

In *The Centaur*, for example, Peter is able, despite his present situation, to recall his father, George Caldwell, listening to the laughter coming from the saloon and saying to his son, "All joy belongs to the Lord." Peter realizes it was "half a joke" but also, by implication, half true. For George,

Wherever in the filth and confusion and misery, a soul felt joy, there the Lord came and claimed it as his own; into barrooms and brothels and classrooms and alleys slippery with spittle....Wherever a moment of joy was felt, there the Lord stole and added to His enduring domain. And all the rest, all that was not joy, fell away, precipitated, dross that had never been. He thought of his wife's joy in the land and Pop Kramer's joy in the newspaper and his son's joy in the future....Only goodness lives. But it does live (p. 220).

From an obsession with death, George is able to return to an appreciation of the gift of life and to his role in sustaining that gift for his family.

This awareness that life is to be enjoyed as a gift from God is mediated in various ways. For David Kern, it comes in observing the colored patterns of pigeon wings (*Pigeon Feathers*); for Joey Robinson, in noting the patterns of rain on the window (He says, "A physical sense of ulterior mercy overswept me") (*Of the Farm*, p. 80). For Rabbit, his insight into life's gift comes on the golf course; for Hook, through the stars, those "points of light arranged at random, to give the night sky adornment" (p. 114, Knopf). The list could be extended. The key to discovering the value of existence in each of these cases is the recognition that life is a gift granted to us. It is in innocence, rather than through attempted mastery, that man discovers life's unfolding Grace-fulness.²⁷ "There is a color," suggests Updike, "a quiet but tireless goodness that things at rest, like a brick wall or a small stone seem to affirm. A wordless reassurance these things are pressing to give."²⁸

Some of Updike's characters like Hook, in *the Poorhouse Fair*, discover life's "goodness." Others, such as Conner, do not, trying instead futilely to arrange the stars "geometrically," or so they "Spell out a thought-provoking sentence" (p. 114, Knopf). Life takes on

meaning for John Nordholm in "The Happiest I've Been," as two different friends trust him enough to fall asleep beside him, and in "Friends From Philadelphia," where the reader realizes John will be surprised by the gift of a bottle of *Chateau Mouton-Rothschild 1937* (*The Same Door*, pp. 175, 18). Man's lot is to enjoy life as it unfolds. But others fail to understand the need for such a receptive posture toward life. Like Clayton Clayton, they see "competition as the spine of the universe" ("Who Made Yellow Roses Yellow?" [*The Same Door*, p. 76]).

Throughout Updike's writing, one observes his belief that life cannot be reduced to a formula. The husband in the story "Wife-Wooing" is taught this lesson as his program for seducing his wife ends in failure. It is instead his wife's unexpected gift of herself in bed the following night that produces ecstasy. Swimming offers a further parable in this regard. As the divinity student in the story "Lifeguard" reflects, "We struggle and thrash and drown; we succumb, even in despair, and float, and are saved" (*Pigeon Feathers*, p. 147).

That life presents itself to man as a gift to be received is a spiritual truth. For Updike, though God may seem silent, he does provide those who are receptive indirect communication through his creation. In his story "Packed Dirt, Church-Going, A Dying Cat, A Traded Car," Updike suggests through David Kern's reminiscences that existence remains in God's gracious hands. David describes his insights into life's meaning as "supernatural mail." The events of his day "had the signature: decisive but illegible" (*Pigeon Feathers*, pp. 174, 172). In *The Centaur*, Peter and George Caldwell have a similar recognition as they drive in a snowstorm:

What an eloquent silence reigns! Olinger under the vast violet dome of the storm-struck night sky becomes yet one more Bethlehem. Behind a glowing window the infant God squalls. Out of zero all has come to birth (p. 179).

And to give yet a third example, Hook responds to Conner's cynical question concerning evidence for God's existence by saying, "There is what of Cre-ation I can see..." (*The Poorhouse Fair*, p. 112, Knopf).

It is with fragile threads of argument such as these that certain of Updike's characters are able to hold on to life's meaning. They might hope for more—indeed Harry Angstrom, George Caldwell, and Piet Hanema all seem at times to have lost their grasp on such a tenuous mooring, and perhaps the Reverend Marshfield and Jerry Conant do—but as Mrs. Smith tells Rabbit:

That's what you have, Harry: life. It's a strange gift and I don't know how we're supposed to use it, but I know it's the only gift we get and I know it's a good one (*Rabbit, Run*, p. 187).

Such is the limit of man's knowledge of his present situation. We could wish for more, but even small joys are not to be despised.

III. CONCLUSION

Criticism of Updike's writing need not gravitate in the direction of either Christian orthodoxy or secular humanism. For Updike has provided his readers, both through direct references and by the overall shape of his fiction, an alternate interpretive approach. In a way that parallels both consciously and unconsciously the wisdom writers of Old Testament times, Updike has turned to creation in his search for life's meaning. Limiting himself to careful observations of life as lived, albeit in fictive form, Updike has proven, in Granville Hicks' phrase, to be "a most redoubtable explorer of the mysteries of the commonplace."²⁹ As he has portrayed contemporary existence, he has revealed its pretentiousness, even while suggesting its divine basis.

The Hebrew wiseman, Qoheleth, used the medium of a "king-fiction" to expose in his day the vanity of working to achieve riches, pleasure, or wisdom. In an analogous way, John Updike has used in our day the short story and novel to give voice to the pretentiousness and hollowness of contemporary attempts to manipulate life to one's desires. Aware of the intransigence of life's qualifiers, death being the chief, Updike, like Qoheleth, has sought some firm ground on which to build man's life. As with the Hebrew writer, he has found it, not in the word of God proclaimed by the prophets or clergy, but in God's still small voice resident in creation. Here in life's everyday experiences—in one's work, past memories, relationships, and love—man discovers clues to life's ongoingness. If one cannot master life's mystery, he can at least perceive sufficient truth from it to gain some skill in the "art of steering" (Prov. 1:5) through the course of his days. For John Updike, the god of the churches is silent; but this same God has not left himself without witness through his created order.

FOOTNOTES

1. Rachel C. Burchard, *John Updike: Yea Sayings* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1971), p. 2.

2. John S. Hill, "Quest For Belief: Theme in the Novels of John Updike," *Southern Humanities Review* 3 (September 1969): 166.

3. Alice and Kenneth Hamilton, *The Elements of John Updike* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), p. 249.

4. Lewis Lawson, "Rabbit Angstrom As A Religious Sufferer," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 42 (June 1974):232-46. David Galloway, "The Absurd Man As Saint: The Novels of John Updike," *Modern Fiction Studies* 10 (Summer

1964): 111-27; Robert Detweiler, *Four Spiritual Crises in Mid-Century American Fiction* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1963), p. 22.

5. Hamiltons, *op. cit.*, p. 248; S.A. Zylatra, "John Updike and the Parabolic Nature of the World," *Soundings* 56 (Fall 1973):323-37; Daniel Morrissey, review of *A Month of Sundays*, by John Updike, in *Commonweal*, 6 June 1965, pp. 187-88.

6. Richard E. Fisher, "John Updike: Theme and Form in the Gardens of Epiphanies," *Moderna Språk* 56 (Fall 1962):259.

7. Arlin G. Meyer, "The Theology of John Updike," *The Cresset* 34 (October 1971):24.

8. John Aldridge, "An Askew Halo for John Updike," *Saturday Review*, 27 June 1970, p. 25.

9. Wayne Falke, "Rabbit Redux: Time/Order/God," *Modern Fiction Studies* 20 (Spring 1974):61, 65.

10. John Updike, "Why Robert Frost Should Receive the Nobel Prize," *Assorted Prose* (New York: Knopf, 1965), p. 30.

11. Page citations to Updike's works will be given in the text and are from the Fawcett Crest Book editions unless otherwise noted.

12. Guy Davenport, "Novels With Masks," *National Review* 14 (9 April 1963):288.

13. John Updike quoted in Guerin La Course, "The Innocence of John Updike," *Commonweal*, 8 February 1963, p. 513.

14. Morrissey, review of *A Month of Sundays*, p. 187; Alfred Klauser, "Steel Wilderness," *Christian Century*, 22 February 1961, p. 246.

15. Granville Hicks, "Mysteries of the Commonplace," *Saturday Review*, 17 March 1962, p. 21.

16. Joseph Waldmeir, "It's the Going That's Important, Not the Getting There: Rabbit's Questing Non-Quest," *Modern Fiction Studies* 20 (Spring 1974):13.

17. Richard Gilman, "A Distinguished Image of Precarious Life," *Commonweal*, 28 October 1960, p. 128.

18. Jack De Bellis, "The Group and John Updike," *Sewanee Review*, 72 (Summer 1964):534.

19. Gilman, *op. cit.*, p. 128.

20. Charles Samuels, "The Art of Fiction, XLIII: John Updike," *Paris Review* 45 (Winter 1968):105.

21. John Updike, quoted in Jane Howard, "Can A Nice Novelist Finish First?" *Life*, 4 November 1966, p. 82.

22. D. J. Enright, "Updike's Ups and Downs," *Holiday*, November 1965, p. 162.

23. Frank Gado, *First Person* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1973), p. 92.

24. The best description of Updike's thematic treatment of death is Joyce B. Markle, *Fighters and Lovers: Theme in the Novels of John Updike* (New York: New York University Press, 1973).

25. Cf. Updike's extended poem entitled "Midpoint," which takes an inventory of his life at the end of his thirty-fifth year. John Updike, *Midpoint and Other Poems* (New York: Knopf, 1969).

26. Cf. "The Blessed Man of Boston, My Grandmother's Thimble, and Fanning Island," *Pigeon Feathers*, p. 167: "Details. Details are the giant's fingers. He seizes the stick and strips the bark and shows, burning beneath, the moist white wood of joy. For I thought that this story, fully told, would become without my willing it a happy story, a story full of joy; had my powers been greater, we would know. As it is, you, like me, must take it on faith."

27. Cf. Fisher, "Garden of Epiphanies," p. 258; La Course, *op. cit.*

28. La Course, *op. cit.*, p. 514.

29. Hicks, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

The Psychotherapeutic Situation in Theological Perspectives

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Since the dawn of recordable history man has been fascinated and perplexed with human actions, thoughts and motivation. The classic words of Delphic and Socratic wisdom: "Know thyself," "The unexamined life is not worth living," have captivated and challenged human reflection, prompting both an individualistic and a collective search for human truth. The mystery of human life and human spirit has been both elevated and debased, the shift frequently being relative to man's interest in and interpretation of the Divine Spirit. Thus during the Reformation, the Holy Spirit was all, while the human spirit was considered a prostrate helpless endowment that, apart from election by the Divine Spirit, had no ultimate individual or corporate worth. If he was to escape being pejoratively stamped a humanist, the religious person had to subdue any "rational creativity"—or at least appear to do so! Human creative propensities working to reform the religious institutions were viewed as divinely ordained. But human initiative in secular activities was viewed askance and was accused of evoking human rebellion against the created order of things as religious perceived.

The widespread consequence of this has been a *dualistic* perception of creaturely life and a dichotomously split two-level interpretation of reality: to each its own! Such a serious duality is especially noted in the segment of human life that has to do with *conflict* and the wide gamut of human *affects*. This either/or split is mirrored in the writings of notable and well-intentioned theologians of our day and is certainly present among a large segment of writers and thinkers in the modern behavioral sciences of our century. It is thus that John Hick, in his monumental work on theodicy, can write about hope as follows: "Christian hope is not parallel to secular hope but is the extrapolation of Christian faith into the future."¹ Likewise, in a whole book by Ezra Stotland which is devoted to the "psychology of hope," one notices a lack of any eschatological parameters. In *Theology After Freud* Peter Homans vividly reveals the fact that a certain level of suspiciousness exists between the two disciplines dealing with the human spirit:

An investigation of the relation between theology and psychology has never been of special interest to either theologians or psychologists. Theological

studies express only modest concern for the forms of personal and social life and, in so doing, give occasional attention to psychology. But, when the theologian's more considered methodological discussions move to materials outside classic kerygmatic and doctrinal sources for assistance and a fresh perspective, they usually turn to philosophy and historiography, even to literature, rather than to, say, psychology or sociology. And when psychologists from time to time reflect on matters beyond the limits of their own imperatives to scientific rigor, they, too, turn to philosophy, history, and occasionally to literature, but never to theology.²

Thus one may well appreciate Albert C. Outler's attempts, in *Psychotherapy and the Christian Message*, to "relate psychotherapy and Christianity in valid synthesis and productive alliance."³ But even in Outler's sensitive and insightful treatment one may still note the presence of a certain duality that needs synthesis.

The present paper will undertake, in a preliminary and somewhat tentative fashion, to move toward a more synthetic perspective. The development will be threefold:

- I. A commentary on the evolution of psychotherapy as a human activity
- II. Psychotherapy and the psychoanalytic situation as viewed from a responsible and informed Christian position.
- III. The theological implication of therapy and psychoanalysis, and its relationship to the Christian eschatological interpretation of this life and the life to come

I

Though the term "psychotherapy" is a contemporary term for a specific interpersonal activity, the phenomenon has not been initiated in modern times. One could say that a therapeutic relationship has always existed when two of the following individuals have met: 1) a person in distress who has subjectively realized a level of stress in himself which cannot be alleviated by the person himself at that specific time, and 2) another being who is willing to be present, to care, to empathically listen and to venture an opinion or act in a way that is judged to be in the best interest of the distressed individual reaching out to him.

According to this conception, one could say that a parent-child relationship would have, in its long history, frequent serious moments when a therapeutic-type bond becomes a significant mode of relating. Indeed, in such early parent-child relational matrix is embedded not only models of a therapeutic bond but also those of love and faith. Parental consistency, the necessity to set limits and to say "No" at specific junctures, and the institution of deprivation, either as punishment or for the sake of promoting the child's ability

to wait and to tolerate the tension of such a state—all are important postures which are later woven into responsible adult relationships.

What modern psychotherapy seems to do is to recreate a similar kind of relational atmosphere in which, when aberrant early interpersonal relations have occurred, they can be reactivated for the sake of a better resolution and integration. In reality, what is required in both the early patient-child setting and the therapeutic situation are a few basic ingredients: the presence of a sense of trust between two persons, a certain level of maturity, and an ability, in the person whose help is sought, to give and empathize.

From the above, it is obvious that such interpersonal activities are not phenomena that got started in the last century; rather they had their origin in the quite unsophisticated lives of our ancient ancestors. However, modern psychotherapy, as a distinctive methodological discipline, has arisen in the context of what may be broadly referred to as the modern scientific enterprise, and needs to be understood against this background.

Beginning with Kepler and Galileo, and gaining major momentum with Newton (who rather unlike most of those who would follow in his train, regarded his theological contributions as more important than his scientific works!), science established its credentials in the manifest fruits of ever-accelerating achievements: “unravelling the secrets of nature” and increasing human “power to control nature.” Science was methodologically independent of theology—Laplace’s famous remark: “I had no need of that hypothesis!”

Thus, the scientific enterprise shared in and principally contributed to the rise of secularism in the modern period: the pervasive dualistic assumption that religious and theological realities (if indeed there be any) have no relevance for the understanding of ordinary human life, which can and ought to function in complete autonomy. It should be noted that theology and religion, insofar as themselves positing and supporting dualisms, were not without complicity in these developments.

From the self-congratulatory ethos of manifest achievement it took only the distortion of understandable pride into inordinate *hubris* to produce the elitist cultural phenomenon of “all-sufficient” Scientism: There is no true knowledge other than scientific knowledge and no real power other than application of scientific technique! (Scientism was a major, though not the only factor contributing to the split—within the “secular”—between the sciences and the humanities.)

The ever-accelerating expansion of scientific achievement produced—and required—ever-increasing specialization and sub-specialization with the accompanying distortion of compartmentalization in knowledge and practice. The bonds which loosely joined the many “sciences” into “science” were basically those of common (though variably applicable) methodological assumptions and commitments. Many scientists (and many more non-scientist interpreters of science) were also joined by bonds of common faith-assumption and faith-commitment which affirmed so-called “Scientific Determinism” as an all-embracing world-view.

For Christians, it should be possible—if indeed we believe in a living God who is concerned for man and at work in human history—to see in the modern scientific enterprise special gifts of divine grace, even though these gifts—like all gifts of grace—are subject to tragic and sinful human distortion. If Scientistic autonomy-claims are not indeed to have the last word, it should be possible for Christians to see in the history of scientific discovery the guidance and empowerment of divine revelation.

Psychotherapy, as a methodologically-conscious discipline, took root and grew on the soil of the modern scientific enterprise. Its development, therefore, not surprisingly, reflects in special ways the generalized features and assessments sketched above.

However, psychotherapy has of necessity been an integrative “interdisciplinary discipline,” drawing in manifold ways upon a variety of special disciplines. In development of theoretical frameworks, and even more in practice, psychotherapy has had to be an art as well as a science, requiring personal sensitivity and creative insight. Some theoretical models, including those of Freud, have included deterministic assumptions—along with other assumptions which could not be interpreted and applied deterministically. But more adequate developments of theory have come to include what has always been requisite in practice: recognition of the freedom of the unique individual.

Freud’s basic discovery of the psychoanalytic method opened the way for the emergence of psychotherapy, in its various forms, from a poorly defined (yet ageless and real) modality of help, to a respectable field of human therapeutic endeavor with a secure place in the medical sciences. It should surely be possible for the Christian to see in the emergence and refinement of a helping discipline which has greatly enriched the interpersonal and intrapersonal life of man, a more than human disclosure; a gift of divine grace.

This is not, however, to ignore the fact that psychotherapy can pose questions and issues for Christian interpretation. For example,

discovery of the presence of an unconscious mind and of mental functions which could account for myriad forms of aberrant and normal human functioning in the waking state has sometimes been claimed to require the conclusion that such phenomena as religious faith, agape love, and relationship with God are merely illusory. It is indeed true that an appropriate understanding of these will frequently defy reductionistic explanations using only the yardsticks of motivational and conflict parameters. But the emergence of psychotherapy does pose a challenge to those for whom the life of faith and eschatological hope is central and foundation.

Among the significant questions posed by psychotherapy, we may note the following: What constitutes a responsible Christian and religious position toward the discipline of psychotherapy and psychoanalysis? Are there deeper religious truths implicit in the therapeutic relationship of an analyst with his analysand? By a focus on this human and unique interpersonal therapeutic relationship, could one derive theological insights about the moral order of the created world? Are human illness and emotional life-crisis to be viewed exclusively as isolated, "mechanical" and unfortunate life events, or do they have a larger, howbeit mysterious, theological and religious eschatological significance for the life of that person and for those around him?

II

Among the scientific disciplines in our time, the behavioral sciences constitute the youngest and, so far, the most inexact disciplines. The past decades have witnessed a proliferation in specific behavioral trends and schools. The neurological-medical model constitutes one polarity, while the psychoanalytic-psychological model of mental functioning stands at the other end. However, it is this very diversity which has resulted in a much-needed balanced understanding of the mental functioning of man; there now is recognition that both the vegetative-organic substratum of the brain and the "functional"-affective mental operation are equally present. One could say that a major advancement in the expansive field of human mentation and emotion was the differentiation and separation of the field from a predominantly philosophical plane to a position where more concrete measuring methodologies could be applied; this is not to imply that the medical model has a higher level of certitude and authenticity than rigorous and critical theological-philosophical assessments.

A view which sees human conflicts and emotions as not merely synonymous with ethical discord had inevitably to emerge. In the

many preceding years, the religious establishment was the guardian of the insane; all it seemed to do was to chain, exhort, exorcise and pray for souls. For these sick persons, reformation had to come, not from within the ranks of the ordained but from a totally different source, that of the behavioral-neurological sciences. A discipline that did not align itself consciously to any ethical institution was thus divinely destined to usher in a new dimension in the alleviation of human suffering. The immediate response in ethical camps was inevitably to be that of suspicion.

It is of interest to note that in such a breakthrough, the "secular" pioneers (i.e. Freud) were more effective than those who wanted immediately to interpret the newly-acquired insights in a religious context. In psychosomatic medicine, current advancements in bereavement, attachment and separation are, like psychotherapy itself, truly based on the secular and non-religious approach of Freud rather than on that of Jung or other religious interpreters. Jung's religious disposition, though leaving its lasting imprint on significant aspects of our understanding of man's unconscious, has not been as heuristic to subsequent developments in the behavioral sciences.

The establishment of psychiatry as a medical discipline has been a major achievement by 20th-century man. Psychiatry would not have made its unique contribution to medicine had the discipline been left in the academic sphere of philosophy, theology or anthropology. The needed humanization of medicine and the seeing of man as a holistic psychosomatic gestalt have been major contemporary happenings. For Christian faith, the important thing to keep in perspective in all of this is the recognition that such an evolution is an integral divine revelation and not the result of mere human effort and determination. In a larger sense, psychiatry is a contemporary phenomenon to bring humanness to an increasingly complex and mechanized health delivery establishment.

It is imperative that the Christian faith realize the fact that the last one hundred years have witnessed some significant major uncoverings as to the nature and operation of the human mind and brain. What is demanded of the Christian psychotherapist is not the adoption of certain theological or philosophical attitudes for assimilation and *practical* utilization of these findings, but rather a new professional stance. One could refer to this new needed stance as that of a "responsible Christian professional attitude." By this is not meant an evangelical reinterpretation of major behavioral scientific findings (*a la* Paul Tournier, the famous Swiss psychiatrist) but a more responsibly comprehensive and religiously mature position.

The writer of this paper would summarize and define this position as follows:

We live in a created universe where a beneficent loving Creator “desires” to have creatures turn to Him with the utmost free will, with the greatest freedom from compulsivity to do so. He has created a world equipped with natural laws that secure consistency and predictability. A whole new world has been revealed to exist within man himself, a world that is made of a conscious and an unconscious strata and of complex numbers of human drives. The human condition is influenced by a number of “natural occurrences,” including specific childhood happenings that affect later life adaptations, even the ability to live and act in faith. This is not to be interpreted deterministically but rather tragically. Yet, through the discerning knowledge of the Creator, human *tragedy can mysteriously be transformed*. During this earthly life, humans are given opportunities, through revelation, to unravel the secrets of the created order of things, including the order of inner psychic life.

The responsibility of a person endeavoring to alleviate or unravel the workings of this inner world of man requires that such a helping person employ the ardent utilization of his human best in mastering revealed scientific truth and, in so doing, adopt a posture of reflective commitment. This means a realization that what he now knows as truth is partial, and hence he anticipates that a better understanding is feasible through further subsequent discoveries, even if the sources of these discoveries be secular. He realizes well that all scientifically-disclosed truths are ultimately part of the enabling Creator’s plan to let humans participate in the process of revelation.

Thus, a responsible Christian behavioral scientist is one who dedicates his energies to a deeper understanding of the uncovered order of things in his field, masters the funded knowledge in his area of work, and does not sift or omit theories merely because they might seem to contradict his prior formulation of religious ideologies. This certainly implies that an open critical mind is to be utilized constantly. The responsible Christian professional will also be keenly aware that human sin enters any field of scholarship and study when the attainment of perfect mastery of the field becomes the ultimate concern of the investigator and when the professional becomes dulled to the higher and more ultimate meaning of the acquired knowledge. In short, human sin is born when the professional sees what he masters and uncovers, not as the gift of divine grace, but as mere human aggressive endeavoring.

Christian faith demands of science not a mixing of Christian theology with scientific findings, conclusions or methodologies but a more comprehensive reinterpretation of verified scientific findings and adoption of a posture with an eschatological vector. This will be the focus in the concluding part of this paper.

III

In our century, a major and significant contemporary phenomenon in aiding the helping and healing enterprises of man is the initiation, cultivation and refinement of a human interpersonal technique called psychotherapy. The terms has had such wide and varied usage that its deeper ethical and theological perspectives could conceivably be overlooked. The phenomenon, in essence, consists of two humans, hitherto unknown to each other, who establish a relationship in hope that the relationship will lead to better and happier life.

The basic features of this unique relationship are the following assumptions: 1) Human life and experiences are real events which are worthy of being recalled and examined. 2) Potentiality for change, better personality integration, and the assimilation of more adaptive life style are possible at any point in a person's life-span. 3) One human being ("professional") is able to subjugate and control his/her own idiosyncrasies and personal biases and thus deal with another's life-crises with objectivity and reverence. 4) The re-examination of one's life with its varied neurotic defensive styles and a clearer understanding of one's motivations and the nature of conflicts could result in their mastery and, in essence, their reversal. 5) The experiences of a person, whether these experiences be real interpersonal relationships or the personal world of fantasies, wishes, dreams, impulses, phobias, etc., are all real and all important and, as such, are to be handled with the utmost human respect and reverence. This posture maintains, for example, that an individual is unique and is to be respected, and that his suffering and pain are real despite instances in which, when objectively viewed, no major life events can logically be discerned to account for this pain. In such a position, the dictum: "It is not real; it is all in your head!" has no meaning.

In all of the above, the reverence for reality and the seriousness and weight of human experience stand out clearly. Equally evident is the fact that the therapeutic relationship and activity are limited to two dimensions: one human is dealing with another. This lacks the third dimension: a person's relationship with the Creator. This third vector is what modern psychotherapy (in its more conventional and reserved forms) has, rightly or wrongly, persistently left out of its domain, yet it is evident that modern therapy has serious ethical and religious implications. Such therapeutic activity basically asserts the *possibility of human healing* and the *importance of the future* and makes a concerted effort to allow this future to be more meaningful and less conflict-laden. In this sense, then, it has an *eschatological* component, though this may not be readily evident.

The possibility for a better life, more meaningful relationships, less conflict in human enterprises—all these *can* happen. What should be noted in addition is the fact that failure in all such integration and attainment of wholeness can and does occur, and at times (more frequent than are acknowledged) unerring prediction for outcome is not possible. Surprises and incidents of the unexpected are also in evidence; anyone who has worked with depressed patients can attest to the occurrence of suicides among those for whom such a destiny was not suspected as a distinct possibility and, likewise, of personal growth and recovery in those for whom a progressive institutional deterioration was predicted.

There are a number of emerging life and ethical principles that should be asserted as a result of the above-noted phenomenologies. One is that human life is complex and that the healing of souls does not follow strict and predictable directions. Second, healing can occur at all junctures of life and under varied adverse life conditions. A third principle is that the most adverse of life's crises cannot deplete totally the ingredient of healing-capacity that resides in man, but may, on the contrary, prove to have significance in better subsequent human integration and growth.

At a higher theological level, one would wonder if the human phenomenon referred to as psychotherapy is not but a dim and imperfect vision of a far more sublime and perfect original. The psychotherapeutic experience, though a unique encounter, is a very circumscribed and limited one. Though the relationship is based on respect for human life and the seriousness of the world of human feelings, yet there are numerous life situations in which the therapist does not want to get involved. The setting of "therapeutic goals" is, in itself, a sanctioned form of setting limits. It is almost as if the therapist is proclaiming: "I can't do or be everything for you." Though this has positive implications for the growth of the person seeking his help, yet it also demonstrates the limitations of this human relationship. Basically Freud is correct when he states:

The analytic relationship is based on a love of truth—that is, on a recognition of reality—and that it precludes any kind of sham or deceit.

The business of the analysis is to secure the best possible psychological conditions for the functions of the ego; with that it has discharged its task.⁴

The goal for attainment of the "best possible psychological conditions" is, to some significant extent, a form of limiting human involvement, therapeutic as this may be. The "analytic situation" is a facilitating therapeutic technique; the analyst's definition of "reality" is a circumscribed one; and both should be clearly viewed in

this way. The error that is frequently committed by analysis as a discipline and by psychoanalysts as practitioners is making such techniques into life philosophies and religious credos.

There are life crises and life realities where human therapeutic intervention will demand actual involvement, and, though a therapist does not (and frequently should not) become personally involved, yet he should at least be aware, as mentioned above, that his definition of reality is circumscribed and limited. The "care" of a human being in his totality is more an ideal than a human reality. Though man does and should attempt to care for others in a total way, such caring inevitably falls short. Only a "Divine Therapist" can satisfy totally. This is significantly captured by Hick:

... a psychotherapist [tries] to empower a patient to be himself and to cease frustrating his own desires, to face reality and accept his proper place in the affections and respect of others. The Divine Therapist has perfect knowledge of each human heart, is infinitely wise in the healing of its ills, has unbounded love for the patient and unlimited time to devote to him. It remains theoretically possible that He will fail; but He will never cease to try, and we may (as it seems to me) have a full practical certainty that sooner or later He will succeed.⁵

To make a Christian interpretation of psychotherapy is not to introduce theological and philosophical insights, formulations and principles into the practice of what is basically a "human process" but to view the discipline itself as a tool, though an imprecise one, designed by a benevolent Creator to alleviate human distress and suffering. In the life to come, the human and this partial helper will be done away with because the divine and perfect Therapist will be readily accessible to those who seek Him.

FOOTNOTES

1. John Hick, *Evil and the God of Love* (Glasgow: Collins-World, 1966), p. 381.
2. Peter Homans, *Theology After Freud* (Indianapolis/New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1970), Introduction.
3. Albert C. Outler, *Psychotherapy and the Christian Message* (New York: Harper & Row, 1954), p. 7.
4. Sigmund Freud, "Analysis Terminable and Interminable," in *The Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* (London: Hogarth, 1964), Vol. 23, p. 248.
5. Hick, *op. cit.*, p. 381.

Toward Personal Perfection*

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TOWARD THE POSSIBILITY

Perfect personhood could be realized only in a unique individual: a person. Every person is a unique individual, but a perfect person, if there ever were one, would be unique in another order of uniqueness. This person could appropriately be called "the Individual."

The Individual could "be" perfect only by having become perfect: the one in whom personalness became perfected in a unique historical process of personalizing-change. This developmental process of becoming would, as personal, be the Individual's achievement; hence the outcome of perfection could in this sense be attributed to the Individual.

However, the personal achievement could not be simply an autonomous "self-change." The Individual would be dependent—as all people are—upon being affected by other realities, including other agents. But the quite extraordinary outcome of perfection would suggest that a suprahuman Agent was somehow involved in this process and that the role of the human Individual would lie principally in a quite extraordinary exercise of responsive capacity-to-be-affected by the higher persuasively-personalizing Agency.

If such were the case, the Individual's life would involve a radical renunciation of any autonomous endeavor toward decisive self-change and any ultimate claim to self-achievement. The Individual would know, whether others did or not, that the achievement came from the agency of the higher Agent in a gift of capacity and responsibility uniquely given and uniquely received.

The perfection of personhood in the Individual would—whatever the specificities—consist in the complete achievement of maximal possible human persuasively-personalizing-capacity to

*Ed. note: The Reverend T. Ronald Vaughan—M. Div. 1971, M.A. 1974—recently shared with me the reflections presented here under the title, "Toward the Reality," which stimulated me in turn to write the reflections here entitled, "Toward the Possibility."

elicit personal change in ways maximally effective and beneficial for affecting the unique personalization of other individuals in dependent responsiveness to the higher Agent of personal change, with the desire and intention that this personalizing-capacity become, insofar as possible, effective for all. The Individual would thus be the Individual-for-all.

In order for this perfecting of personalizing-capacity to become finally complete, the Individual would have to experience and surmount (not autonomously, but rather through sustained responsiveness to the higher Agent) the maximal possible crises of challenge to his or her developing capacity.

The Individual would be either female or male: of the two—which would be essentially irrelevant to the possibility of becoming personally perfect, though perhaps contingently relevant to historical contexts. The Individual's own mode of sexuality (male or female) would be one of a number of particularities of the Individual as a person (not “personalness in general”) which could not have a universal or ultimate significance. (For example, if the Individual were a woman, any woman—or man—who saw in that particular fact a “universal” or “ultimate” significance would have mis-seen.)

Universal significance could be found, however, in the possibility of seeing the Individual-for-all as presenting and exemplifying in one actual human life a mode of personalization appropriate as a goal for all human life: personalization as relational *interpersonalization* which, renouncing illusions of ultimate “autonomy,” would support and enhance the uniqueness of each individual through ultimate dependence upon the higher Agent. Ultimate significance could be found in the possibility of relationally-receiving as a gift the perfect personalizing-capacity of the Individual-for-each as the perfect agent of personalizing-change: the one in and through whom the higher Agent could effect individual personal transformation toward the goal for all human life.

The Individual's desire and intention to reach out to each and all would not be capable of fulfillment through the Individual as a finite human being. But the human persuasively-personalizing-capacity perfected in the Individual would be able to reach out to all through the relationally-mediating agency of the higher Agent, and would be able even to perfect another...if any one—or even every one—were, in the processes of personal change, willing to receive and, despite all setbacks, go on receiving the gift...all the way to the culmination.

All these things would, if actual, no doubt be a “mystery.” But then, all human change is—perhaps—a mystery.

Would personal perfection mean attainment of a “static state,” immune from further change? Not if life is life.

The end of personal change would mean not the end of change, but rather the beginning of life in which change would never hurt, but only and always bring new fulfillment. If the crucial issues of personal change were finally *settled*, so that the *interrelational* outreach of one’s personhood had become *only* personalizing and in no way depersonalizing, since one was now *undistractably* willing in all things *to be affected by* the higher Agent through the Individual: one would then be “ready”—the first time—for fulness of *life* as fully *shared*.

One *would be* always “still” open to involvement in changing contexts moving toward new horizons with new and changing experience and accomplishment, all shared in new and changing concreteness of relationships discovered and rediscovered in joy:

gifted from the One “whose will it is TO GIVE,”

enduringly Living One,

ever new Giving One,

Presence in all change.

TOWARD THE REALITY

Jesus, the unique agent, had talked about personal change, capacity for change, and agents of change. He had said that people had variable types of hearts and talents or capacities. He had spoken of lives as “fields” into which capacity-engendering ways of thinking-feeling-acting were to be introduced like “seed.” He said that some lives were of the sort that the seed could root, expand, and stimulate change. In other lives the results would be like young, untended plants, soon to wither and die. He said it was hard to tell, initially, about results, but he taught that his agents were to broadcast the seed nevertheless. He said that responses were often unpredictable, and that the “Spirit” of change blew “where it pleased.” But he also said that the capacities for positive results were sometimes apparent, and that there was then needful only a wise capacity-assessing agent to “reap” them. In the same way, negative results could sometimes be foreseen; hence his saying that his agents should not “cast their pearls before swine.” He had prefaced this injunction with words about being “wise,” seemingly meaning some kind of insight about capacity in others which would guide the agent in how to proceed. Jesus gave hints toward a description of how change took place, but kept acknowledgment of mystery firmly ensconced. The kingdom of God is like a small, hardly noticeable “pinch of leaven,” which—however mysteriously—shall finally, beyond human understanding, somehow “leaven the whole loaf.”

The agency of Jesus continued through the Church as an agency of change. His agents used their own thinking-feeling-acting as change-engendering: "Be ye imitators of me." They also used objects—"consider the lilies"—and concepts—"God is love"—to elicit change. These agents had themselves been changed in their thinking-feeling-acting. "I was the chief of sinners," one had said.

Another thing about them was that they were aware of the continuing need to change and spoke of the process as "pressing on," "growing in grace," "adding to," etc. They viewed life as an education, "a trial," "a race," a dynamic process. They saw the absolute norms of thinking-feeling-acting in Jesus. To think as he thought ("mind of Christ"), feel as he felt ("love of Christ"), act as he acted ("went about doing good") seemed to them to be the accomplishments par excellence of life. Jesus was such an exceptional agent that they applied to him names indicative of the reverence and awe in which he was held: "Christ," "Son of God," "Lord," "Savior." As such, as the Absolute, he could command change. They, as agents, could only command it in his name, and then labor to facilitate it. They viewed Jesus as the initiator and sustainer of change in their own lives: "What Jesus began with us," "the author and finisher of..." They even talked of him as "always with them," "perfecting" the continuing change. He was the ever-present capacity-engendering "Lord" who "opened hearts" and then effected change. He was Capacity itself sharing itself and perfecting itself in the lives of others. What had happened and was happening in their lives they felt necessary for the lives of all others, hence their preaching of the gospel "to all the world." The burden of preaching was to offer the capacity-gift, "gospel," which offered new and expanded prior capacities in persons. Persons were free to do with the gift what they would: they could "accept" or "harden their hearts." It was an individual choice. But mystery was also attributed to the how of change. They referred constantly to "the Holy Spirit," "The Spirit of Christ." Even this mystery operated in conjunction with individual freedom, for the "Spirit" of change could be "quenched" or "resisted." Responses to their gospel, in Jesus' name, were not predictable. Sometimes harlots were more receptive than priests.

The gift of new capacity seemed somehow limitless: "I can do all things through Christ." It rearranged thinking: "We are the body of Christ." It rearranged feeling: "We love because he first loved us." It rearranged acting: "Do all as unto the Lord." The change was vectoral, leading toward perfection: "You are to be perfect." The latter was always before, perhaps fully accomplishable only in the next life: "*Then we shall be like Him.*"

Book Reviews

RELIGION AND HUMAN SEXUALITY

by JAMES H. PHILLIPS

This is the title of a course which I taught for a number of years with undergraduates before retiring in May 1977. Ministers in counselling situations and directors of Christian education (as well as anyone in position to recommend books to senior high or college age youth or their parents) might, I thought, find some help in brief reviews of five books which I have found most valuable to students in developing a sound view of human sexuality from a Judaic-Christian perspective. Other references were required or recommended when more specific aspects were treated (such as premarital pregnancy, abortion, sex in marital relationships, extra-marital sex behavior, monogamous marriage vs. alternative life-styles, etc.). But the books reviewed here were selected primarily to provide a background in terms of basic knowledge and understanding which would enable students to develop a new, or reevaluate their old, religious-moral frame of reference for the decision-making process when confronted with specific issues of human sexuality.

One of the best sources for illuminating a biblical background for this course was William G. Cole's *Sex and Love in the Bible* (Brown Book Co., Farmingdale, N.Y., 1959, 473 pp., \$6.50), which is, I assume, well known by many ministers because of its long-standing availability. Study of this book can help to modify the popular but often misleading and misused "proof-text" approach, because it deals with sex and love in the cultural context of the times, not only that of the Israelites and early Christians, but of their respective neighboring cultures as well. In this sense it affords an enriching and broadening knowledge of how to study the Bible, while also contributing to an understanding of the biblical views of sex and love within their historical contexts. The titles of the first chapters also reflect an indispensable theological orientation: Divine Love and Human Love in the Old Testament (chs. 1 and 2), with these designations repeated for New Testament teachings (chs. 3 and 4). Later chapters deal with more specific subjects, such as premarital sex, homosexuality, etc. This book could well merit a course in itself. Unfortunately it is not available in paperback. The other four books used in the course are available in paperback.

(Parenthetically, a new book which I wish I had had available as a follow-up of Cole's more general treatment is *Sexuality, the Bible and Science* by Stephen Sapp (Fortress, 1977, 140 pp., \$8.25). Dr. Sapp was a graduate instructor in the Department of Religion for several years, and as a colleague of mine taught sections of this same course. His book is his doctoral dissertation, accepted virtually unrevised for publication! It contains, in my opinion, the best available current critical description and analysis of biblical scholars' interpretative treatments of the significant portions of Scripture bearing on this subject. I am happy to report that it will be reviewed in a forthcoming issue of the *Review*.)

Finding sources that represent comprehensive Jewish, Catholic and Protestant views, respectively, of human sexuality is an impossible venture because of the varying viewpoints of these traditions. The following selections were admittedly somewhat

arbitrary, but each was selected with several criteria in mind: its readability and appeal to students being confronted, likely for the first time, with a study of each tradition; the author's authoritative representation of a significant spectrum within his tradition; and a treatment that not only informed but stimulated critical reaction and further inquiry.

Choosing a Sex Ethic: A Jewish Inquiry, by Eugene B. Borowitz (Schocken, 1970, 182 pp., \$2.45), a rabbi and professor in the Jewish Institute of Religion at Hebrew Union in New York City, proved to be one of the favorites of each class. Its primary appeal was elicited by an extraordinarily perceptive description and objective examination of four dominant ethical positions on human sexuality in our society today, namely, "healthy orgasm" (recreational sex as an end in itself), "mutual consent," "love," and "marriage," with premarital sex as the focal point of concern. As background for this treatment, his chapter on "The Jewish Experience" is especially illuminating as he develops a kaleidoscopic view of Jewish sexual customs from the earliest legislation of biblical and later rabbinic times down to modern times. Dr. Borowitz, after impressive objectivity, reveals with equally impressive subjectivity his own position in the final chapter, "Speaking Personally," which can be succinctly represented by his own words (p. 113): "Thus, the most ethical form of human relationship I know is love-for-life. Its appropriate social and religious structure is the monogamous marriage."

Selecting sources reflecting, respectively, Catholic and Protestant thought on human sexuality was especially difficult. But I had one additional criterion, not needed for presenting a Jewish perspective, namely, looking for sources that would present a positive Christian view which might be able to counteract the strongly negative sexual impressions often associated with Christian preaching and teaching, which I found dominating the outlook of many students reared in the Catholic or Protestant fundamentalist traditions. The following two books served this purpose well: *Sex: Thoughts for Contemporary Christians*, edited by Michael J. Taylor, S.J. (Doubleday, 1973, 240 pp., \$1.45) and *The Christian Response to the Sexual Revolution*, by David R. Mace (Abingdon, 1970, 142 pp., \$2.50).

The first book is an anthology of articles previously published and therefore has no developing theme. In fact, it has a range of subjects that makes it a significant resource for a number of specific problems, e.g., "Premarital sexuality," "Sex and the Single Catholic," "Pornography," and "The Homosexual and the Church." However, the topics and authors (all well-known and highly-respected in Catholic circles) of several of the beginning chapters provide some clues to the content and quality of the basic treatment of human sexuality in this anthology: "Body and Soul: A Preface to the Discussion" by Robert J. O'Connell, S.J.; "Sex and the Modern Christian" by Eugene C. Kennedy, M.M.; "A Sex to Love With" by Andrew M. Greeley; and "Sexuality and Sin: A Current Appraisal" by Charles E. Curran. This book gained the following plaudit by a reviewer in *Commonweal*, a popular Catholic weekly: "All in all, the best Christian book on sex I've read in a long time."

It is my estimate that this book demands and merits reflective reading and that it is best discussed in a classroom setting with a knowledgeable and skillful leader. This is especially needed in considering the article "Sexuality and Jesus" by Thomas F. Driver, one of several non-Catholic contributors. (Duke graduates will be interested in knowing that Driver is a fellow-alumnus.) Currently he is Paul Tillich Professor of Theology and Culture at Union Theological Seminary in New York City. Driver's main concern is that, since the Gospels are silent on the specific topic of Jesus' own sexuality, an heretical "Docetic" Christ has arisen and persisted in the traditional image of Christ as an asexual figure, thereby denigrating the basic Hebraic conviction (which Jesus clearly shared, Mk 10:5-9) that human sexuality in its God-intended

functions is part of the essential goodness of God's creation. One of the serious by-products of this persistence is that it has provoked the literary license of a number of notable modern authors.

The following paragraph (pp. 54-55) points to the problem and this consequence: "Most of so-called Christendom still labors under the assumption that, for a Christian, sexuality stands as a barrier in the way of salvation. Nowadays we meet this mainly in its inverted (actually its older) form: namely, the exaltation of sex into a condition of spiritual blessedness. D. H. Lawrence would blast Jesus out of His neutrality regarding sex. He would make Jesus a sensual lover in order to make Him a savior. Norman Mailer and others make the quest for the 'good orgasm' into a religious quest. William Inge, like Hollywood in its heyday, makes the reconciliations of the bed the end-all in human relationships. Aphrodite and Priapus have as many worshippers among us as ever they did at Corinth and Rome." Driver's analysis is exciting and his resolution suggestive (p. 55): "I am simply urging that we see the Jesus of the Gospels not isolated from sexuality, even in his own figure, but as refusing to sanction its religious status," i.e., as presented by the fertility cults of his day. This article will be regarded as startling and even shocking by many Christians who, in my opinion, are the very ones who should read and reflect upon its message.

The book by Mace has been a popular best seller. It will be of interest to Methodists to learn that Dr. Mace began his career in his native England as a Methodist minister. He continued his training in counselling, then came to this country and identified himself with the Society of Friends, already having established himself as an internationally known authority on marriage and family guidance. Several years ago he retired from his position as Professor of Family Sociology at the Behavioral Sciences Center of Bowman Gray School of Medicine (Wake Forest University), but he is still active and much beloved in the North Carolina Family Life Council and in national professional circles of marriage and family counselling.

There are several outstanding appeals of this book to students: first, due to its simple, direct literary style it expedites both reading and understanding; secondly, the content and its development convey the impression to the reader that he/she is the benefactor of wide-ranging scholarship and in-depth counselling experience. Hence, the simple style by no means implies simplistic content. Although one might wish that Mace had developed his subjects at greater length, the basic appeal and merit of the book is its informing content. This is especially true of chapters 2 and 3.

The second chapter, "Sex in the Christian Tradition," guides the reader from early Church views of human sexuality through sex in medieval thought to the views of Luther and Calvin. The traditional legacy is primarily an anti-sexual one, which continues to cause problems for many Christians even today. But readers learn, most perhaps for the first time, that this *negative* view was the consequence of hellenistic influences upon early Church fathers, especially St. Augustine; hence its stance was "not only unbiblical but also anti-biblical." This chapter, juxtaposed against the first one, "Sex in the Bible," provides perspective for the reader's understanding, and the way is cleared for a *positive* reconstruction in the final chapter.

Before reaching that point, however, the third chapter presents a clear description of the factors contributing to "The Sexual Revolution," which has motivated a "new quest for meaning." This movement presents to the Church and Christians an unprecedented opportunity and responsibility, which Mace develops in his final chapter "The Christian Response." The presentation of varying alternatives, with Mace's own position clearly stated, offers fertile ground for productive discussion. As an *introductory source*, this is a *first choice*, not only for young people but also for adults who need a positive Christian view of their own sexuality. Mace's insistence upon "back to the Bible" as the primary source for this positive understanding should

have a universal appeal to Christians. (Mace acknowledges his indebtedness to D. Sherwin Bailey's classic historical treatment in *Sexual Relations in Christian Thought*. In fact, Mace dedicates his book to Bailey.)

Finally, as a climactic study for the first half of the course, it was my aim to choose a source that would demonstrate the imperative need of an informed and dedicated personal Christian value frame of reference for confronting specific sexual issues. My choice was Peter A. Bertocci's *Sex, Love and the Person* (Sheed and Ward, 1967, 173 pp., \$12.95). Dr. Bertocci has held the Borden Parker Bowne Chair of Philosophy at Boston University since 1953. His eminence is further signified by an impressive number of honors and appointments — e.g., Fulbright research scholar twice; a Guggenheim Fellowship; elected president of both the Metaphysical Society of America and the American Theological Society in 1963.

This book is for maturing persons, demanding an open mind, ready to come to grips with *profound* questions, which the author frequently raises in a sharp, probing and incisive manner. "The basic contention" is set for the reader in the preface (p. 10) "...these questions [about sex, love, and marriage] cannot be answered without thinking about related issues. We cannot know what the place of sex in the life of a person ought to be without asking: What values make for the growth of creative personality? This is a large question... But nothing less can be called sex *education* and no more far-reaching question faces any person. The six chapters that follow are attempts to set sex, love, marriage, and home in relation to the total life of a person."

After a treatment of the essence of true marriage in the first chapter—"Marriage: Holy Wedlock or Unholy Deadlock?"—Bertocci proceeds in chapters 2 and 3 to develop the means of a personal Christian "symphony of values" without which "we can give no concrete meaning to the words person, maturity and love" (p. 63). But this value system is "an unfinished symphony" demanding conscious efforts to grow. "It is impossible to overestimate the importance of the specific value-patterns that keep persons growing or prevent their growth... Our thesis is that in our day it has become all the more important for us to become aware and articulate about the kind of human being we ought to become. Decisions about particular issues, such as sex and marriage, cannot be adequate unless we keep the person as a whole, and persons-in-relation, in mind." (p. 71).

Having established this thesis, Bertocci, in the remaining section—chapters 4-6—seeks a policy that "should govern our thinking and acting about sex [especially premarital sex] if its own value is to be enhanced and if it is to be a creative factor in the unfinished symphony of value" (p. 71).

Most young persons, subjected to a bewildering variety of cultural "signs" and "norms," are understandably confused about sexual ethics. Those who are open to an in-depth Christian study that points to the enhancement and creativity of their sexual gifts—rather than relying upon the weakening traditional legalism of much preaching and teaching—will find in this book an exciting venture in constructing a sound, reliable, responsible base for a personal sexual ethic. For those young people, parents, counselors, and ministers who are increasingly permissive regarding sexual mores, especially premarital sex that expresses "love"—in current usage, a word loaded with ambiguity and seductive rationalization—this book demands a responsible level of rebuttal or the option of a re-examination of personal and societal values.

It was hopefully assumed that, after individual reflective reading and class discussions of these five books, students would be better prepared for decision-making as they confronted crucial specific problems and possibilities in their experience of human sexuality. This assumption, I am pleased to report, was often confirmed.

The Debate About the Bible: Inerrancy Versus Infallibility. Stephen T. Davis. Westminster. 1977. 149 pp. \$5.45.

This short, but very interesting, book is written by an evangelical Christian basically to other evangelical Christians. The purpose of the writing is to discuss the problems involved with the idea that the Bible is infallible and inerrant. To some these terms are synonymous, but Davis argues that they are not. And he pleads with his fellow evangelicals not to label anyone who does not affirm both as beyond the evangelical fold. His basic argument is that he is himself a dedicated and committed evangelical, but he does not believe that the Bible is inerrant.

To some readers of this *Review* this book may not at first seem to be of any relevance. But apart from the intra-fraternal debate reflected in this work there are some very interesting and important points with which we all must wrestle. If indeed the Bible is the basis for our faith, how does one approach this collection of books? What kind of authority is it? How does one distinguish and separate the cultural "container" from the timeless Truth? This particular book does not answer all the problems, but it is a helpful and stimulating work in this area. And it is interesting that Professor Davis is not a Biblical scholar but a philosopher.

The major issue of this book is the distinction between the belief on the one hand that the Bible is inerrant, i.e., that it contains *no error at all*; and the other point of view (that of the author) that the Bible is the "only infallible rule of faith and practice." The key to understanding is "faith and practice."

Davis discusses initially the arguments espoused for inerrancy and some of the problems encountered in such a claim. Several theories by leaders of that particular viewpoint are presented.

There are three basic arguments, according to the author, for inerrancy:

the Biblical argument, i.e., that the Bible itself claims to be inerrant; the epistemological argument, i.e., that unless the Bible is inerrant there is no real foundation upon which to base one's faith; and what he calls the "slippery slide" argument, that unless one believes in inerrancy, that person will probably or likely reject the major Biblical themes and teachings. Each of these positions is presented and discussed by Davis.

After this discussion of the viewpoints and arguments of those who argue for inerrancy, there is then presented the author's case against inerrancy and for infallibility. While he believes that the Bible is infallible in matters of faith and practice, Davis nevertheless also finds a place in his system for human reason and a historical-critical study of the Bible. He warns, however, against becoming so caught up in these areas that one misses the real message of the Bible. His comment here is worth quoting: "Furthermore, the *exclusive* concern with critical issues in many of today's graduate schools of religion seems to me to have produced a whole cadre of technically skilled Biblical scholars who seem unable or unwilling to let the Bible speak to modern men and women on the issues to which it addresses itself" (p. 117).

In the concluding chapter there is a clear appeal for a faith that issues in practice. It is not enough simply to have correct theological orthodoxy; faith must have a behavioral side as well. And he concludes with a reiteration of his own conviction that the Bible is the only infallible rule of faith and practice. He defines that idea in this way: "The whole Bible, when correctly interpreted, leads those who believe and obey into the religious truth that sets people free; the Bible can and does lead people to a knowledge of God as he has revealed himself to us in Jesus Christ" (p. 138).

The present reviewer found this book to be engaging and thought-provoking. It is recommended for

reading by all who claim to acknowledge the authority of the Bible. The time is really ripe for a full discussion of the problems associated with Biblical authority, inspiration, and revelation against the background of the critical age.

—James M. Efird

Wilberforce. John Pollock. St. Martin's Press. 1978. xvi, 368 pp. \$16.95.

William Wilberforce (1759-1833) is deservedly remembered on both sides of the Atlantic as probably the major figure in bringing about the abolition of Britain's slave trade, and thus pointing the way for eventual abolition by the United States of America.

A personal note should here be introduced. This reviewer was born and educated in Kingston-upon-Hull, where Wilberforce was regarded as one of her very greatest sons, and on numerous occasions toured his home in High Street, with its grisly slaving relics, and startlingly lifelike wax figure of Wilberforce at his desk. In later years he carried on some research in the records at Wilberforce House, and led the introductory prayer at the civic bicentenary celebration of his birth in that historic building. It is understandable, therefore, that he approached this volume with more than normal interest—and a very critical eye.

A really good biography of Wilberforce has long been needed, one that can offer solid documentation to the scholar, one that is unbiased and unsentimental in its approach, and one that is written so that it can hold the attention of the reader. All this is fulfilled by the present volume.

An important feature of the book is that the author portrays his subject as a whole man, with his contradictions and personal foibles. The crusade against slavery and the slave trade furnishes the dominant theme, and new insights are brought to this story, but Mr. Pollock

helps us to visualize the manner in which Wilberforce's views of the Christian religion dominated both this campaign and his other political, philanthropic, and religious interests, taking us behind the scenes by means of many hundreds of personal letters.

Included briefly, of course, is his relationship with John Wesley, and a short quotation from Wesley's encouraging letter written within a few days of his death. "...unless God has raised you up for this very thing, you will be worn out by the opposition of men and devils. But if God be for you, who can be against you..." This could be expected. What perhaps could not be expected was a later mention of the annuity which Wilberforce furnished to Charles Wesley's widow, "which shamed the Methodist body into raising another."

Many such glimpses along little-trodden paths of history remain tantalizing glimpses only, perhaps to be followed up by other historians and biographers. Yet this was necessary because of the need to maintain perspective when working through a huge mass of little-known manuscript material which Mr. Pollock has accumulated in his researches in dozens of libraries on both sides of the Atlantic—he makes a special note of indebtedness to the Perkins Library of Duke University, with over six hundred relevant items, including 94 Wilberforce letters. This solid documentation forms a major strength of the volume, though the erudition is presented so unobtrusively than one is apt to think "How interesting!" rather than "How learned!"

The volume is well organized and attractively produced, with a coloured portrait of Wilberforce as a frontispiece, a dozen other illustrations scattered through the narrative, and a folding genealogical table inserted before the notes, bibliography, and index. My major criticism is the difficulty of checking the sources and other notes without any relevant page-references in the headlines, the only clue being chapter

headings and the numbered cues. Nevertheless, if you are an intelligent person who seeks an authoritative and perceptive biography of Wilberforce, and one which it is a pleasure to read, this is the book.

—Frank Baker

Yeshiva. Chaim Grade. Bobbs-Merrill. 1976. pp. i-xiv, 1-387. \$12.50. *Masters and Disciples*. Chaim Grade. Bobbs-Merrill, 1977. pp. i-xi, 1-399. \$15.

I would like to draw the attention of readers of the *Review* to this novel in two parts by Chaim Grade, one of the very greatest Yiddish writers of our time. These works, which have only recently been translated, vividly depict Jewish life in Lithuania between World War I and World War II. The two books, more than any other works that I have read in the field of Jewish studies, reveal the quality and nature of life under the Torah. They enable non-Jews to enter imaginatively and sensitively into that life, and are invaluable for an understanding of Judaism. Grade writes with the scope and detail of a Tolstoy. These books deserve to be widely known and read. I would urge readers to suggest their purchase by public libraries wherever they are not already available.

—W. D. Davies



**THE
DUKE
DIVINITY SCHOOL
REVIEW**

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Yesterday's Heroes: Selective Appropriations of Tradition

The usual pressures and demands of ministerial practice focus primarily in the present. Knowledge of the great traditions of the past acquired in seminary may tend all too easily to decline rather than to go on growing once one has one's diploma and is out in the "real world." Insofar as one's study time is not occupied with reading of more or less immediate practical relevance, the endless list of "latest things" in contemporary theology is often more likely to draw one's attention than is the more finite list of great classics of the past.

The articles in the Fall 1978 and Winter 1979 issues of the *Review* under the general title, "Yesterday's Heroes: Selective Appropriations of Tradition," are presented with the hope of helping to rekindle the reader's interest in selective study and personal appropriation of our historical heritage.

Competent scholarship constitutes the background rather than the foreground of these presentations. The primary purpose of the writers has not been that of displaying academic research or making contributions to scholarly learning. Indeed, I have asked the writers to "bracket" (insofar as possible!) their professional academic orientations and not to "worry" about such questions as: How would this essay look to professional colleagues? Is it adequately balanced?

What I have asked these scholars to do is to provide concrete examples of what we hope to inspire in readers: existential appropriation of classical traditions in which knowledge of what the original author meant in his or her historical context becomes integrated and shaped—perhaps even transformed—by what the author's thought can mean for me personally. Thus the phrase, "Selective Appropriations," is intended to mean what it says. These presentations are "selective"; they do not claim to present, even in sketchy form, an evenly balanced over-all picture of an author's thought. They are "appropriations"; they do not claim to present, even within the limited range of their selectivity, simply what any scholar would "of course" say about the author.

We would not want to support the notion that history consists chiefly in the history of thought or that thinkers can be fully understood apart from knowledge of their larger historical contexts and personal life histories. Limitations of space, rather than any "intellectualistic" view of history, have required that these presentations focus primarily on selective aspects of thought rather than on historical and biographical considerations.

Charles K. Robinson

The Socratic-Platonic Conception of Philosophy as Therapy

by ROBERT E. CUSHMAN

Research Professor of Systematic Theology

In the history of European thought, elements of the philosophy of Plato (428/7-348?B.C.) have formed a major philosophic tradition.¹ One thinker in the Latin West who bulks large in the legitimate succession is Augustine of Hippo. Although Augustine was a Christian, he was also a debtor to the Greeks, and he preferred Plato above all other “philosophers of the Gentiles.”² Augustine was, however, fully cognizant of the differences between Hellenic philosophy and the Christian faith; and more clearly than any Christian predecessor, he defined the area of discontinuity. With reference to Platonism in particular, he located the differentiating factor at the point of the Incarnation of the eternal Word.³

But our concern with Augustine’s thought in this context must purposely neglect his discriminating and influential treatment of the faith and reason problem.⁴ Rather our interest here is focused upon those references to Socrates which Augustine makes in *The City of God*. Socrates (469?-399B.C.) is to be distinguished from his predecessors, according to Augustine, by virtue of the fact that he was the first among Greek thinkers to direct the aims of philosophy toward the improvement and regulation of the moral life, whereas his predecessors had occupied themselves with the investigation of physical processes.⁵

Speculating upon possible explanations for this transformation of interest, Augustine suggests that Socrates may have found the investigation of physical questions difficult and their solution obscure and uncertain. This is a possible explanation, Augustine surmises, but he favors another hypothesis. And he attributes to Socrates the fixed conviction that unpurified minds are disqualified for the investigation of divine reality. Socrates, says Augustine, “was unwilling that minds, defiled by earthly desires, should essay to raise themselves upward to the divine.”⁶ Augustine further comments:

[Socrates] saw that the causes of things were sought for by them,—which causes he believed to be reducible to nothing else than the will of the one true and supreme God,—and, on this account, he thought they could only be comprehended by a purified mind; and, therefore, that all diligence ought to be given to the purification of the life by good morals, in order that the mind, delivered from the depressing weight of lusts, might raise itself upward by its native vigor to eternal things, and might, with purified understanding, contemplate that nature which is incorporeal and unchanging.⁷

There is nothing novel in Augustine's claim that Socrates distinguished himself from previous thinkers by turning from physical to ethical questions. Classical commentary is fairly unanimous regarding this transference of philosophic interest and effort. The distinctive contribution of Augustine to Platonic exegesis is to be found in his *explanation* of the Socratic transference of interest from physical to anthropological and ethical investigation. In this Augustine has no antecedents, and, although he exhibits in this explanation his customary perspicacity, his contribution toward understanding Plato's theory of knowledge has received virtually no attention in modern times.

Augustine's deduction is momentous in its import for our comprehension of *philosophia* as Plato conceives it. It strongly affects our conception of Plato's views concerning the way of knowledge and the nature of education. In Augustine's interpretation of Socrates, the determining factor, conducing either to ignorance or to knowledge of ultimate reality, is the moral condition of the whole person. Character, or *êthos*, is decisive either for ignorance or for knowledge of most real Being. If Augustine is right, virtue is quite as much the condition of knowledge as it is also true, and better known, that knowledge is the condition of virtue. *Philosophia*, as the pursuit of wisdom, is no disinterested intellectual exercise but presupposes a transformation of character. Likewise, the kind of humane education (*paideia*) which is basically, radically, needed will be a redirection of cognition through a transformation of affection.

All this is implied in Augustine's explanation of Socrates' abandonment of physical questions for anthropological ones. Augustine believed that he discerned in this revolution the Socratic conviction that, since "like can only be known by like,"⁸ an "ethically" irresponsible mind can have no access to an order of reality which is inherently axiological. To put it in Augustine's own words, the Good can be known only by a "purified mind."

We cannot here pursue the question, to what extent these convictions are properly to be attributed to the historical Socrates rather than to later developments in Plato's thought. But we would do Plato—as well as Socrates—poor service if we failed to note and emphasize Plato's deep and abiding sense of indebtedness to Socrates, a mysterious teacher, who never set himself up as anyone's "teacher" (*Apol.* 33b), and who left no written legacy behind at his martyrdom.

Along with Plato's account of Socrates' trial in the *Apology* and the picture of Socrates provided by Plato in the early dialogues, we also have, as a major point of access to the historical Socrates, the famous "autobiographical passage" in the *Phaedo* (96a-101e).

In this passage Socrates recounts how, as a youth, he was eager for the kind of “wisdom” which was called “investigation of nature,” how exhilarating was the search for the “causes” of everything (96b). However, he found that “explanation” of growth, sensation, even memory and human thought, “by means of” physiological and, ultimately, “merely physical,” sub-structures was “confusing” him. He concluded that he must be personally “unfit” for this kind of investigation. Moreover, Socrates felt that he had been oddly “blinded” by this manner of study: he seemed to have lost the “knowledge,” inadequate as it may have been, which he had once upon a time had—or at least surely thought he had—before turning to the apparently lower as, purportedly, an “exhaustive explanation” of the apparently higher.

According to his testimony in the *Phaedo*, Socrates felt suddenly and unexpectedly relieved of his befuddlement upon hearing of the doctrine of Anaxagoras that it is “mind (*nous*) that arranges and causes all things” (97c). Socrates immediately concluded, on the basis of what he had thought he had “known,” that, if this were so, then, of course, Mind, in establishing and ordering all things, would certainly order things in each case as was best and fitting. “For,” Socrates recollects, “I never imagined that when he [Anaxagoras] said that they were ordered by intelligence, he would introduce any other cause for these things than that it is best for them to be as they are” (98a).

This inference is of capital importance; for, if he indeed made it, as Plato bears witness, Socrates probably deserves to be recognized as the first serious teleologist in Western philosophical tradition. For what Socrates implies—in fact declares—is that cosmological explanation can adequately proceed only by including within its ultimate reference-framework a *telos* or Good acknowledged as the ultimately controlling goal of an Intelligent Cause.

Socrates assumed—perhaps in a sense “naively,” in view of the outcome of his own earlier studies in the inherited philosophical tradition—that Anaxagoras would elaborate this axiomatically foundational doctrine (so seen by Socrates) in a further “explanation” of *how* it was *best* for the ordering of this world to be . . . “as it is.” (Perhaps in the notion of such an “explanatory” possibility Socrates was also “naive.” Perhaps, but even so, his extraordinary faith was, and perhaps is, somewhat novel.) As scholars who still nowadays study the fragments of Anaxagoras could “predict,” Socrates was, in his excited perusal of Anaxagoras’ writings, destined for disappointment. Anaxagoras quickly “re-explained” the apparent meaning of his words in a reductive reversion to “physical” factors of process—quite within the traditional idiom of what we

now call "Pre-Socratic Philosophy." As high as Socrates' own youthful hopes had then been raised: so low they fell.

Socrates himself, however, had—with the temporarily misinterpreted "help" of Anaxagoras—clearly taken a momentous step (forward or backward, as each may judge) in cosmological explanation: Not merely *what* is the world like? but, more importantly, *why* is the world as it is? Socrates had accepted "from Anaxagoras" the dictum that a supreme Intelligence orders the world. But to this conception of supreme *mental* Causality Socrates made his own unprecedented *teleological* contribution.

This conception could only have come to light through his own, quite personal, program of *self-knowledge*. From self-examination, from intimate personal probing—however painful—of the real-mystery of himself he had, somehow, made a discovery that is stated clearly enough in the "autobiographical passage": It had become plain to this young man that *to act according to intelligence is to act from a decision or choice of what is best* (99a). Accordingly, if it is, as Anaxagoras suggested—whatever Anaxagoras "meant"—Intelligence which contrives and arranges the cosmic whole, then Socrates is already prepared to "see" that the ultimate Cause is a comprehensive Good which informs and constitutes the governing integrative purpose of a cosmic Mind. In cosmological explanation, beyond and more important than any *what*, is the *who* of a benevolently ordering Intelligence and the *why* of an all-comprehensive Good which, whatever the mystery as to "how," constitutes the integrative *telos* of this world as it actually is (99c).

It is not explicit in these passages just how Socrates understands the relationship between the cosmic Intelligence and the Good which characterizes its purpose and guides its action. One could scarcely argue with any confidence that for Socrates, as for Plato later in the *Republic* (506-509), the Good has become disengaged from the cosmic Mind and acquired an independent status. In the passages before us one can only say that Socrates' interpretation may, or may not, be tending in that direction.

One can, however, say with considerable confidence that, outside the fairly clear limits of the "autobiographical passage," the *Phaedo* is, in much of its explicitly doctrinal teaching, probably more representative of Plato's views at this stage in his own development than it is directly expressive of the thinking of the historical Socrates. The same judgment pertains to Plato's later, much fuller, treatment of the Form of the Good in the *Republic*. In summary, one can say that—with the *Republic* as a crucial turning-point in Plato's own reflective life—the theory of the transcendent Forms (*logoi*) was Plato's own way of looking for a *mediating* linkage between the

Good as ultimate Cause and its effects in the world in which we plainly find ourselves; and that, in this period of endeavoring to come to terms with the mysterious impact of Socrates, the state of Plato's own theology was such as to leave him, for the moment, a little embarrassed about God.

Socrates' own major positive contribution to Western thought and culture is his conviction that intelligence essentially involves awareness and choice of what is best. This insight represents his loftier estimate of human nature and destiny and his evaluation of the "given" resources of the human soul. By searching into himself, by active responsiveness to the deliverances of his soul, Socrates discerned what he took to be a "divine imperative" notifying him of an irreducible difference between right and wrong, good and evil. These ineffaceable axiological distinctions are for Socrates the primary data of the human (humane) consciousness.

Plato faithfully reports in the *Crito*—whatever he may or may not have made out of this bolt-from-the-blue for himself—the first principle of Socrates' life-conviction as an axiological criterion in this ethical form: "We ought neither to requite wrong with wrong nor to do evil to anyone, *no matter what he may have done to us*" (49c). In the same context of discussion, we are distinctly informed that, in Socrates' revolutionary view, the human "soul" is that reality within the ambiguous totality of human life which, reflective of ultimate Reality, is, inescapably, concerned with right versus wrong by its distinctive and inherent aptitude—wanted or unwanted—and is—recognized or unrecognized—benefitted by righteousness and injured or ruined by unrighteousness (47d).

The radically revolutionary significance of Socrates' understanding of the human "soul" may be partially grasped by comparative contrast with the general pre-Socratic meaning of *psuchê*, which could be roughly summarized thus: "soul" is that principle of vitality which is common to all things living, and which in the human species may—or may not—survive the bodily death of the real human being as a, dreadfully undesirable, shadowlike, mostly lifeless, inescapable hang-over from the one-and-only life one has lived, which is never to be lived again. (Consideration of the influence of Orphism on Socrates' language is quite beyond the scope of this little essay. In any case, Orphism has, at the most, served as the linguistic preparation for the Socratic revolution in conceptual meaning.)

Why is the human soul ruined by wrongdoing and benefitted by rightdoing? Ultimately it is because wrongdoing denatures the soul and removes it regressively further and further from the province and "likeness" of that "divine reality" with which it has a given "kinship." This is the pervasive message of the *Phaedo*, which is also

re-echoed in a memorable passage of the *Theatetus* (176a-b) where the end of human life is fore-seen thus: "to become like God," that is, "to become righteous and holy and wise."

Socrates, in examining himself, was not only alerted to a root difference between good and evil but also made aware of his responsibility to the good and his obligation to shun its opposite. For Socrates the human soul transmitted a mysterious and ineluctable summons to righteousness. In this consciousness human beings become self-transcending and responsible beings, categorically distinct from the merely cyclical processes of sub-human nature.

In Socrates' own personal self-understanding, this moral summons is most properly to be *acknowledged* not as an autonomous pronouncement of the soul "to itself"—much less as a coercively induced acquiescence to conditioning by "group pressure." (Apparently Socrates' "group" did not usually exert the kind of obligatory "pressure" by which, or from whom, he feels himself addressed.) Contrary to most interpretive contexts, clearly against the presumptive stream of his own cultural life-situation, Socrates acknowledges this moral summons as a *divine summons* which comes to human life *from a transcendent* "but" *morally concerned Deity*.

For Socrates the moral imperative of human life is—fully acknowledged—*obligation under and responsibility to the only true and wise God*. Such at least is the picture of Socrates' last extremity presented by Plato in the *Apology*: Socrates understands his own life, nearly over now, as a life of "service to God" under a "divine commission" in "obedience" to what "my God commands." One may perhaps appropriately doubt that this "picture," so untypical of prevalent Greek assumptions, and clearly so perplexing to Plato himself, is properly to be attributed merely to Plato's "free imagination."

One phase or token of Socrates' own acknowledgment of living under a divine imperative is his customary experience since childhood of a "divine sign" or "supernatural presence" (*daimonion*) which characteristically restrains him from wrong, often checking him in the middle of a sentence.⁹ There can be no proper doubt that this spiritual "monitor" served to notify Socrates of a good with which he was presently out of line. And it is clear that in some sense Socrates' experience was peculiar. It was a meaning-laden mystery to Plato—and perhaps just "odd" or "crazy" to many others. But we cannot properly conclude that Plato regarded this mode of experience as utterly unique to Socrates. So to think would be to divest Socrates of his exemplary and pedagogical role in Plato's clear view of him.

Socrates is for Plato, in some way, a uniquely revelatory figure, “a reality among the shadows” (to borrow a phrase from *Meno* 100a). Plato could not, apparently, come to a fully adequate understanding of the mystery of Socrates. Doubtless, we shall not be able to do so either. But part of the truth about Socrates’ peculiar experience of divine moral guidance is perhaps this: The “sign” is exceptional with Socrates because he is sensitively open to and deliberately heeds and honors the solicitations of a divine moral address which is also in some way present, even if commonly unheeded and repressed, in the lives of others.

But it is beyond Socrates’ possibility either to prove or to enforce *another’s* admission of the divine summons. (Herein lies the historically fitting truth in Kierkegaard’s acknowledged debt to Socrates’ “maieutic method” as the human source, “between man and man,” of SK’s own method of “indirect communication” as one—though, be it noted, not the only—essential mode of “Christian communication.”) It is possible only to admonish another to attend and to heed for oneself.

This was Socrates’ problem: the prime datum of the human consciousness (axiological awareness, however repressed, of a transcendent divine-moral imperative) cannot be exhibited and demonstrated to all and sundry. (Indeed it *cannot be demonstrated* to any solitary individual.) Appropriate acknowledgment requires “tendance of the soul,” alertness, and, above all, *veracity* to oneself as to whether, when, and how one is being-addressed. Such sensitively-open responses to always-potentially-ambiguous evidence cannot be coercively enforced on anyone. Therefore Socratic education was, as the opening pages of the *Theatetus* again exhibit, characteristically a persuasive endeavor to elicit the personal *confession* of individuals to the truth of their *own* deepest insights and noblest aspirations.

In addition to Plato’s belief that Socrates’ positive convictions could best be fathomed by *understanding the unusual person* who was thus persuaded, Plato (absorbing the import of the teacher’s bearing as well as the teacher’s words) recognized with increasing clarity a—to Plato at least—unique aspect of Socrates’ character: This man was a living transvaluation of the most common human standards. Socrates was not merely eccentric to the popular mind; in most respects he was the *antithesis* of the opinions and attitudes of “the many” (*hoi polloi*). Yet, just here, paradoxically, was his odd stature revealed: for, unlike the Cynics, who would profess to follow him, Socrates displayed none of the self-exaltingly proud contempt for “merely common human” ways and works—that is, just plain “everyday people”—which had so typically marked the “wise men” of his inherited cultural tradition.

Socrates feared least what most people feared and avoided most. And, conversely, Socrates feared most what others feared but little, if at all, and took small pains to avoid. He cherished the novel opinion that a person's first business ought to be the perfection of his or her soul—its assimilation insofar as possible to the likeness of "God."¹⁰ Therefore wrong and injustice *against another* he considered the greatest *self-injury*.¹¹ Against Callicles' contemptuous taunts in the *Gorgias*, Socrates calmly replies that righteousness is, in his view, the most effectual form of self-protection (522d). However lonely in his judgment, it was thus clear to him that "doing wrong is worse than suffering it, and escaping punishment worse than incurring it" (474b, 480a, 505b).

This unusual ethic was fixed in the ineffaceable substance of Socrates' way of life. Hence everywhere in the early dialogues it is customary for Socrates to rebuke his fellows, as in the *Apology*, "for neglecting what is of supreme importance and turning your attention to trivialities" (30a). In making certain discoveries, as he thought, about human nature, Socrates had acquired a new conception of human well-being. If Socrates was right about human life; if he was right in making the soul primary and in regarding it as possessing an affinity with the Divine, then, plainly, the average Athenian's set of values was perverted.

The situation was never more aptly described than by the hard-headed Callicles: Either Socrates is joking when he contends that injustice in the soul is the worst evil that can befall a person, or, if it is really true, the common foundational-presuppositions of human life are turned "upside-down," and most people are doing the exact opposite of what they ought to be doing (*Gorg.* 481c).

Turning the direct focus of our attention, now, away from Socrates, we may note the symbolic implications of Plato's language in the *Phaedrus* myth: a soul which had never seen the truth could never pass into human form (249b, e). By this Plato doubtless testifies to the conviction that there is no human being who is not possessed of intimations, however dimmed, of higher abiding reality, some primordial affinity for the Truth (*Rep.* 494d; cf. *Phaedr.* 248b). Within human intelligence there remain vestigial patterns, *paradeigmata*, "after-images" of the soul's primordial communion with divine realities. As "surviving" patterns adumbrating reality, they are *a priori* or antecedent to sensory experience and are, indeed, its formal presupposition and basically intelligible structure. As Plato suggests in the *Republic* (589d), they are a "divine" aspect of human nature whereby human beings are essentially *theoeidês* and *theoeikelon*, deiform and in the likeness of God (501b).

Nevertheless, the human tragedy is that inherent likeness to the

“divine” becomes fractured, obscured and, indeed, almost lost. The true human good, the proper end and goal of human life, becomes *dislocated*. The native and essential orientation of the soul toward the divine Reality with which it is “akin” becomes diverted and misdirected toward concerns which are “*alien*” to the *essence of humanness* (those characteristic relationships which make life “human” insofar as it is human—*humane*).

Among pre-Socratic philosophers, Protagoras was famous for his dictum: “Man is the measure of all things.” Plato’s extensive and searching criticisms of this doctrine¹² are commonly recognized among historians of philosophy. A less common observation, however, is that both Socrates and Plato had, nevertheless, something to share with Protagoras in this doctrine. We have already seen that Socrates’ distinctive program of study served to occupy him almost exclusively with *people*. And we have seen that Socrates and Plato were in agreement that the likeliest and most promising index to reality is the human soul.

While agreeing with Protagoras that in a certain mysteriously ambiguous sense “man is measure,” Socrates and Plato were wholly at odds with him over two points in particular. First, they repudiated the sensationalistic “phenomenalism,” according to which Protagoras denied any enduring structure of reality independent of the transient sensations of the (“this”) human percipient, and whereby man turns out to be the “measure” only of himself: *i.e.*, I am the “measure” of my here-now-passing-sensations only in the tautological sense that my here-now-passing-sensations-for-me are whatever they are. Secondly, they strenuously dissented from the views of Protagoras on the nature of the “man” who, properly, might serve as measure.

Plato is prepared to regard “man as measure” in virtue of the *essential* human *kinship* with and *potential* human *conformity* to a transcendent, suprahuman, divine Reality which is the ultimate Source and Norm of all truth and value. (“In our eyes God will be the measure of all things in the highest degree—a degree much higher than is any human being they are talking about.” *Laws* 716c.) According to the measure of a person’s *actual* conformity to this divine Reality, that person can, and ought to, function as a clue to the nature of reality. In human response to the divine summons and in the resultant rectitude of human life, there may come to actualization an “*analogy of being*” between the human knower and the divine reality reflected and known. Plato’s ontology is basically theomorphic. “Man” may properly be taken as “measure” of reality only because man is *in fact measured* by divine Reality and may become fashioned after its *likeness*.

Plato was deeply convinced that the majority of people—it was, after all, a majority who had condemned Socrates to death—live as though they are asleep in relation to ultimate Reality and the moral obligations for human life which derive, even if unrecognized, from this relationship. Plato's task, therefore, was that of endeavoring to bring people to the point of acknowledging that they have been asleep to the real nature and meaning of themselves-in-the-world. Plato frequently contrasts the waking with the sleeping state—the dreaming with the truly wakeful life. (See, *e.g.*, *Rep.* 476c, 520c, 533c, 534c; *Phaedr.* 277d; *Tim.* 52b-c.) This recurrent metaphor is symbolically cognate with the better-known myth of the Cave in the *Republic*.

In the frightening imagery of the Cave, human beings are pictured as living their whole lives in chains, down deep inside a cavern, with their backs to the light. Their gaze is always toward the deeper, farther-down wall and the half-darkness see-able there. Oblivious to the higher, brighter World outside their little “world,” they assume that the transient shadows they see (cast by passing objects in the Light above and behind at the opening-out of the pit) are, “obviously,” the only “true realities.” Most of the prisoners finally become adept at “identifying” the shadows which come and go in constant flux. They understandably honor, as the “wisest” of their number, those who are “quickest to make out the shadows as they pass and best able to remember their customary precedences, sequences, and co-existences” (516c).

However, Plato's satire upon phenomenalism is here, as elsewhere, mingled with humane concern. He knows that it is impossible to convince people by any unambiguously “demonstrative” argument either that they are dreaming with respect to reality or that they are imprisoned in a cave of ignorance. The illusion is too internally complete. The system of evident impressions is, taken by itself, adequately coherent—at least so long as one does not confront the question that can always be deferred, if not utterly repressed: what beyond the seen must transcendently be in order for the see-er to see whatever is seen?

Moreover, the perspective is commonly shared—indeed, so uniformly entertained as to subvert any obvious clue that it is a “perspective.” Also thereby excluded are all those misgivings and prickings of doubt which otherwise might precipitate a revision of judgment. (The salutary function of doubt, *aporia*, the perplexity which ensues upon the “cracking-up” of presumption, is—Plato remains convinced by reflection upon the typical stages of appropriating response to Socrates' dialectical method—a necessary stage in the process of humanely needed education.)

In addition, Plato was aware of a “habituation” of the mind which can enforce ignorance in a resistantly-fixed outlook of the whole soul. Thus it was plain to Plato that the kind of education which was needed involved not so much cogent argument, much less formal “proof,” as it did an *art of waking* people from sleep—or turning them around and *leading* them out *into the Light*.

The tragedy of human existence—and therewith the problem confronting *philosophia* as a method of education—is signaled in the common human contentment with living an “unreal and alien life” (*Rep.* 495c). This is the melancholy motif which recurs in the writings of Plato. Indeed it is Plato’s own version of the *nemesis* theme of traditional Hellenic myth. As the “exemplary” Callicles states the matter: The life which people customarily live is one “turned upside-down” (*Gorg.* 481c), little knowing that this “life” is an inverted existence.

Inversion of reality, as the characteristic ethos both of human individual and human social life, is Plato’s typical picture of the “natural man.” This remarkable—remarkably common—capacity to turn the entire “world” (and thereby also onself) upside-down was, as we have seen, obstinately self-confirmatory. Therefore Plato’s hopefully-awakening art, dialectic, would encounter heavy going.

In regard to the nature of ultimate reality and the imperative obligation of the Good, most people are, in the Socratic-Platonic diagnosis, not merely “ignorant”; they are “doubly ignorant”: ignorant of their own ignorance. Moreover, since human nature essentially involves some sort of relation to truth, however distorted, this double ignorance is the most “perverse” and “culpable” sort: stubborn *commitment* to the needed *illusion* that “I know” the truth. Existential ignorance of the divine-moral nature and implications of ultimate Reality has not merely “intellectual” but also moral dimensions: the self-centered self-deception of an illusorily self-exalting pride. The self, in the name of “truth,” has become committed to and egoistically identified with its own error and stubbornly entrenched against any threatening incursions of Truth, which would be “numbing” and painful for one’s own self-understanding. Thus Plato comes to refer to such morally culpable ignorance as a “disease,” “corruption,” or “vice” of the soul.

This self-deceptive inversion of human life compels people to honor virtue, justice and truth with their lips, even while they serve their own distortedly prideful and self-centered desires with might and main. Plato perceived in such a condition the worst form of human *bondage*, the exact antithesis of genuine human freedom. This is, in sum, Plato’s view of the basic human plight. And this is the dire condition for which Plato seeks—with guidance from his

recollections of Socrates—to devise a healing therapy.

The Cave in the *Republic* is, as we have already noted, Plato's best-known symbolization of this basic human plight. In returning again to this classical representation of human bondage, we may briefly pursue four points.

In the first place, Plato is aware of the influence of environment upon ontological judgment as to where is the locus and what is the nature of the "really real." He recognizes that the character of human thought concerning reality is powerfully conditioned by the climate of opinion, the prevailing mind-set, in which the individual participates from childhood. One's inherited cultural ethos contributes those fundamental viewpoints that, in turn, constitute the unexamined premises of thought. No one escapes the influence of a corporately-presiding human perspective. On the other hand, no person is educated, nor has even begun to be educated, who has not undertaken, in a sustained way, critically to examine the reigning dogmas and "axiomatic" assumptions of one's age and place.

Secondly, Plato discerned that there is no cure for not-seeing except seeing. Adopting the analogical implications of the Cave symbolism, we may say that there is no way to overcome cave-blindness unless the prisoners be somehow unfettered, turned about toward the light, and ushered out into the brightness of the outer day. For Plato the best analogy of knowledge is immediate vision. It is for this reason that he frequently employs the simile of the "eye" or "vision" of the soul. Knowledge replaces ignorance when the "eye of the mind" is "converted to the light from the darkness" (518c).

There is a third aspect of the bondage of the mind to which our attention may be drawn by the graphic imagery of the Cave. It is impossible to grasp the deeper meaning in Plato's conception of education as necessarily requiring some sort of conversion unless we are alert to the obdurate character of human ignorance in willful resistance against any proffered enlightenment: For eyes long habituated to semi-darkness, there will be a strong "natural" tendency to retreat from any greater light as both painful and disorienting. (Faulty interpretation at this point has been responsible for the comparative neglect of the place and role of conversion in Plato's educational therapy).

Fourthly, and perhaps most importantly, we need to note and to reflect upon the point that, in the symbolism of Plato's Cave imagery, the people who live backwards to the light are not, even so, in utter darkness. However dark their darkness, their lives are, nevertheless, suffused with light—else they would see nothing. Yet, never having been confronted with the Light-Source, they have presumably no conception of, or awareness of the existence of, the *power-of-*

intelligibility by which—though unrecognized—they perceive whatever they perceive, experience whatever they experience.

As evidence from a perhaps unexpected quarter, Plato notes how quick and how eager are people of inverted vision in discerning the small but thereby concentrated range of things which command their interest and attention, and, conversely, how obtuse they are in respect to larger and higher realities. “Have you never observed,” he asks, “in those who are popularly spoken of as ‘bad but smart’ men, how keen is the vision of the little soul, how quick it is to discern the things that interest it?” Then he adds, “a proof that it is not poor vision which it has, but one forcibly enlisted in the service of evil” (519a).

The *difficulty* confronting the would-be “therapist” is realistic recognition of willful human concentration of vision in “the service of evil.” At the same time, the *possibility* of therapy rests in the faith that the divine *Light* of the Good, even though repressed and perverted, is nevertheless *shining*, however dimly, in the life of every human being. Therefore therapeutic education is not the art of “producing” vision—much less “creating” light—but of “converting to right use from uselessness that natural indwelling intelligence of the soul” (530c). Plato’s sensitivity to the scope of dynamic personal resistance against the needed therapy is indicated, among other ways, in the fact that words for “conversion” or “to convert” appear at least twenty-one times in Book VII of the *Republic*. Plato never thought he had hit upon a “sure method.”

All who undertake an interpretation of Plato’s thought have been adequately warned of the hazards by Plato himself. The interpreter must begin with a written text. Yet Plato has stated that anyone who believes “that anything in writing will be clear and certain, would be an utterly simple person” (*Phaedr.* 275c). The written word is barely a pale image of “the living and breathing word” of free and fair discussion (276a). Of written words Plato says: “You might think they spoke as if they had intelligence, but if you question them, they always say only one and the same thing. And every word, when once it is written, is bandied about, alike among those who understand and those who have no interest in it, . . . When ill-treated or unjustly reviled it always needs its father to defend it, for it has no power to help or protect itself” (275d-e). For this and—as we have seen—other reasons Plato did not believe that truth could be encapsuled in treatises and thereby conveyed to others. Nevertheless Plato did write and evidently with the intent of communication.

Plato wrote dialogues. And the reader, in any age, may easily become annoyed and indeed exasperated by the results: tentative and provisional conclusions or, often seemingly, no conclusions at all. Often Plato appears to be wholly absorbed in the quest and

indifferent to the outcome. Plato in employing—indeed creating—this new form of “literature,” seems, especially in the earlier dialogues—less so in the later—to be less intent on propounding neat answers to the riddle of human existence than on locating the genuinely fruitful questions by the exploration of which others *may* be assisted to find answers *for themselves*.

Where matters of ultimate concern are at issue, Plato has no faith in borrowed findings, no trust in so-called “truths” which one simply “takes over” from others and does not achieve for oneself as the result of one’s own personal quest, dialectical struggle and inward appropriation. To write straightforward, matter-of-fact treatises on the nature of ultimate Reality, the supreme Good, and the consequent moral implications for human life would be for Plato to encourage the illusion that ultimate Truth can be simply “handed over” like an external and impersonal commodity in the public market.

Plato is convinced that the dialogue alone preserves, in some measure, the form of “living speech” in search of truth and is alone, therefore, suited to be the vehicle of dialectic. Dialectic, especially in the form of conversational cross-examination (*elenchos*), is an art of inquiry rather than of demonstration. We cannot comprehend what Plato hopes to accomplish with dialectical cross-examination unless we understand that, in matters of ultimate concern, Plato discounts all answers other than those a person gives to himself, inwardly consenting to converging lines of evidence which “could” be personally resisted but *ought* to be personally *acknowledged*. So Plato endeavors to provide a maieutically helpful method of therapeutic self-education in which one and the same person is inconspicuously assisted in becoming both self-inquisitor and self-witness. The goal is not irrationally-emotional coercion of belief but rather rationally-affective persuasion toward truth which is, when appropriately acknowledged, *self-confirming*.

Socrates thought that Wisdom, in the strict and fully proper sense, is a property of God alone (*Apol.* 23a). Plato sees the role of “wisdom” in human life not so much in terms of a possible possession as in terms of an imperative quest: *philo-sophia* is the “love of wisdom.” Hence for Plato philosophy is a way and a life. For Plato there is no necessary connection between sheer intellectual acumen and wisdom. For wisdom is “the habit of the Good.” Insofar as wisdom may be achieved by human beings it is a hard-won vision of ultimate Reality inseparably conjoined with a love of ultimate Truth. The minimal requirements in any human process of coming-to-know are a *sustained interest* in discovery of—whatever kind of—truth and a willingness to follow converging lines of evidence in

acknowledgement of implications. In any arena of truth which essentially involves a *conversion of self-understanding*, appropriate acknowledgement of implications will be *painful*, hence readily resisted. Accompanying Plato's endeavors to devise an appropriately helpful therapeutic method are abundant indications of Plato's clear awareness that no methodological technique will avail in the absence of a moral temper congenial with the pursuit of truth. As Professor Grube has well said, "Truth cannot be discovered unless the main stream of desire be directed towards it."¹³

In the absence of suitable moral temper, the final goal of knowledge is inhibited, and dialectical cross-examination will be frustrated (*Gorg.* 501c). This discloses perhaps the "weak link" in Plato's conception of therapy; namely, that dialectic, the principal means of conversion, at one and the same time is intended to induce and yet itself presupposes a suitable condition of moral character. The insoluble problem of Plato's program of therapy is identical with the unanswerable question: How long can people live at odds with themselves and with their deepest presentiments of goodness and truth?

Socrates—for Plato the ideal human therapist—could answer that question not for another but only for himself, as he puts it to the obstinately self-contradictory Callicles (*Gorg.* 482-c):

Philosophy always holds one and the same, and it is her speech that now surprises you, and she spoke it in your presence. So you must either refute her, as I have said just now, by proving that wrong doing and impunity for wrong done is not the uttermost evil; or, if you leave that unproved, . . . there will be no agreement between you, Callicles and Callicles; but you will be in discord with him all your life. And yet I, my very good sir, should rather choose to have my lyre, or some chorus that I might provide for the public, out of tune and discordant, or to have any number of people disagreeing with me and contradicting me, than that I should have internal discord and contradiction *in my own self*.

Hope for, even the thought of, a more than human therapy wrought by a "divine Therapist,"¹⁴ could probably have crossed Plato's mind, if at all, as no more than a passing fancy. After writing the *Republic*, in which the Form of the Good appears to exercise sole claim to the status of ultimate Reality, Plato indeed moved in the direction of rehabilitating the strange—in its cultural context—Socratic conviction of a benevolently purposeful God.¹⁵ But Plato's own conviction of the ultimate status of ordering principles, a conviction inspired by but not simply derived from Socrates, set limits around how far Plato could consistently travel in the direction of theism.

This is not merely to say that the Forms, including the supreme Form of the Good, were probably never conceived by Plato to be fully and solely grounded in the mind and will of God. It is also to be

acknowledged that Plato is, after all, a Greek and not a Hebrew: He develops a magnificent and morally inspiring view of the one supreme God as benevolently ordering the *general* principles which govern the processes of becoming for the sake of creatures; but Plato will scarcely have considered the possibility that the *particular* divine providence, which he surely sensed—even if he could not adequately understand—in the life of Socrates, might manifest itself in another, and even more efficacious mediator of healing, a Mediator of God's own healing therapy.

It seems to me that God has attached me to this city to perform the office of [some stinging] fly; and all day long I never cease to settle here, there, and everywhere, rousing, persuading, reproving everyone of you. You will not easily find another like me, gentlemen, and if you take my advice you will spare my life. I suspect, however, that before long you will awake from your drowsing, and in your annoyance you will take Anytus' advice and finish me off with a single slap; and then you will go on sleeping until the end of your days, unless God in his care for you sends someone to take my place.¹⁶

FOOTNOTES

1. *Editor's Note*: Professor Cushman's essay is, in at least one obvious sense, different from the other essays in this series. Dr. Cushman is not dealing with a Christian writer. It was my conviction, however, that readers who have not studied Dr. Cushman's book, *Therapeia: Plato's conception of Philosophy* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1958; reissued at Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1976), would derive significant benefit from exposure, even if minimal, to the understanding of Socrates and Plato which received masterful development in that work. Well realizing that an essay-length synopsis of the book would not be possible, I asked Dr. Cushman, nevertheless, to provide for readers of the *Review* an essay which might at least approximate a "synopsis." This essay includes considerable passages of material quoted directly from *Therapeia* without quotation marks or page references, which would have been too laborious for the author and too distracting for the reader. Unless otherwise indicated, translations of more than a phrase in length are those of the *Loeb Classical Library*, which are accompanied by a critical Greek text.

2. *De Civ. Dei* VII, 4, translation from *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* (ed. P. Schaff, New York, 1886).

3. *Conf.* VII, ix.

4. See the author's "Faith and Reason" in *A Companion to the Study of St. Augustine* (New York: Oxford, 1955), pp. 287-314.

5. *De Civ. Dei* VII, 3.

6. *Ibid.*

7. *Ibid.*

8. This principle is fundamental to Plato's epistemology and is omnipresent in the dialogues.

9. In addition to the *Apology*, see, e.g., *Euthy.* 3b; *Rep.* 496c; *Phaedr.* 242b.

10. *Apol.* 29e, 36c; *Gorg.* 504e; *Rep.* 591c. Cf. *Rep.* 500c, 501c, 589d; *Theat.* 176c; *Laws* 716c.

11. *Apol.* 30d; *Rep.* 577s, 588e; *Gorg.* 509a f.

12. The most important discussions are to be found in *Cratyl.* 386a f. and *Theat.* 152a f. The final upshot of Plato's critique is that, on Protagoras' assumptions, truth and falsity become indistinguishable (*Cratyl.* 386c).

13. G.M.A. Grube, *Plato's Thought*, p. 137.

14. John Hick writes in *Evil and the God of Love* (Glasgow: Collins-World, 1966), p. 381: "The Divine Therapist has perfect knowledge of each human heart, is infinitely wise in the healing of its ills, has unbounded love for the patient and unlimited time to devote to him. It remains theoretically possible that He will fail; but He will never cease to try, and we may (as it seems to me) have a full practical certainty that sooner or later He will succeed." This passage is quoted with enlightening and helpful commentary by Durham psychiatrist, John G. Giragos, "The Psychotherapeutic Situation in Theological Perspectives," in *The Duke Divinity School Review*, Vol. 43, No. 2 (Spring 1978), p. 137.

15. See, among other passages, *Soph.* 248c-249a; *Phileb.* 22c, 26c, 28c; *Tim.* 29d-e; *Laws* 716c, 967a.

16. *Apol.* 30e-31a, transl. Hugh Tredennick in *The Last Days of Socrates* (London: Penguin Books, 1954), p. 37.

St. Irenaeus on General Revelation as Preparation for Special Revelation*

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The views of St. Irenaeus (130?-202?) on the topic of what may be called "general revelation" are in many respects similar to but also in some interesting ways partially different from the lines of interpretation which would later be developed in the West, especially by the brilliant but sometimes tortured genius of St. Augustine. Among the partial differences which will emerge in our considerations here are Irenaeus' dynamic, personal and salvific understanding of God's activity and purpose in general revelation and his clearly holistic understanding of the human recipients.

Irenaeus sees creation as grounded not only in God's nature and power but also in God's free volitional choice: "God, according to His pleasure, in the exercise of His own will and power, formed all things (so that those things which now are should have an existence) out of what did not previously exist" (II.10:2). Again, he affirms that "of His own free will, He created all things" (II.1:1).

Perhaps the key phrase for an understanding of Irenaeus' view of creation (and indeed his whole conception of the divine economy of salvation) is to be found in his axiomatic affirmation that "creation is being carried out" (IV.39:2). The world is not a self-existent system of entities which, once created, continues to operate simply "under its own steam." God is related to the creature in an intimate and active manner. This immanent operation is differently related to the various reality levels or characteristics of the creature.

Sheer existence as such is not something creatures possess in themselves but is dependent upon the power and will of God. Not only existence but vital life-process and spontaneity are grounded in the power of God, for "the manifestation of God which is made by means of creation, affords life to all living in the earth" (IV.20:7). The relation of human life to God takes on a personal coloring and is properly acknowledged as grace:

*I can hardly claim that any high level of "competent scholarship" lies behind this hastily composed essay. It is the result of editorial desperation when an expected essay on Irenaeus continued to be "forthcoming" but never appeared. (The prospective author was not a faculty colleague!) All quotations are from *Against Heresies* in Vol. I of *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*. Passages are cited by book, chapter and section only. I have in some instances altered the text of the *A.N.F.* by inserting or deleting italics.

For life does not arise from us, nor from our own nature; but it is bestowed according to the grace of God. (II.34:3)

But as the animal body is certainly not itself the soul, yet has fellowship with the soul as long as God pleases; so the soul herself is not life, but partakes in that life bestowed upon her by God. (II.34:4).

By this enlivening relation to us God “vivifies the whole man” (V.4:1), and through this living wholeness the possibility and actuality of personal relatedness between creature and Creator arise. This intimate, dynamic, inspiring relation is wrought by the Holy Spirit, who “does, in the most gentle manner, vivify and increase mankind” (IV.20:10).

Apparently Irenaeus does not consider human reason to be a higher level or a separate function of human being. Human life is the activity of the whole person and reason is a characteristic or quality or function of this living activity. Human life moves in and through and toward the rational. In terms of the divine economy this means that the Holy Spirit, in vivifying human life, orients humanity toward the Logos in “general revelation” and witnesses to Christ in “special revelation.” It is in this light that the following passages should be understood:

For since His invisible essence is mighty, it confers on all a profound mental intuition and perception of His most powerful, yea, omnipotent greatness. Wherefore, although “no one knows the Father, except the Son, nor the Son except the Father, and those to whom the Son will reveal Him,” yet all do know this one fact at least, because reason, implanted in their minds, moves them, and reveals to them that there is one God, the Lord of all. (II.6:1)

God does, however, exercise a providence over all things, and therefore He also gives counsel; and when giving counsel, He is present with those who attend to moral discipline. It follows then of course, that the things which are watched over and governed should be acquainted with their ruler; which things are not irrational or vain, but they have understanding derived from the providence of God. (III.25:1)

Irenaeus is, as we shall see, quite willing to point to *a posteriori* evidential grounds for belief in the existence of God. But in the passages quoted above, he is not presenting an argument; he is rather attempting to point to an essential function of human existence in relation to God; an “*a priori* fact,” if you will. If he had chosen to formulate this characteristic of the human situation in terms of a theistic argument, some form of the “Ontological Argument” would have been the result. What Irenaeus is actually doing here, is presenting his conception of what would be called, in terms of a later theology, “general revelation.” Before considering the import of these passages we may note two others which, taken together, elucidate the activity of both Word and Spirit in general revelation:

... there is one and the same God the Father, and His Word, who has been always present with the human race, by means indeed of various dispensations, and has wrought out many things, and saved from the beginning those who are saved, (for these are they who love God, and follow the Word of God according to the class to which they belong), and has judged those who are judged, that is, those who forget God, and are blasphemous, and transgressors of His Word. (IV.28:2)

... the same Spirit of God, although He has been poured out upon us after a new fashion in these last times, [descends] even from the creation of the world to its end upon the human race simply as such, from whom those who believe God and follow His Word receive that salvation which flows from Him. Those, on the other hand, who depart from Him, and despise His precepts, and by their deeds bring dishonour on Him who made them, and by their opinions blaspheme Him who nourishes them, heap up against themselves most righteous judgment. (IV.33:15)

It is axiomatic with Irenaeus that "God cannot be known without God: but that this is the express will of the Father, that He should be known" (IV.6:4). For Irenaeus there is no such thing as "natural" knowledge of God, *if* by "natural" one means a human activity performed without dependence upon and influence by God's activity. This point indeed follows from Irenaeus' more inclusive contention that no human activity does or could function in independence of God. On the other hand, if by "natural" one means an intimate and organic relation which is integral to and constitutive of the essential nature of humanity, then this knowledge of God is in the highest sense "natural," because it is the actualization of the personal grace of the Creator in dynamic relatedness with the rational creature. However, if we want to interpret Irenaeus' position in later technical terminology, we will need to think in terms of "general and special revelation" rather than "natural and revealed theology."

Many more passages can be found in which Irenaeus discusses the knowledge of God apart from special revelation, but which deal with what may be called an "externalized" knowledge in contradistinction from "inward" knowledge. However, within the over-all perspective of Irenaeus' theology, the "implanted reason" of the Word and the "gentle vivification" of the Spirit confer the fundamental guidance and empowerment for general revelation. The knowledge of God, as all knowledge, is relatedness to and through the power of the Logos (IV.6:7); it is the Word who confronts and demands, whom people obey and follow or disobey and depart from. And it is the Holy Spirit from whom salvation "flows," who "vivifies" and "nourishes" the whole of human life, who presents the Word as the living Word in an inward, intimate, and personal way, and who endeavors to evoke a living response.

Some of the key words in the above-quoted passages are very suggestive: "reveals," "moves," "nourishes," "flows from,"

“implanted,” “always present with”; “intuition,” “perception,” “understanding,” “counsel,” “moral discipline”; “attend.” “follow,” “love”; “forget,” “depart from,” “despise.”

The knowledge of God in general revelation transcends, though it may also involve, theoretical or conceptual knowledge. The Word, through the quickening activity of the Spirit, exercises a *moral* constraint upon the living action of the whole person. The negatively “disciplinary” side of this living Word indicates to Irenaeus the fact that people do not simply and forthwith comply and conform to this counsel. Rather, however much they may comply, the primordial situation in this relation is one of human volitional divergence or alienation from the guidance and empowerment of the constraining Presence.

This constraint, though always present, requires to be “attended to” if it is to be “followed.” It is quite possible for people to neglect or “forget” it and, in so doing, to “depart from” it. Due to the “intuitive” or “perceptive” character of this relation, attending and following or forgetting and departing are expressed primarily in affective volition rather than abstract opinion: not in knowledge or ignorance “about” God, but in the responsive movement of the whole person in “loving” or “despising” the One who moves and constrains.

On the one hand, this relation *is* personal. On the other hand, it is not necessarily *known to be* personal. The fact that it is prompted and precipitated by the active presence of God makes it personal “from God’s side.” The fact that it involves the whole person as living in and responding to the Spirit makes it personal from the human side. Yet the very inwardness, depth, and intimacy of the relation means that it both can be and must be *actual, whether or not* one comes to an explicit *recognition* which is objectified in the conceptual awareness: “I am inwardly related to a personal Other who constrains me.”

The essential and primordial response of “attending to” the divine constraint might perhaps be best expressed by the word *humility*. Irenaeus affirms on numerous occasions that humility is of the very essence of any true knowledge of God; he sees the contrast between pride and humility at the very center of redemption: “The pride of reason, therefore, which was in the serpent, was put to nought by the humility found in the man Christ” (V.21:2; cf. II.11:2; II.26:1; V.22:2). Before the divine counsel can be followed, it must be attended to. Its disciplinary nature implies that people *are* not related as they *ought* to be. In this situation humility is expressed in acceptance, or knowledge as acknowledgement. Rather than accept one’s real situation one tends to “forget” the inward constraint and to “depart” from it.

As we have seen from the beginning of this study, Irenaeus maintains consistently that human beings are always, and in all levels or characteristics of being, related to God. To cease to be related to God would be to cease to exist. Furthermore, relation to God culminates in the personal intimacy and vivifying activity of the Spirit who makes the human person a living whole and presents the constraint of the Word in an active and concrete-occasional manner which both demands and makes possible a human(izing) response.

Irenaeus' *theological conception of humanity* is paradoxical or more accurately dynamic and dialectical. Everyone knows God, but everyone does not know God: everyone partakes of life, but everyone does not partake of life. (In the *full* sense, only one, Jesus Christ has known God and partaken of life.) A human being is a creature of having and having-not; specifically, a creature of being-in-relation-to-God and of not-being-in-relation-to-God. The former is the *a priori* and absolutely indispensable presupposition of the latter. That which gives ultimate significance to human life—in the present moment and in relation to eternal destiny—is each one's personal relation to God, as a whole person "vivified" through the Spirit and "rationalized" through the implanted Logos.

Whether in humble attendance and acknowledgement or in prideful forgetfulness and rejection (or in an ambiguous "mixture" of both), human beings reason and live through the power of the Word who is "always present with the human race" and the Spirit who continually "does, in the most gentle manner, vivify and increase mankind." Even if one moves away from God, it is by the power of God that one moves. And even if one is in personal relation against God, one is still in personal relation with God.

The traditional Christian doctrine of eternal reward and punishment, whatever else may be said about it, gave to each person a unique and absolute significance as an individual (beside which all strictly philosophical doctrines of the dignity of human personality exhibit a merely borrowed luster). It was in relation with God that the early Christians found their own personhood and in the light of which they viewed the personhood of all others. Irenaeus' conception of the intimacy of human relation to God through the indwelling activity of Word and Spirit, sees human selfhood as grounded in and precipitated and occasioned by the personal vivification and constraint of God upon the human self.

It is of central importance to note that Irenaeus does not conceive general revelation as merely "sufficient justification for damnation." As we have already seen, those who "follow his Word receive that salvation which flows from Him." The omnipresent divine-human drama in history is not a farce and neither, despite the mystery of

human suffering beyond human estimate, is it merely a tragedy; it is the living personal relation between human response-in-freedom and God's prevenient action-in-freedom, which constitutes the ultimate meaning and reality of human destiny in a divinely guided and empowered becoming which is begun but not consummated in this present life.

All that has been said thus far concerning the personal relation between humankind and God has presupposed the reality of responsive human freedom. Irenaeus maintains that "God has always preserved freedom, and the power of self-government in man" (IV.15:2). In the following passages he sets forth a clear conception of the nature of human freedom in relation to the initiating activity of God:

This expression, "How often would I have gathered thy children together, and thou wouldest not," set forth the ancient law of human liberty, because God made man a free [agent] from the beginning, possessing his own power, even as he does his own soul, to obey the behests of God voluntarily and not by compulsion of God. For *there is no coercion with God*, but a good will is present with Him continually. And therefore does he give good counsel to all. (V.37:1)

All such passages demonstrate the independent will of man, and at the same time the counsel which God conveys to him, by which He exhorts us to submit ourselves to Him, and seeks to turn us away from unbelief against Him, without, however, in any way coercing us. (IV.37:3)

Perhaps the only comment required here is that such terms as "possessing" and "independent" must, as appears clearly from the context, be understood as relative expressions of one "end" of a relation. Relatedness to God is the preceding, sustaining, and evoking condition of whatever independence-in-relation-to-God a human being may "possess."

Thus far we have confined our attention to what may be called the "inward" or "interiorized" character of general revelation. Irenaeus' emphasis on the intimate personal working of Word and Spirit constitutes for him the primary "datum." Nevertheless, even though his conception of general revelation is primarily inwardized ("ontological" and "moral") rather than outwardized ("cosmological" and "teleological"), he does recognize the validity of an "exteriorized" or *a posteriori* side of general revelation in *correlation* with the "interiorized" or *a priori*. We may distinguish three types of *a posteriori* argument from our experience of existence in the world: argument from design, argument to one ultimate Cause, and argument from universal testimony. We may examine these in order.

Irenaeus necessarily approaches the argument from *design* in a rather wary manner, for he has to contend against the Gnostics who take different aspects of the creaturely world as symbolic "images" of the variety of "Aeons" (mythological suprahuman Powers) in the

“Pleroma” (the divine “Fulness” of suprahuman Powers in a hierarchically descending-ascending Order, “secret knowledge” of which supposedly guarantees “salvation”). This Gnostic (“secret-knowing”) interpretation of the order of creation represents to Irenaeus simply one more manifestation of the pagan tendency toward idolatry: worshipping, as though it were ultimate, a creaturely “image,” which cannot in itself be ultimate (see II.7:1-6; 8:1-3). Therefore, he is careful not to base his argument on any specific characteristics of creation, but rather “takes the bull by the horns” and emphasizes the opposition and disharmoniousness of the various aspects of creation considered “individually” in themselves. The aesthetic, intelligent, and providentially-purposive ordering of the whole constitutes the basis of his argument:

But since created things are various and numerous, they are indeed well fitted and adapted to the whole creation; yet, when viewed individually, are mutually opposite and disharmonious, just as the sound of the lyre, which consists of many and opposite notes. . . . The lover of truth therefore ought not to be deceived by the interval between each note, nor should he imagine that one was due to one artist and author, and another to another . . . ; but he should hold that one and the same person [formed the whole], so as to prove the judgment, goodness and skill exhibited in the whole work and wisdom. Those, too, who listen to the melody, ought to praise and extol the artist, to admire the tension of some notes, to attend to the softness of others, . . . neither giving up the artist, nor casting off faith in the one God who formed all things, nor blaspheming our Creator. (II. 25:2)

. . . acknowledging that not one of the things which have been, or are, or shall be made, escapes the knowledge of God, but that through his providence every one of them has obtained its nature, and rank, and number, and special quantity, and that nothing whatever either has been or is produced in vain or accidentally, but with exceeding suitability, and in the exercise of transcendent knowledge, and that it was an admirable and divine intellect . . . (II.26:3)

Again, when Irenaeus considers arguments involving the concept of divine *causality* he is confronted by the fantastic speculations of the Gnostics. It is perhaps surprising that, in the polemical context of arguing against the Gnostics, he did not reject causal arguments altogether. He indeed points out that the activity of “inquiring into the causes of things” *can* be an occasion for the arrogant manifestation of the pride of reason (II.26:1). Yet he recognizes the “right” of human reason to inquire into the causes of things, provided that the investigation is conducted in a spirit of humility:

If any one, however, say in reply to these things, What then? Is it a *meaningless* and *accidental* thing, that. . . . created things, are what they are?—we answer them: *Certainly not*; but with great wisdom and diligence, all things have clearly been made by God, . . . and men ought . . . to harmonize with *what actually exists*, or with *right reason*. (II.25:1).

On all these points we may indeed say a great deal while we search into their causes, but God alone who made them can declare the truth regarding them. (II.28:2)

If, however, any one does not discover the cause of all those things which become objects of investigation, let him reflect that man is infinitely inferior to God; . . . that he cannot have experience or form a conception of all things, like God . . . (II.25:3)

For thy Former cannot be contained within limits; nor, although thou shouldst measure all this, and pass through all His creation, and consider it in all the depth, and height, and length, wouldst thou be able to conceive of any other above the Father Himself. For thou wilt not be able to think Him out . . . (II.25:4)

“*The truth*” regarding *created* things is their *reference to their Creator*. Whatever else may be discovered about the causes of things—if their transcendent reference is not recognized, reason is not functioning as “right” reason; for right reason is reason related to and through the Logos.

Thus when Irenaeus comes to argue for the existence of God according to the causal principle he does not base his argument on any particular types or manifestations of causality, but rather emphasizes the unity, ultimacy, and transcendence of God as the creative Source of all finite creaturely causality. He accepts the *basic* Neoplatonic notion of the “Pleroma” (complete Fullness) of Being as the casual Source of finite being, but demands that *Pleroma* be rationally acknowledged as ultimate and absolute Fullness. To dilute the “Pleroma” into a descending hierarchical multiplicity is to deny its very “fullness”: divine completeness, unity and ultimacy (II.1:2, 3,5; II.2:3; II.13:9).

It will be sufficient here merely to indicate the principal motifs of Irenaeus’ causal argument. The movement of human thought in its examination of the world seeks “rest.” Whatever human beings find in the world, they know “already,” as it were, that this cannot be ultimate. If they view the variety of causal powers exhibited in the world as transcendentally referring to and deriving from a hierarchical order of transmundane powers, they still have not found rest in the true Pleroma. Nothing less than *the Complete Fullness of Being*, without dilution or division, can be *the Ultimate*. If human thought is “content” with less than this, it has ultimatized the limited and conditional and has fallen into self-delusive idolatry. If human thought attempts to go “beyond” the One who is the absolute Fullness of Being, it is thrown into self-contradictory blasphemy.

Whether Irenaeus considers his remarks to be a “proof of the existence of God” in the strict sense is perhaps very doubtful. But it seems to me that his discussion does have important significance in its *a priori* theological insight: The conception of “the ultimate” is, so to speak, “written into” the human mind through the divinely “implanted reason.” Everyone does not arrive at an “objective certainty” of the existence of the Ultimate to whom Irenaeus points.

(In fact, "objective" knowledge in the strict sense would contradict the very transcendence and ultimacy of God.) But *everyone does know* inwardly, whether acknowledged or not, that none of the causes or things or principles which one finds objectified in the world is ultimate. The proper and truly "pious" attitude toward the objective world in the life of the person who has not been decisively confronted by special revelation, is the recognition that wherever and to whatever one may turn: This is *not* ultimate; this is *not* God.

The chief, though not the only, significance of the outwardized "cosmological approach" in Irenaeus' thought is its reference back to the inwardized "ontological approach." This point is revealed quite clearly in his elaboration of what was previously referred to as the "argument from *universal testimony*":

That God is the Creator of the world is *accepted* even by those very persons *who speak against Him*. . . . that proof which is derived from those who allege doctrines opposite to ours, is of itself sufficient,—all men, in fact, consenting to this truth: . . . the very heathen learned it from creation itself. For even creation reveals Him who formed it, and the very work made suggests Him who made it, and the world manifests Him who ordered it. (II.9:1)

It is therefore in the highest degree irrational, that we should take no account of Him who is truly God, and who receives *testimony from all*. . . . (II.10:1)

These passages taken in themselves sound quite paradoxical, but in the light of what we have already seen their meaning may perhaps emerge with some clarity: Irenaeus is not referring to "universal testimony" in the sense of spoken words, though he does see verbal testimony as in some degree correlated with the more basic fact to which he is pointing. Even those very persons who "speak against" the one Creator nevertheless, in the God-given *a priori* structure of rational human thought, must "accept" him; those who "take no account" nevertheless "consent."

The *objective manifestation* of the Word is *correlated with the subjective "implanatation"* of the Word. World and self are correlated sides of general revelation so that "even creation reveals Him who formed it." But "self-knowledge" is the primarily relevant source—apart from special revelation—for human knowledge of God. The reason for this is not simply that self-knowledge is direct whereas objective knowledge is indirect or mediated. The "reason" which is of far more profound significance is that, not only special, but also general *revelation* is rooted in the *activity of God*: Whereas the manifestation of the Word in the "external" creaturely world is "universal" in a relatively abstract and static sense, the manifestation and "constraint of the Word" through the "vivification of the Spirit" in the life of *each* individual person is universal in the wholly concrete and dynamic sense. "Objective" human conception of and belief in the existence of the metaphysical Ultimate, the Fullness of

Being, etc., has genuine religious significance only if and insofar as correlated with and rooted in inward personal acceptance of and subjection to the personal constraint of the Word through the Spirit.

In the discussion thus far I have deliberately avoided those passages which refer to humanity in terms of the “image” or “likeness of God” (*imago* or *similitudo dei*). These terms are in the process of becoming technical in the writing of Irenaeus, but they have not yet assumed the fixedness and rigidity which was destined to be conferred upon them by later theologians. The meaning which Irenaeus attributes to them can be understood more clearly after his basic conception of human life in relation to God has first been examined. We may now turn to some of the most relevant passages:

But man, being endowed with *reason*, and in this respect like to God, having been made *free* in his *will*, and with power over himself, is himself the cause to himself, that sometimes he becomes wheat, and sometimes chaff. (IV.4:3)

But because man is possessed of free will from the beginning, and God is possessed of free will, in whose *likeness* man was created, advice is always given to him to keep fast the good, which thing is done *by means of obedience to God*. (IV.37:4)

For by the hands of the Father, that is, by the Son and the Holy Spirit, *man*, and *not* [merely] *a part* of man, was made in the *likeness* of God. Now the soul and the spirit are certainly a part of the man, but certainly not the man; for the perfect man consists in the commingling and union of the *soul* receiving the *spirit* of the Father, and the admixture of that *fleshly* nature which was molded after the *image* of God. (V.6:1)

For in times long past, it was said that man was created after the image of God, but it was not shown; for the Word was as yet invisible, after whose image man was created. Wherefore he did also easily lose the similitude. When, however, the *Word of God became flesh*, He confirmed both these: for He both *showed forth the image truly*, since He became Himself what was His Image; and He *re-established the similitude* after a sure manner, by assimilating man to the invisible Father through means of the visible Word. (V.16:2)

For I have shown that the Son of God . . . *commenced afresh the long line of human beings*, and *furnished* us, in a brief, comprehensive manner, with *salvation*; so that what we had lost in Adam—namely, to be according to the image and likeness of God—that we might recover in Christ Jesus. (III.18:1)

Image, in Irenaeus’ general usage of the word, means a “showing-forth,” a manifestation. As we have noted previously, Irenaeus had to oppose Gnostic interpretation of various properties of creation as “images” of the Aeonian Pleroma. Revelation of the Word in creation as such is, for Irenaeus, a function of the whole and is thus objectively “abstract.” An image must be *concrete*; it must be *perceivable* as well as conceivable. Now Irenaeus holds, following the general practice of the early Church “Fathers,” that in the light of Gen. 1:26 there is one concrete “place” in creation which is essentially capable of revealing the Word of God: the visible, perceivable characteristics of a human life.

A human being is perceived “in the flesh,” and thus human “fleshly nature” is capable of showing forth the image of God. But the outwardly perceivable image is a *manifestation of* that which is *inward*. Thus whether or not—or the degree to which—a human life shows forth the Word depends upon the inward personal relation to the Word: the “similarity to” or “likeness of God.”

From the passages quoted above, the similitude might conceivably be taken merely as “the rational freedom of the whole person.” But to interpret this expression as a “property” which human beings “possess” in themselves apart from *appropriately responsive relation to God*, would be radically to misconstrue Irenaeus’ fundamental meaning. The term *similitudo* simply refers in summary fashion to human life insofar as lived in rightly responsive relation to God: “by means of obedience to God.”

All the results of our preceding examination must apply here. Human life as the likeness of God, in the actual human “existential situation,” is characterized by having *and* having-not, by being-in-relation *and* not-being-in-relation. Thus, a valid understanding of Irenaeus’ conception of general revelation and universal prevenient grace ends in acknowledgement of the need for “special revelation” and the “grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Apart from a human life in which the Word *fully* dwells there can be no image, no showing-forth, of God in the *finally revelatory* sense. Apart from a full Incarnation of the Word, creation in its concrete aspects remains, as Irenaeus keenly discerned, ambiguous. Human beings insofar as they are inwardly alienated from submission to the Word cannot authentically image and mirror-forth the Word. And human beings not only stand in need of the perfect concrete Image and Revelation of God in a human life; they also, even more radically in Irenaeus’ view, stand in need of an inwardly-transforming, redeeming and reconciling power in correlation with the outwardly perceivable Image of the Word.

Human freedom is always freedom in acceptance and submission to a power which is not our own; insofar as we have rejected the possibility of submission to the “divine constraint” we have given ourselves over into bondage to demonic “powers.” Each person is, inescapably, personally related to God; insofar as one has turned away from God one has alienated oneself from the Source of true communion and has lost one’s own true selfhood. Human life is not sheer activity, but formed-activity; insofar as one resists the continual creative re-formation of the Spirit one hardens and congeals one’s own life into the *habitus* of sinful patterns. Thus humankind stands in radical need: of liberating release from demonic bondage into the power of true freedom in submission to God; of reconciliation from

alienation into personal communion with God; of re-formation out of the old form-of-life into a new form-of-life whose structure is ever open and responsive to the dynamic prompting and empowering of the Spirit.

In correlation with the perfect revelatory Image of God, in Jesus Christ (the Word Incarnate), the Holy Spirit (through the Mystery of the Triune Godhead) actualizes the Power of the perfect finite human life of the God-man (perfected in triumph over all temptation to sin) within the inward reality of receptive human lives, thus moving human destiny in becoming toward that Goal which has been the eternal will of the Father: the final Consummation of God's creating in a corporately shared imaging-forth of blessed creaturely likeness to God.

St. Augustine on the Goodness of Creaturely Existence

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On the one hand, Augustine (354-430) can write: "At their hands [those of godless men] we suffer robbery, captivity, chains, imprisonment, exile, torture, mutilation, loss of sight, the violation of chastity to satisfy the lust of the oppressor, and many other dreadful evils. . . . What numberless casualties threaten our bodies from without—extremes of heat and cold, storms, floods, inundations, lightning, thunder, hail, earthquakes, houses falling; or from the stumbling or shying or vice of horses; from countless poisons in fruits, water, air, animals; from painful or even deadly bites of wild animals; from the madness which a mad dog communicates. . . . What disasters are suffered by those who travel by land or sea! What man can go out of his own house without being exposed on all hands to unforeseen accidents? Returning home sound in limb, he slips on his own door-step, breaks his leg, and never recovers. . . . How many accidents do farmers, or rather all men, fear that the crops may suffer from the weather, or the soil, or the ravages of destructive animals? . . . sudden floods have driven the labourers away, and swept the barns clean of the finest harvests. . . . As to bodily diseases, they are so numerous that they cannot all be contained in the medical books. And in very many, or almost all of them, the cares and remedies are themselves tortures. . . . Have not the fierce pangs of famine driven mothers to eat their own children, incredibly savage as it seems? In fine, sleep itself, which is justly called repose, how little of repose there sometimes is in it when disturbed with dreams and visions; and with what terror is the wretched mind overwhelmed by the appearances of things which are so presented, and which, as it were, so stand out before the senses, that we cannot distinguish them from realities! How wretchedly do false appearances distract men in certain diseases! . . . From this hell upon earth there is no escape, save through the grace of the Saviour Christ, our God and Lord." (*The City of God*, XXII, 22).

On the other hand, the same Augustine writes: "What wonderful—one might say stupefying—advances has human industry made in the arts of weaving and building, of agriculture and navigation! With what endless variety are designs in pottery, painting, and sculpture produced, and with what skill executed? What wonderful spectacles are exhibited in the theatres. . . . what wealth of song is

there to captivate the ear! how many musical instruments and strains of harmony have been devised! What skill has been attained in measures and numbers! with what sagacity have the moments and connections of the stars been discovered! . . . In fine, even the defence of errors and misapprehensions, which has illustrated the genius of heretics and philosophers, cannot be sufficiently declared. . . . there is such a symmetry in its [the human body's] various parts, and so beautiful a proportion maintained, that one is at a loss to decide whether, in creating the body, greater regard was paid to utility or to beauty. . . . Shall I speak of the manifold and various loveliness of sky, and earth, and sea; of the plentiful supply and wonderful qualities of the light; of sun, moon, and stars; of the shade of trees; of the colours and perfume of flowers; of the multitude of birds, all differing in plumage and in song; of the variety of animals, of which the smallest in size are often the most wonderful—the works of ants and bees astonishing us more than the huge bodies of whales? Shall I speak of the sea, which itself is so grand a spectacle, when it arrays itself as it were in vestures of various colors, now running through every shade of green, and again becoming purple or blue? . . . What shall I say of the numberless kinds of food to alleviate hunger, and the variety of seasonings to stimulate appetite which are scattered everywhere by nature, and for which we are not indebted to the art of cookery? How many natural appliances are there for preserving and restoring health? How grateful is the alternation of day and night! how pleasant the breezes that cool the air! how abundant the supply of clothing furnished us by trees and animals! Who can enumerate all the blessings we enjoy?" (*The City of God*, XXII, 24).

Within the same chapter of his *City of God*, just a couple of pages apart, we have Augustine's version of "It was the best of times" and "It was the worst of times." Perhaps nowhere else do we have a more striking counterposition of the sorrows, frustrations, fears, insecurities, and pains, and the riches, joys, pleasures, accomplishments, and beauty of human existence. Perhaps nowhere else in recorded history do we encounter a person in whom such an acute sense of present and potential evils, of the depth of human suffering and misery, and of the dark underbelly of creaturely life that is ever present, is combined with such a deep appreciation of the achievements of human science and art, of the beauties of nature, and of the riches of human friendship and love.

One of the many ways in which the life of Augustine can be viewed is as a struggle between denying and affirming bodily existence in a worldly environment in time. Related to that struggle is the issue of how created spatial, temporal goods are to be appreciated and valued in relation to enjoying and loving God.

Augustine lived in an age in which there was a widespread desire to escape from the vicissitudes, risks, failures, and evils of spatio-temporal existence into a timeless, changeless realm. There was with this outlook a positing of the mind or soul as clearly distinguishable from and superior to the body, and as that which could now partially and might sometime completely and finally leave behind the body and all the pains and frustrated or evil desires to which it was subjected. Partly cause and partly effect of this pervasive attitude was the denigration of sex.

This “philosophy” was not without its affect on Augustine’s mother, Monica. Or, as is more the case, the experiences of people like Monica over generations found expression in various philosophies (which in Augustine’s times can be labelled as Neo-Platonic or Gnostic). And Monica was not without her affect upon her son. Augustine mentions a conversation with her in which “this world with all its delights became contemptible to us” and in which Monica said that she had “no further delight in any thing in this life,” since her final desire, that Augustine become a Catholic Christian and that she should see him “despising earthly happiness,” had been realized (*The Confessions*, IX). But she also recognized the pull of earthly, temporal things. She did not have Augustine baptized when he was an infant, for she expected him to indulge in bodily pleasures before despising the world, and wanted the believed-in remission of all prior sins in baptism to be strategically used. A “lifescrypt” analyst could have a field day with all of that, but such an endeavor is not our concern here.

Augustine grew up enjoying the delights of sight, touch, and taste and the joys of the human voice, laughter, and friendship. Like all of us he began life affirming bodily existence in an environment in time (not in thought, of course, but in experience). Yet there were perceptions and attitudes of others and some experiences of his own that were pulling Augustine in the direction of seeing such existence as futile and evil. At the age of nineteen, he joined the Manichaeans, who identified evil with corporeal, material things and the good and divine with (supposedly) non-material, spiritual light.

The attraction of Manichaeism for Augustine and others lay in its allowing one to identify oneself with the divine sparks of light entrapped within the body and to externalize one’s bodily desires and actions, thus allowing one (to attempt) to escape responsibility and guilt for feelings and deeds regarded as evil. Thus one could affirm bodily, temporal existence in one’s actual living, while “officially” taking a position suitable to one’s “superego” or “shadow,” or whatever may be the appropriate term for that “part” of one that “looks askance” on earthly things.

Augustine's rejection of Manichaeism nine years later represented an acceptance of bodily, temporal things as an evil part of himself, of his will. (This should not be taken to imply that only relatively "bodily" evils or imagined evils were included in that which Augustine acknowledged to be in himself and his will, but this is the aspect of the change with which we are here concerned.) While this led in the short run to an increased asceticism and a greater or more integrated rejection of things earthly, in the long term, it was an integral part of a process of greater affirmation of spatiotemporal goods as gifts from God. For while he had been with the Manichaeans, his acceptance (and rejection) of earthly things had been a dishonest one in which he was split with himself.

In *The Confessions* there is a good deal of talk about the goodness of creation. Yet the over-all atmosphere is fairly much one of desiring to transcend bodily existence to some complete, unchangeable, timeless realm. He writes, the "the mind is one thing, the body another." In a discourse that seems comical to us, Augustine wishes that he would be able to take food solely for sustenance, but that inevitably pleasure accompanies the movement from emptiness to fullness. And he wishes that he would not have to put up with the temporal nature of knowledge but could know all instantaneously and unchangeably as the angels do.

While there are countertendencies in *The Confessions*, the basic attitude expressed is that temporal things are not to be perceived as being gifts from God that have an *intrinsic* value that should be accepted and enjoyed, but rather are to be valued only *instrumentally*, as pointing to or manifesting God and things eternal.

Perhaps most indicative of Augustine's struggle between affirming and denying the human, temporal, earthly things (things which he always to some extent on some level affirmed by desiring and enjoying them) is his attitude toward friendship. Augustine writes of his friendship with people he had grown up with who had subscribed to Manichaeism with him: "All kinds of things rejoiced my soul in their company—to talk and laugh, and to do each other kindnesses; to read pleasant books together; to pass from lightest jesting to talk of the deepest things and back again; to differ without rancour, as a man might differ with himself, and when, most rarely, dissension arose, to find our normal agreement all the sweeter for it, . . . to be impatient for the return of the absent, and to welcome them with joy on their homecoming; these, and such-like things, proceeding from our hearts as we gave affection and received it back, and shown by face, by voice, by the eyes, and by a thousand other pleasing ways, kindled a flame which fused our very souls together, and, of many, made us one" (*The Confessions*, VI). And as Peter Brown writes, Augustine's

delight in human companionship continued: "in middle age he remains delightfully and tragically exposed to 'that most unfathomable of all involvements of the soul—friendship.'" But he worries about his great need for others, about the vulnerability and risk involved in relationships, particularly the possibility of the loss of a person to whom one has become attached, and about the distraction from divine, eternal things by human attachments. He was ashamed at his great sorrow at his mother's death. He would sometimes write that he wished he could be without passionate involvement in human relationships and cleave solely to God.

In his latter years, particularly in *The City of God*, Augustine exhibits a greater affirmation than heretofore of human existence in an environment in time. While there are certainly passages that admonish the pilgrim to the heavenly city to use "advantages of time and earth" only instrumentally in the contemplation of eternal things, the stronger message is that created temporal things are to be enjoyed as gifts from God having intrinsic value. He writes: "the things this [earthly] city desires cannot justly be said to be evil. . . . For it desires earthly peace for the sake of enjoying earthly goods. . . . These things then are good things, and without doubt the gifts of God." And the second quotation at the beginning of this paper cannot but be seen as affirming that human and natural things are to be relished. And while there lingers the desire not to be greatly sorrowed by the death of friends, there is more of an acceptance of this as a necessary part of friendship, that over-all is most definitely good. Augustine cautions, though, that in the process of enjoying earthly goods, the heavenly city and its "eternal victory and never-ending peace" are not to be neglected. Perhaps it can be said that, to some extent at least, Augustine has come to believe that human, temporal things are not to be wholly escaped from in the afterlife, but are tokens of a new creation that will leave behind only the evils that attend and are entwined with all earthly things.

When one considers the atmosphere which enveloped Augustine, he appears all the more an exponent of bodily existence. While he still makes a clear distinction between the soul and the body and characterizes the latter as "by nature inferior to" the former, he challenges the more radically dualistic opinions of the Manichaeans and "Platonists." He takes the Manichaeans to task for neglecting divine truth in regarding the soul as completely good and the body as completely evil, when, in fact, both body and soul have some good (in so far as they are created by God) and some evil (in so far as man goes astray and is punished). While the "Platonists" attribute the creation to God, they nevertheless hold that all vice in the soul arises from bodily perturbations and desires. Augustine asserts that a number of

vices arise in the soul, particularly pride, the greatest sin. And he traces bodily vices to Adam's prideful soul, seeing "the weighing down of the corruptible body"—its evilness to the extent that it causes the person to have strong and partly uncontrollable desire for pleasure—as punishment for his original sin. But though bodily existence was originally intended to be good by the Creator and will be good after the resurrection, some ambivalence remains as to our actual bodily existence in an environment in time.

The area where Augustine least came to affirm the goodness of creation was that of sex. While he disputed those who thought the ideal would be to have a sexless world and affirmed sex as he imagined it would have been engaged in by Adam and Eve if they hadn't fallen, he perceived sex as it actually is as basically dirty and evil. Ideally for Augustine, sex would be just for the purpose of procreation and without the "wild heat of passion" arousing the sexual organs, accomplished with the calmness, control, and utility with which man's "other members serve him for their respective ends." Augustine disapprovingly notes that in the sexual act "all mental activity" is suspended. He pens that the "field of generation should have been sown by the organ created for this purpose, as the earth is sown by the hand." What bothers Augustine is the lack of control by the will: sexual desire comes when we don't want it and controls us, and, conversely, sometimes when we want it it doesn't come. While part of Augustine's negative feelings about sex stem from the perception of sex as consisting of overweening desire that manipulates and runs roughshod over the needs of others, there is also here the desire to be a mind which is in complete possession of itself and above all the vulnerability and risks, above the inability to re-evaluate and turn back in midstream, above all being affected by others, by his own past, and by conflicting desires—and in the bargain above all the rich potentialities—of incarnate existence in one of its premier aspects. Augustine, rather than recommending that one allow sexual desire and passion to become a part of one's will to be realized for the pleasure of oneself and another, would have one always fight it and be a will divided.

How can we appropriate Augustine with respect to the issues raised in this paper? For the most part I will let you decide that for yourselves, which hopefully you have been doing in reading this. My categories and interpretations should give you some feel as to how I have appropriated Augustine in this area and hopefully will help in your appropriation, whether or not you totally accept them.

I will, however, make a few comments of a general and concluding nature. I believe we should appreciate Augustine's struggle over whether to affirm the Christian belief in the goodness of incarnate

existence and his basic acceptance of that goodness, despite a general atmosphere and particular events (“little things,” like the breaking up of civilization as it was known, and the death of friends and relatives) that pushed in the opposite direction. While things are not as bad now as in Augustine’s time, there are still plenty of evils that tend to make us life-denying, and reading Augustine—who, while more than aware of the dark underbelly of life, still affirmed the great delights of this world—can help us retain or regain the awareness that creaturely existence is a very good gift from God despite all possible and actual distortions.

The other basic lesson we should appropriate from Augustine is that creaturely goods are not all that is to be valued. We should worship the Creator rather than the creature. God is to be contemplated, communed with, and thanked “for all the blessings we enjoy.”

Finally, a firm belief of Augustine’s, which is indirectly related to the themes of this article and should not go unmentioned, is that despite the myriad and profound evils which are always present in creaturely existence in an environment in time, God is ultimately in control. Though we may not share Augustine’s belief in God’s determining everything down to the last iota and his eventual denial of any genuine contingency in human volition, we should sense in Augustine that God assured to him and assures to all who have faith in Him the ultimate purposefulness and meaningfulness of our lives.

St. Thomas Aquinas on Free Will and Predestination

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Thomas (1224/5-1274), a Dominican friar? No, it shall never be. No son of mine is going to go about begging. If he has to become a religious, let him join a respectable order like the Benedictines, where he can become abbot of Monte Casino and bring glory to his family! Such were the sentiments of the Aquino family when they heard the plans of the teenage Thomas. Thomas had just finished studies in the *studium generale* at Naples, where he had come to know two of the most important factors in his life: the Dominican friars and the natural philosophy of Aristotle. In spite of his early education with the Benedictines, the life of the followers of St. Dominic with their dedication to truth, to preaching and to teaching, appealed to the young Thomas. As he journeyed north toward Bologna with a group of Dominicans, already wearing their black and white habit, he was set upon by his own brothers and held a prisoner for over a year. The family hoped to “deprogram” Thomas, but their efforts were in vain. He used the time to pray and to read. Upon his release, the Dominicans sent him to the University of Paris for further training. From Paris, he accompanied Albert the Great to Cologne, where Albert organized a Dominican *studium generale* out of which eventually developed the University of Cologne.

The quiet, heavy-set, tall young Dominican gave no indication of the power of his mind; indeed, because of his size and his silence, he was called the “Dumb Ox.” A student, thinking Thomas’ silence was a result of a poor grasp of the lectures, offered to help him. Thomas accepted. In the course of their work together, the student was so enlightened by Thomas’ extraordinarily clear notes and explanations that he asked Thomas to continue to help him. It was also at this time that Albert the Great, finding some of Thomas’ notes, was equally impressed and said, “We call him the Dumb Ox, but the bellowing of that ox will resound throughout the whole world.”¹ In Cologne, Albert lectured on Aristotle’s *Ethics*. Thomas also heard him lecture on the *De divinis nominibus* of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite. It was with regard to these lectures that the two stories given above are told. Thomas finished his studies in Cologne and returned to Paris to obtain a masters in theology. Having already spent two years in the *cursus biblicus*, or bible study conducted in every Dominican house, Thomas proceeded to lecture on the

Sentences of Peter Lombard. At the unusually early age of thirty-one, Thomas was given the second chair in theology at the University of Paris and his life as a Regent Master began.

Thomas was a prodigious worker, keeping three secretaries occupied simultaneously! Yet he was also a man of prayer, spending hours of quiet contemplation between midnight and dawn. Indeed, he considered his teaching to be the fruit of his contemplation. From the first years of his regency at Paris, Thomas was a *magister in sacra pagina*, that is, one of his primary functions was to comment on the Bible, which he continued to do until his death. From this come volumes of commentaries on books of both the Old and New Testaments.² That point needs to be stressed in order to overcome the common prejudice that the scholastics ignored the Bible and spent overmuch time on the *Sentences* and other theological manuals. Indeed, it was only to bring some order into the theology gleaned from the commentaries on books of the Bible that Thomas prepared his master-work, his *Summa Theologica*. Among the many theological topics which engaged Aquinas' mind, probably no subject intrigues many students of the history of theology more than the relation of free will and predestination. Aquinas does not resolve the tension or the mystery, but his treatment of the problem involves some important insights. The dilemma is set in two terms: human responsibility and God's free grace. Free choice protects the former; predestination protects the latter. Both draw their arguments penultimately from the doctrine of creation and ultimately from the doctrine of God. Revelation teaches that God is and is one, so Thomas Aquinas begins the *Summa Theologica* with a short section on the task and method of theology and then plunges into questions on the one God.

Here occur the famous five proofs for the existence of God, the first of which argues for the necessity of an Unmoved Mover. Inherent in this seemingly cold, philosophical designation of God is a theology of power and sweetness. Since Thomas' theology fed his own prayer and was inspired by it, one may well ask how anyone could experience love of what seems to be a cold and abstract concept, an Unmoved Mover.

Actually, the notion is explicable only in terms of goodness. Why did God, perfect and perfectly blessed in the beauty and wisdom and love of the three persons, create anything *extra*, anything outside that immense, intense triune life? Because goodness shares what it is as well as what it has. Creation has no other motivation than sharing. More than that, God does not simply scatter created beings and leave them to their own devices. God gives them motion, moves them, by calling them home. In a manner proper to each species, God intends

their perfection. Since perfection is ultimately in God, God is the end or goal of every creature. What is more, every creature, insofar as it is, is a reflection of God and is good. But the very variety which provides the beauty and perfection of the created whole includes natural conflict. So the insect blights the rose in order to become an adult insect, the wolf pursues the lamb, and at the top of material creation are human beings endowed with minds and wills and emotions which are their glory and, since the fall, the source of moral conflict.

God's power is so great that each created being is sustained in and entrusted with its nature, the principle of its activity. God does not need to control every creature so directly that the causality of creatures is nullified, as some medieval philosophers taught. It is the nature of water to run downhill. The nature of roses is to bloom and drop their seed; the nature of deer is to leap and of wolves to chase the deer. Human beings, however, are a unique blend. We share in the bodily properties of animals and the intellectual-volitional nature of spiritual beings. So our thinking and our willing are effective. We share with every created being powers to act according to our nature. We are therefore responsible for our actions. However, without God's sustaining power, no creature would continue to exist, much less act. God is, therefore, the middle as well as the beginning and end of all creatures, moving them by calling them home and sustaining them in the journey.

But God dignifies creation still more. By "providence" Thomas refers to God's immediate power and care for creation. "Government" is the term used to express the means God employs in applying providence. How does God govern? Through created instruments. A double good is thereby obtained. Creatures are dignified by their real participation in God's direction of the universe and God is glorified in the effectiveness of creatures. *Providence* assures that the various parts, even when they are in conflict or, in the case of moral evil, acting contrary to God's commandments, yet serve an ultimate harmony.

When we speak of God governing the universe through the natural abilities with which God has endowed creatures, we are talking about causality. Causality is a notion necessary in understanding the relation of providence, predestination and the power of rational creatures to will happiness and to choose, freely, the means of happiness. The will's natural object is happiness, or what is good for the person, but error can occur in two ways: one can mistake what is ultimately good and so seek something less than God as the source of happiness, or one can mistake the means, the way to God.

Let us, then, briefly review causality. God is the First Cause or Efficient Cause. All created beings are secondary or instrumental

causes. To take an example from our own lives, suppose you wish to make a table. You *design* the table first, designating material, shape and proportions (the formal cause) appropriate for your *intended use* of the table (the final cause). Then you pick up a *saw and hammer* (the instrumental causes) and you apply them to the *wood* (the material cause). You are the efficient cause, the maker. Your tools are instrumental causes which you use according to their nature. A saw's nature is to cut, but it cannot cut by itself. It must be held and properly applied to the wood. You and the saw together make the table, which then proceeds from both you and the saw.

In creation, God made a variety of beings, the highest of which are those possessed of mind and will. People and angels are God's greatest creation because their rational volition gives them a freedom and responsibility unknown to the rest of creation. Briefly put, God's greatest glory is the creation of beings who can freely love and serve their Creator.

But how, then, does God move people and angels? Isn't that a contradiction? No, it is not a contradiction, but it escapes our ability to imagine because we cannot approach such power in our own creativity. Only God can create, sustain, and move free agents according to the free natures given them. The actions of spiritual beings proceed both from God as First Mover and from rational volition, a principle interior to human beings and angels.

Only God can move the human will according to its very nature so that it chooses freely. The only thing that determines the will is its proper object. The will, as intellectual appetite, naturally desires, has an appetite for, the good. How then does it choose evil? The human will, according to Aquinas, never chooses evil as evil, but always as an apparent good. So the robber chooses not to dwell upon the fact that his action is wrong. The robber considers primarily the happiness associated with the riches which he or she has determined to have regardless of the means. What God does is to sustain the robber as a rational, volitional, physical being, even though the robber abuses these natural abilities, which are good in themselves. Just because its actions are evil, God does not annihilate, or reduce to nothing, a being which, as a being, is good. Rather God sustains the good of its being and draws good ultimately from the evil action.³

The will, created for happiness by loving God as the mind is created to know God, is free in this life to fix upon lesser goods, making gods of them. The will is not perverted by sin in its function of desiring the good, but rather in fixing upon means as though they were ends in themselves: power, riches, fame. The principle to remember with regard to God and free will is this: if God can create a

free will, God can also move that will according to its free nature so that it functions freely.

So far we have been talking about creation. What about the fall, redemption, grace and predestination? With the fall, the order which ruled in Adam and Eve through special gifts, principally that of original justice, was disrupted. The mind was no longer clear in directing the will to true good, the will itself became more open to the persuasion of lesser appetites or passions and the passions no longer obeyed reason but demanded immediate gratification. Equilibrium was shattered. But the will remained free and therefore responsible. Human beings remained moral agents. Even though good actions were more difficult, they were still possible. Salvific action, however, was impossible. Only God could heal the wounds of sin and rectify the enormous wrong done against God through human nature.

God's answer was to entrust divinity to humanity. God's answer was to become incarnate when the Second Person of the Trinity assumed human nature and was born a human being, Jesus of Nazareth. I will not rehearse here this theology given by Aquinas in the third part of the *Summa Theologica*, except to say that through his incarnation, life, passion, death and resurrection, Jesus Christ became the source of grace for the children of Adam and Eve. Grace, as all of God's gifts, does not destroy or distort human nature, but heals and elevates. So free will is strengthened to fasten on true good and elevated so that it can love God and choose the means to deepen union with God. With the help of the supernatural virtues of faith, hope and love, both mind and will are made stronger through their sensitivity to the movement of the indwelling Trinity, especially the inspiration attributed to the Holy Spirit.

It is paradoxical to us that human freedom is increased by the greater influence of God. But remember the principle that what God can create to be free, God can move according to its nature, freely, and even enhance, by grace, that very freedom. God heals the soul wounded by sin and thereby heals its faculties, raising both to the supernatural level in such a way that the soul's nature, and therefore its faculties, remain true to themselves. The individual who is gifted with the healing, elevating grace of God can say in all truth, "I love God." Such an individual can also say, "God in me and through me loves God." But such a one must also say, "Without God's help, I cannot love God truly."

What moves God to give grace? Only God's own love, for nothing outside God can move the Unmoved Mover! God's love of an individual is election. The effective directing of that person to salvation is predestination. Thomas defines predestination as "a certain divine preordination from eternity of those things which are

to be done in time by the grace of God” (III, 24, art. 1). From this definition, we learn that predestination applies only to angels and to human beings and, among them, only to the elect.⁴

The key to grasping this difficult idea is in two principles: (1) The knowledge of predestination is in God, (2) God is not in time, but eternity. Eternity is always *now*; there is no before or after. From our point of view, in time, some people may be said to be destined for salvation before they are born. But this is a human, temporal way of speaking that must always be corrected.

Does God elect some because of lovable qualities? No, rather God’s election is the cause of loveliness. This is the reverse of our behavior. We are attracted by some goodness in a person and then begin to love. God’s love, however, goes before and itself provides whatever is good in any creature, but especially in those objects of special love, the elect. Nor is the foreknowledge of merits a cause of predestination, since both grace and merits are *effects* of predestination.

What then of free will? If it does not enter in, how is our love of God the love of a responsible agent? Recall the discussion of efficient and instrumental causes. Thomas says that “there is no distinction between what flows from free will, and what is of predestination; as there is no distinction between what flows from a secondary cause and from a first cause.”⁵ Grace and merit are effects of predestination, because they are intended by God to be the way or means for free agents to move toward their end, eternal life in God. As Thomas explains, “there is no reason why one effect of predestination should not be the reason or cause of another.”⁶ But even if, from our point of view, glory is merited through cooperation with grace, nevertheless, grace, and the whole of the life of the predestined, is the result of election, that is, God’s eternal love. So Thomas concludes this section:

Thus it is impossible that the whole of the effect of predestination in general should have any cause as coming from us; because whatsoever is in man disposing him toward salvation, is all included under the effect of predestination: even the preparation for grace.⁷

God is the Unmoved or First Mover. All creation is brought into being and sustained in its activities by God. All creation is under god’s providence which directs the whole to its end, namely God and God’s glory. But on the way, each creature is governed by God through secondary causes or instruments which enjoy the dignity of their real causality and so further glorify their creator. Highest on the scale of creatures are rational-volitional beings whose principle of activity is within them so that they enjoy free will or responsible

action. Although this interior source of action is a principle, it is not a first principle, for the first principle is of God.

And just as it is not incompatible with nature that the natural movement be from God as the First Mover, inasmuch as nature is an instrument of God moving it; so it is not contrary to the essence of a voluntary act, that it proceed from God inasmuch as the will is moved by God.⁸

Finally, God elects some and reprobates others according to his goodness under which providence directs all things to an harmonious end. In the midst of such variety, some evil occurs, but God allows it only to draw good from it ultimately. Election, or predestination, is the result of God's mercy saving some, while reprobation is the effect of God's permitting others to fall away and to become objects of justice. In both cases, the human agents act freely and therefore responsibly, meriting reward or punishment. In the case of the elect, freedom is enhanced by grace so that it is capable of supernatural acts.

In this essay what I hope to have lifted out for your particular attention is, first, the dignity God bestows on creatures in associating them in the government of the universe as secondary but real causes, second, the special instance of this dignity in the freedom which God bestows and sustains in rational creatures, and third, the particular love of God which gives the greatest gift of all, the grace to know and love God here and hereafter.

FOOTNOTES

1. Quoted in Weisheipl, p. 45, from William of Tocco, *Hystoria beati Thomae* c 12. Fontes 79.

2. See Weisheipl, pp. 110-122.

3. Although it is tempting, the problem of evil is not our primary concern in this essay.

4. Reprobation is the opposite of election, not of predestination.

5. I, 23, art. 5.

6. *Ibid.*

7. *Ibid.*

8. I-II, 6, Art. 2.

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Prayers Through the Ages

collected by the Editor

JOHN BAILLIE (20th cent.): "Eternal God, who hast been the hope and joy of many generations, and in all ages hast given men the power to seek Thee and in seeking to find Thee: grant me, I pray Thee, a clearer vision of thy truth, a greater faith in thy power, and a more confident assurance of thy love. If I cannot find Thee, let me search my heart and know whether it is not rather that I am blind—than Thou who art obscure, and I who am fleeing from Thee rather than Thou from me; and let me confess these my sins before Thee, and seek thy pardon in Jesus Christ my Lord. *Amen.*"

SOREN KIERKEGAARD (19th cent.): "Father in Heaven! What is man without Thee! What is all that he knows, vast accumulation though it be, but a chipped fragment if he does not know Thee! Thee the One, who art one thing and who art all! So may Thou give to the intellect, wisdom to comprehend that one thing; to the will, purity that wills only one thing. In prosperity may Thou grant perseverance to will one thing; amid distractions, concentration to will one thing; in suffering, patience to will one thing. Oh, Thou that givest both the beginning and the completion, may Thou early, at the dawn of day, give to the young man the resolution to will one thing. As the day wanes, may Thou give to the old man a renewed remembrance of his first resolution, that the first may be like the last, the last like the first, a life that has willed only one thing. *Amen.*"

JOHN WESLEY (18th cent.): "Lord let me not live to be useless. *Amen.*"

JOHN DONNE (17th cent.): "O eternal and most gracious God, who hast been pleased to speak to us, I humbly accept thy voice in the sound of this sad funeral bell. And first I bless thy glorious name, that in this sound and voice I can hear thy instructions, in another man's to consider my own condition; and to know that this bell which tolls for another, before it come to ring out, may take in me too. As death is the wages of sin, it is due to me; as death is the end of sickness, it belongs to me. And though so disobedient a servant as I, may be afraid to die, yet to so merciful a master as Thou I cannot be afraid to come. I am bold, O Lord, to bend my prayers to thee, for his assistance, the voice of whose bell hath called me to this devotion. Lay hold upon his soul, O God, and how few minutes soever it have to remain in that body, let the power of thy Spirit recompense the shortness of the time, and perfect his account before he pass away.

that though that body be going the way of all flesh, yet that soul be going the way of all Saints. *Amen.*”

JOHN CALVIN (16th cent.): “Grant, Almighty God, that since it is the principal part of our happiness that while we are absent from Thee in this world there is yet open to us a familiar access to Thee by faith—O grant that we may be able to come with a pure heart to thy Presence; and that we earnestly seek to spend our whole life in glorifying thy name, until at length being gathered into thy celestial Kingdom, we may be really and truly united to Thee, and be made partakers of that glory which has been procured for us by the blood of thine only Son. *Amen.*”

THOMAS A KEMPIS (15th cent.): “O Lord, if only my will may remain right and firm towards Thee, do with me whatsoever it shall please Thee. For it cannot be anything but good whatsoever Thou shalt do with me. If it be thy will I should be in darkness, be Thou blessed; and if it be thy will I should be in light, be Thou again blessed. If Thou vouchsafe to comfort me, be Thou blessed; and if Thou wilt have me afflicted, be Thou ever equally blessed. For what is my confidence which I have in this life? Is it not Thou, O Lord my God? I rather choose to be a pilgrim on earth, than without Thee to possess heaven. Where Thou art, there is heaven; and where Thou art not, there is death and hell. Thou art my Hope. *Amen.*”

CATHERINE OF SIENNA (14th cent.): “Thou, O eternal Trinity, art a deep Sea, into which the deeper I enter the more I find, and the more I find the more I seek. How long, O eternal Trinity, Fire and Abyss of Love, wilt thy face be hidden from my eyes? What more couldst Thou give me than Thyself? Thou art the Fire which ever burns without being consumed. Thou consumest in thy heat all the soul’s self-love. Why did I not know Thee?—Because I did not see Thee with the glorious Light of the holy faith, because the cloud of self-love darkened the eye of the intellect. Thou, eternal Trinity, hast dissipated the darkness with thy Light. *Amen.*”

THOMAS AQUINAS (13th cent.): “Let my way unto Thee, O Lord, be sure, strait, and perfect, that neither adversity nor prosperity make me faint or fall away from Thee: that by prosperity I be not puffed up in pride, nor by adversity driven down into despair, but for the one give thanks, and be in the other armed with patience. *Amen.*”

BERNARD OF CLAIRVAUX (12th cent.): “What reward shall I give Thee, Lord, for all the benefits that Thou hast done to me? By thy first work Thou gavest me to myself, and by the next Thou gavest Thyself to me. And when Thou gavest Thyself, Thou gavest me back

myself that I had lost. Myself for myself, given and restored, I doubly owe to Thee. *Amen.*”

ANSELM OF CANTERBURY (11th cent.): “My God, my Lover, I thirst after Thee, I hunger after Thee. As I can, not as I ought, having in mind thy passion, thy buffetings, thy scourgings, thy wounds, remembering how Thou wast slain for my sake—I sit with Mary at the sepulchre in my heart weeping. Hope seeketh to find Thee. Come now, O Lord, reveal thy face to me. Abide with us, abide with us until morning. Let us enjoy thy Presence. The darkness thickens, the evening cometh fast. May our Sun, the Light eternal, Christ our God, show us the light of his countenance! *Amen.*”

SYMEON THE TRANSLATOR (10th cent.): “Thou, my Creator, who art a fire consuming the unworthy: O consume me not! Burn up like thorns all my transgressionſ. Purge Thou my soul, and make holy my imagination. Shine into all the darks of my five senses. Guard me, cleanse, wash, set me right. *Amen.*”

METHODIUS (9th cent.): “I long for Thee, O Lord God of my fathers. With longing I expect Thee, who with thy Word embracest all things. I wait for Thee, the Lord of life and death. I hunger for Thee, who quickenest the dead. I thirst for Thee, who refreshest the weary. I desire Thee, the Creator and Redeemer of man. Thou art our God, and Thee we adore. Thou art God, of all things the First. To know Thee is perfect righteousness; to know thy Power is the root of immortality. *Amen.*”

ALCUIN (8th cent.): “O King of glory and Lord of valours, our warrior and our peace; who hast said, ‘Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world,’ be Thou victorious in us, thy servants, for without Thee we can do nothing. Give us both to will and to perform. And what shall I more say, unless that thy will be done, who dost will that all men should be saved? Thy will is our salvation, our glory, our joy. *Amen.*”

MOZARABIC SACRAMENTARY (7th cent.): “Be Thou, O Lord, our protection, who art our redemption. Direct our minds by thy gracious Presence, and watch over our paths with guiding love: that, among the snares which lie hidden in this path wherein we walk, we may so pass onward with hearts fixed on Thee that by the track of faith we may come to be where Thou wouldest have us. *Amen.*”

GREGORIAN SACRAMENTARY (6th cent.): “Almighty God, unto whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid; cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love Thee and worthily magnify thy holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*”

AUGUSTINE (5th cent.): "Late have I loved Thee, O Thou eternal Truth and Goodness; late have I sought Thee, my Father! But Thou didst seek me, and when Thou shinedst forth upon me, then I knew Thee and learnt to love Thee. I thank Thee, O my Light, that Thou didst shine upon me. The darkness vanished from before mine eyes, and I beheld Thee, the Sun of righteousness. When I loved darkness, I knew Thee not, but wandered on from night to night. But Thou didst take me by the hand and call me to Thee. And now I can thank Thee. *Amen.*"

BASIL (4th cent.): "Be mindful, O Lord, of those whom we have not remembered, through ignorance or forgetfulness or because of the number of their names. Thou knowest the years and the name of each, for Thou hast known every man from his mother's womb. For Thou, O Lord, art the help of the helpless, the hope of the despairing. Be Thyself all things to all men, Thou who knowest each one. *Amen.*"

ORIGEN (3rd cent.): "O Son of God, who comest into the midst of those who have become at concord, perfect us together of the same judgment by a like way of living. We are the Body of Christ and Thou, O God, hast set each member in the Body that the members may have the same care for one another so that if one suffer all the members suffer and if one be glorified all rejoice. Grant us to practice the symphony which springs from the Divine Music, that when we are gathered together in Thy name, O Christ, Thou mayest be in the midst of us. *Amen.*"

IRENÆUS (2nd cent.): "O God, who madest the things of time for man, so that coming into maturity in them, we might produce the fruit of immortality: through thy kindness bestow eternal things, that in the ages to come Thou mayest show the exceeding riches of thy grace. Since it is impossible without Thee to come to a knowledge of thee, teach us men through thine own Word to know thee. *Amen.*"

PAUL THE APOSTLE (1st cent.): "Thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift! Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ! *Amen.*"

Book Reviews

An Introduction to New Testament Literature. Donald Juel with James S. Ackerman and Thayer S. Warshaw. Abingdon. 1978. 368 pp. \$7.95 paper.

The present reviewer has for a long period of time been an advocate of a method of approaching the Biblical books as literature. Hopefully this approach can enable the interpreter to see the work as a whole rather than destroying the meaning of the author or editor by analytical dissection. The author of this present volume under consideration seeks to approach the New Testament as literature, and he combines this interest with an expertise in New Testament scholarship (something that many of the Bible as literature people do not possess). The work focuses on the Gospels and Acts with only one chapter devoted to Paul's teachings and one to apocalyptic literature and Revelation.

After a background chapter setting the historical context for early Christianity, Professor Juel spends ten chapters examining in various ways the Gospels and Acts. Both critical issues and interpretative matters are discussed in these chapters. In the chapter on Paul only Galatians and part of I Corinthians are discussed. The book concludes with a short chapter on apocalyptic, only eleven pages. There is an annotated bibliography which parallels the chapters of the book; in addition there are an appendix dealing with historical matters and an index of Scripture verses.

While the present reviewer feels that the book is well written and interesting reading at most points, it must also be pointed out that the arrangement of the material may well be confusing to a beginning student. In fact, it is curious

that in an approach which seeks supposedly to interpret the writings as "whole" pieces of literature there is so much material from the individual books scattered through the various chapters. There are too many repetitions, and the material would have been much better had all the data about Mark, John, etc. been presented in one place.

Further, the chapter on Paul is simply too short. A brief introduction to Galatians and part of I Corinthians is not nearly enough information for a student to begin to understand the thought and importance of this great figure who casts such a long shadow over the context of the New Testament and subsequent Christian theology. And only eleven pages on apocalyptic and Revelation is not really enough. The other New Testament literature is not discussed.

It is, therefore, with some regret that the present reviewer finds that this book fulfills neither the needs of a more traditional introduction to the New Testament (which, admittedly, it does *not* claim to be) nor the presentation of the New Testament books as literature. Professor Juel's style, presentation, and many of his emphases are quite good. Perhaps the most significant way in which this book could be used would be as supplementary reading in a course in New Testament or as a refresher on the Gospels and Acts for those who already know something about New Testament introduction. It does not, however, in the opinion of this reviewer, do what is so desperately needed today for courses in New Testament: involve the student in a wrestling with the text in terms of history and criticism, literature, and as faith documents.

—James M. Efird

Literary Criticism for New Testament Critics. Guides to Biblical Scholarship: New Testament Series. Norman R. Peterson. Fortress, 1978. 92 pp. \$3.25.

This slim volume is addressed primarily to New Testament scholars and other serious students of the New Testament. Its premise is that biblical, particularly New Testament, study is based upon an inadequate, and largely unarticulated, theory of biblical literature constructed upon an evolutionary model. Peterson's criticisms and proposed solutions have to do primarily with narrative texts (i.e. the Gospels and Acts).

Biblical criticism analyzes texts in order to understand what their components are and how they evolved. The stages of the analysis which reveal the components are then reversed and taken to be an evolutionary process which has produced the finished text, i.e. the text as it stands before us in the New Testament. A power residual in or behind the tradition motivates the process and the environment of the religious community in which the evolution takes place shapes it. Interpretation is then tied to an understanding of the stages of development, especially to the analysis of the principal and final redactional stage, in which an author shapes the materials for a particular purpose or end. But, unwittingly, redaction criticism "pulls the plug on its sources of power" (p. 18) in that it introduces into the interpretative picture an author whose individuality and power over the tradition renders inadequate the evolutionary model as a means of interpretation. Moreover, the redaction critic's fixation upon the process of redaction, that is, the author's editing of the material, renders him unable adequately to comprehend a work in its totality.

After making this case against modern New Testament criticism and interpretation, Peterson goes on to

construct what he considers a more adequate model based upon the work of contemporary literary critics outside the biblical field. Particularly helpful, in his view, is the communications theory of Roman Jakobson. Absolutely essential in Peterson's view is the distinction between narrative message and world (i.e. the poetic construct of the author) on the one hand and the real world on the other. Redaction criticism, with its emphasis upon the distinction between traditional source and editorial reworking has not managed to do justice to the narratives or narrative worlds of the New Testament.

In two final chapters Peterson applies the new approach as he develops it to two narrative texts, Mark and Luke-Acts. In treating Mark he generally ignores redaction-critical results (and disputes!) insofar as they make everything hinge on the distinction between tradition and redaction. Instead, he strives to grasp the structure and movement of the text as it stands, paying particular attention to the element of what has traditionally been called prophecy and fulfillment. Mark arouses several expectations, some of which are fulfilled, others not fulfilled, within the scope of the text itself. An appreciation of both sorts contributes to an adequate understanding of the Gospel. The usefulness of this literary approach in resolving historical questions is seen as Peterson asks whether the Lucan (Acts) scheme of Paul's repeatedly preaching first in a Jewish synagogue, before being rejected and turning to the Gentiles, represents historical fact or the creative scheme of the author. By showing, among other things, how the Acts pattern recapitulates the Gospel and noting such external evidence (or lack thereof) as that Paul in his letters never refers to preaching in synagogues but emphasizes his mission to Gentiles, Peterson makes a strong case against the historicity of the Acts scheme.

Peterson makes a laudable attempt to enrich and correct the models and method of biblical criticism and

interpretation by recourse to contemporary literary theory. Not everything or every aspect of his book is beyond reproach or question. Have redaction critics generally, been as unaware of, or impervious to the potential usefulness of literary criticism as Peterson suggests? Was not Bultmann in principle already aware of the basic distinction of narrative world and real world in the form of the distinction between interpretation and historical reconstruction? (He failed to apply it to the Synoptic Gospels in that he never undertook to interpret them as such.) Why is it strange (p. 6) that "the revolt against historicism took the form of the theological hermeneutics rather than of poetics," given the fact that the Bible is the sacred scripture of religious communities? Did Karl Barth along with Bultmann introduce existentialist terminology into the hermeneutical task (p. 6)? Doubtless such questions as these arise, at least in part, because of the succinctness or brevity of Peterson's work. It nevertheless remains a suggestive essay which deserves the attention of those who are interested in the task of biblical interpretation.

—D. Moody Smith

The Birth of the Messiah: A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives in Matthew and Luke. Raymond E. Brown. Doubleday. 1977. 594 pp. \$12.50.

Raymond E. Brown, scholar and Catholic priest, has done it again. Writing not only for the academician but also for the general reader, he has produced another major commentary on the gospels. Out of his labors of the '60s came his two-volume *The Gospel According to John* ("The Anchor Bible"). Out of his work of the '70s comes *The Birth of the Messiah* which is, as the subtitle indicates, a commentary on the infancy narratives of Matthew 1-2 and Luke 1-2.

Brown's tome (and seldom has so little, 4 chapters of biblical text, resulted in so much, 500 pages plus, for so little, only \$12.50) falls into four main sections: an

introduction (pp. 25-41); an analysis of the Matthean infancy account (pp. 43-232); an analysis of the Lucan infancy account (pp. 233-499); and nine appendixes (pp. 501-570). Throughout the volume Brown comments on the historical plausibility of this point or that point—for example, the visit of the Magi. But he reserves for the appendixes full discussions of such historical issues as the census under Quirinius and Jesus' Davidic descent, Bethlehem birth, and virginal conception. The two central parts which focus on the respective infancy accounts are structured around a traditional commentary format. A fresh English translation precedes notes on each verse. Brown's overriding concern in the commentary, however, is with the redaction-critical question: "What message is the evangelist trying to convey...?" (p. 38)

In a brief review it is difficult to do justice to the subtleties and qualifications of Brown's arguments as he reconstructs the pre-gospel tradition and evaluates the way each evangelist handles the tradition. Nevertheless, how does Brown answer the redaction-critical question? How convincing is his answer?

Acknowledging his indebtedness to Krister Stendahl and André Paul, Brown suggests that Matthew uses his infancy account to establish, in chapter 1, the "Who" and the "How" of Jesus' identity (Son of David/Son of Abraham through adoption by Joseph and Son of God/Emmanuel through virginal conception by Mary) and, in chapter 2, the "Where" and the "Whence" of Jesus' birth and destiny (Bethlehem and Nazareth). Writing for his own believing community of Jews and Gentiles, Matthew's motivation is primarily didactic and only secondarily apologetic. To convey his message Matthew has added formula citations (both pre-Matthean and Matthean in origin) to pre-existing infancy narratives (which he refashioned) and joined the narratives to the genealogy constructed by him (out of pre-existing tables of descent).

Keeping Hans Conzelmann's general understanding of Luke's three epoch view of salvation history (Israel, Jesus, Church), Brown claims that Luke uses the infancy narratives in chapters 1-2 to mark the transition from the period of Israel to the period of Jesus just as Luke also uses Acts 1-2 to mark the transition from the period of Jesus to the period of the Church. Such characters as Zechariah and Elizabeth, Simeon and Anna, represent the piety of Israel; but John the messianic forerunner and Jesus the Messiah belong to the period of Jesus. To convey his message Luke has composed the infancy narratives in two stages. (Shades of the five stages of composition Brown posited for the Gospel of John!) The first stage involved the composition of the stories of the annunciations about John and Jesus, in chapter 1, and the stories of the births of John and Jesus, in chapter 2 (based on bits of tradition rather than any source in the sense of a continuous oral or written narrative). Luke placed the stories in a diptych arrangement to establish a subordinating parallelism between John and Jesus. The second stage of composition involved the insertion of those canticles known as the Magnificat, Benedictus, Gloria, and Nunc Dimittis (which Luke may have altered but which originated among Jewish-Christian *Anawim*, or "Poor Ones"). Luke also added the story of Jesus' visit to the Temple at twelve years of age (a pre-Lucan story similar to those in the apocryphal gospels).

In the judgment of this reviewer, Brown's commentary represents something of a watershed in the history of criticism of the infancy narratives. On the far side of Brown's work lies a myriad of studies on virtually every aspect of these accounts. Brown enters into a continuous dialogue with his predecessors. He has also placed throughout the volume convenient bibliographies related to the portion of text under scrutiny. On the near side of Brown's work will lie continued critical debate. But henceforth Brown's own

impressive synthesis must be considered. This reviewer finds Brown's answer to the redaction-critical question generally convincing but with points of disagreement.

Brown rightly recognizes the importance of Stendahl's contribution toward an understanding of Matthew's use of the infancy traditions. But Brown also fails to take Matthew's own hint that he has a singular interest at the outset of his gospel in the "origin (*genesis*) of Jesus Messiah" (1:1, 18a)—more specifically, the origin of Jesus as the Davidic Messiah. Although by the conclusion of the gospel (28:16-20) Matthew portrays Jesus as transcending Davidic messianic categories (especially 22:41-46), he begins the gospel with a genealogy and a series of narratives OT citations which demonstrate that Jesus' genealogical origin (1:1-17) and all circumstances surrounding that origin—genealogical and geographical (1:18-4:16)—fulfill the Davidic messianic hope. Brown, however, translates *genesis* (1:1, 18a) with "birth," dismisses the possibility that the opening section(s) of the gospel extend(s) through 4:16, and perceives a transcendence of Davidic messianic categories already in the infancy narratives.

Rightly accepting Conzelmann's claim that Luke has a three-epoch view of salvation-history, Brown incorporates the infancy account into that schema. But his assertion that John the Baptist does not belong to the period of Israel but to the period of Jesus is questionable. As Conzelmann himself observed, Luke separates John from Jesus in the body of his gospel. Note the Lucan wording of the "Q" saying, 16:16, and his retelling of the baptism story, 3:18-22. Furthermore, a careful examination of the Spirit-motif in the infancy account itself (as well as elsewhere in Luke-Acts), a universally recognized Lucan theme, suggests that John stands in solidarity with those other representatives of Israelite piety in contradistinction to Jesus. Like Elizabeth (1:41), Zechariah (1:67), and

Simeon (2:25, 26, 27), John "the prophet of the Most High" (1:76) is guided and inspired by the Spirit (1:15, possibly 1:80). Jesus "the Son of the Most High" (1:32), however, is conceived by the Spirit (1:35).

The differences in the ways the evangelists handle the infancy traditions may be characterized in this way: Matthew uses salvation history (as reflected in his genealogy) to support his special interest in Jesus' origin as the Davidic Messiah; Luke uses Jesus' origin as the Davidic Messiah (as reflected in the stories of Jesus' annunciation and birth) to support his special view of salvation history.

This commentary on Matthew 1-2 and Luke 1-2 offers further evidence of Raymond E. Brown's capacity for combining critical honesty and skill with theological sensitivity for Christian proclamation and Church teaching. If a person has any interest in the opening chapters of Matthew and Luke, that person should add this book to her or his library. It will be used.

—W. Barnes Tatum
Greensboro College

Sexuality, the Bible and Science. Stephen Sapp. Fortress, 1977. 140 pp. \$8.25.

Among recent studies of human sexuality in Christian perspective I know of none more lucid or persuasively coherent than this work by Stephen Sapp. In comparison, for instance, to the recent study issued by the United Church of Christ, *Human Sexuality: A Preliminary Study* (United Church Press, 1977), Sapp's work has the decided advantage of the unity of a monograph, a consistent biblical perspective, a sustained theological coherence, and at the same time a clear and responsible account of the evidence of the sciences. In addition to a fine bibliography, the author has appended a helpful glossary of terms employed in his treatment of the scientific studies. In all he has been commendably successful in achieving his

stated goal of reaching "an understanding of human sexuality that takes into account recent contributions of the biological sciences and at the same time incorporates those insights into human nature which are found in the Judaeo-Christian tradition, specifically the Old and New Testament." And I should add that he has done so in a fashion that will be helpful alike to the theologian, pastor, and lay person.

Perhaps most interesting for the non-scientist is the author's discussion of sexuality in scientific perspective. After a clear and concise exposition of the current state of research, he concludes that "both elements (genetics and environment or social conditioning) are necessary and crucial." "In men," he concludes, "what seems clear at this time is that there are biological determinants operative in sexuality but that these can be greatly modified by the postnatal experiences of the individual." (p. 106)

In his concluding chapter, Sapp draws upon biblical, holistic anthropology to bring together the physical and spiritual dimensions of human sexuality which a Cartesian age has all too successfully separated. He concludes that "we express our sexuality appropriately—i.e., we use our sexual organs to their intended and intentional purpose—when we are reflective and purposive in their use, and in so doing exhibit an activity that is more than simply somatic. On the other hand, scientific research reminds us that we can use our sexual organs purposively only within the limits defined and imposed by the organ systems themselves." As he says, a bit more graphically, "the penis can be used intentionally and purposively in carrying out the sexual functions for which it is designed...But the penis cannot be used to write a love letter..." (p. 121). Thus sexuality cannot be understood with exclusive reference to the "natural" functions, since "nature" in the abstract is not a human phenomenon; whereas "what is truly natural for man is not what he shares

with other animals but precisely what is *unique* to the human species"—namely, the capacity to use his sexual nature symbolically in "expression of human purposes and relationships." It is significant that "only humans copulate face to face, looking at each other." Similarly, human sexuality cannot be spiritualized in denial of the body, as if we could transcend our bodies and sexuality in the direction of some kind of androgynous or transexual personhood. This spiritualism is viewed by Sapp as an unbiblical, gnostic doctism. In sum, "man is a participant in sexuality (not merely in the sex act but in sexuality itself) while at the same time sexuality is participant in humanity (a constitutive element in what makes man human.)" (p. 131).

I have one important question for the author. He quite rightly recognizes that in biblical perspective sexuality is human and humans are sexual—radically and for their good. He realizes that sexuality is dialectically determined by both nature and nurture and that the Bible confirms this dialectic, but there he stops. The question begged and perhaps the subject of the next book is—how should the Christian be nurtured for the realization of true sexual identity, male or female? Can the Bible seriously tell us that sexuality is important and yet not help us discover and realize just what it is, what humanity our sexual natures in fact symbolize, and what our human responsibility to nurture it is? We see Sapp avoid the question as he stumbles over Paul's undeniable view "that women should be subordinate." He wishes Paul had transcended his culture a bit more at this point (p. 74), although earlier this same cultural heritage is praised as a source of Paul's "basically positive view of human sexuality." (p. 72). What Sapp perhaps misses is that Paul's intent was not the denigration or devaluation of woman, but rather, to the contrary an understanding and authentic realization by women of their womanhood. Does not theology have to

address the question as to what culture, what kinds of relationships are indeed symbolized by the biological differences and limits which, when properly nurtured, determine, along with biological factors, our identities as sexual persons? Paul suggested that these differences symbolize a relationship which includes, among other things, a super and sub-ordination. We may well conclude that he was wrong, but we cannot beg the question of the proper structure of the relationship or let the opinion polls do the job for us. Incidentally, I see this question begged by most current theological discussions of human sexuality.

But all in all this is a scholarly and exceptionally well-written work which should be on the minister's shelf and would also serve as a fine study guide for lay courses on human sexuality.

—Robert T. Osborn

The Asundered: Biblical Teachings on Divorce and Remarriage. Myrna and Robert Kysar. John Knox. 1978. 112 pp. \$5.95.

There has been a need for many years for a book which would examine in some detail the Biblical texts which speak to the issue of divorce. The need is particularly felt among pastors and lay persons who have not had available to them a book which interpreted the complexities of the Biblical passages which deal with this matter. Scholars have known for a long time just how filled with problems the interpretation of these passages is. Too often among pastors and laity the teaching about divorce has been taken simply as an absolute legalism, thus causing many persons untold and unnecessary agony and unhappiness.

When divorce came to a couple who had been active in church life, these persons were quite often either deliberately or through simple embarrassment treated as outcasts not simply by society but by the church (which they needed at that moment very

desperately) as well. This book attempts to challenge the church to remedy that situation. "The church's ministry to the divorced of our society can be more creative and helpful. It need not be condemnation and rejection. The Biblical teachings upon which the church depends for guidance do not necessitate that the church add its condemnation to that of society." (p. 12.)

The authors then proceed to examine the Biblical teachings on divorce and remarriage and conclude their discussion with suggestions as to how to apply these ideas to the ministry of the church.

It would be difficult to discuss carefully the interpretations presented in this book in the space allotted to a brief review. Suffice it to say here that even though the authors have been generally sensitive to the meaning of the Biblical texts, the data presented in support of their conclusions is somewhat "light." The present reviewer is not basically critical of the conclusions reached in this book, but the complexities which are a part of these texts are too often ignored. The lay person, for whom the book seems to have been written, deserves to know why (in simple language) these texts may have a different meaning from that literal interpretation which has been in vogue for centuries. And one could quibble at points with some of the conclusions reached.

In spite of these shortcomings, however, this book can be useful both to pastors and to lay persons alike. It is a sensitive work which many will appreciate not only for its content but even more for its sympathetic tone toward those who have suffered through the throes of divorce.

—James M. Efrid

The Cultural Subversion of the Biblical Faith: Life in the 20th Century Under the Sign of the Cross. James D. Smart. Westminster, 1977. 128 pp. \$4.95.

The present reviewer has been for a long time now an admirer of the work of

Professor James D. Smart, who for many years was Professor of Biblical Interpretation at Union Seminary in New York. It was, therefore, with great eagerness that he sat down to review this most recent of Professor Smart's works. This book attempts to investigate the problem of how one can keep separate the demands of the Christian faith from the cultural subversion of that faith by the national culture in which one lives. Smart concentrates his study on the problem as it relates specifically to the United States even though he emphasizes that this is an international problem.

After a brief introduction in which he discusses the idea of a "civil religion" (advocated by Robert Bellah), Smart turns to examine the idea that underlies so much of the confusion between the Christian faith and nationalism. He argues that it has its roots in the past wherein Western civilization and nations were viewed as "Christian." This concept did not begin to be seriously questioned until the 1920's, but by 1950 this thinking had simply become untenable in the light of what had happened in two world wars punctuated by an attempt at genocide. The argument is that it is a good thing to give up the idea that a nation, specifically the United States, is a "Christian" nation. By so doing, Smart argues, "Christians are released to be good cooperative members of a pluralistic community when they remember that they share a sinfulness and a responsibility for the sins of their society with all the non-Christians." (p. 33)

Yet Smart emphasizes that a total separation cannot be made between the Church and the state, pointing out that both Fascists and Communists draw a solid line between the two entities. No absolute line can be drawn between the two because the sovereignty of God relativizes all human authorities, even ecclesiastical! Neither can one hide behind religion as strictly the individual saving of "souls," not being concerned at all about political matters. There must be, however, some kind of recognizable

difference between civil religion and the Christian faith. The author strongly argues that: "Civil religion is a temptation for Christians that must be decisively rejected." (p. 47)

One of the strongest portions of the book is found where Smart examines how Scripture has been and can be used or misused in attempting to understand the relationship of a Christian with the state. He argues that Romans 13, Jesus' comment about "God and Caesar," and a misinterpretation of what "salvation" is have contributed to the problem of the relationship of a Christian with the political order. He then attempts to show how these ought to be understood in the light of the cross. Smart feels that the cross lies at the center of how a Christian should approach civil religion. This involves risk, for in the prophetic tradition of which Jesus was a part, alienation of the political leaders was often necessary for a truly religious person. This is a fact because, Smart says, "civil religion has no place in it for a cross." (p. 102)

Over-all the present reviewer commends this book to the readers of this *Review*. It serves as a warning to us all as to how easy it is to become so acclimated to our culture that we tend to identify our national ideas with Christian ideas. There are some points, however, with which one may wish to quarrel a bit with Professor Smart. Some of his illustrations can certainly be questioned such as his comparison of Berrigan's actions with Jesus' cleansing of the Temple (cf. p. 68). His interpretation of Judas as shunning the political implications of Jesus' message runs counter to the majority of interpretations presently espoused, namely that Judas was the betrayer because Jesus was not politically radical enough for him. And Smart's judgment that the present generation of young people is basically distrustful may have some truth in it, but it appears to be more a description of the generations of the late 60's and early 70's than it does the present generation.

The basic weakness comes at the point of how one determines what actions and ideas are to be criticized in the light of the Christian faith. Who is to do the prophetic denunciation? And for what reasons and on what criteria? And there is a potentially dangerous comment which one finds on p. 104. Smart contends that faith in Christ "... sends Christians into the community ready to cooperate with all who in any degree share the vision of a world in which every form of injustice and inhumanity will be resisted and overcome." While the thought of this comment is admirable, the practical implications may be extremely dangerous if exercised at face value. There is always the question which a Christian must ask: What is the motivation for the action and what are the means which are to be utilized in reaching this goal? Smart seems to neglect these important points.

Nonetheless this is a provocative book. It will be well worth the time to study it carefully.

—James M. Eford

H. Richard Niebuhr. Lonnie Kliever.
Word Books. 1977. 205 pp. \$7.95.

Lonnie Kliever, whose Ph.D. dissertation here at Duke was an exploratory study in Richard Niebuhr's Christology, gives us in this volume a full-length picture of his theology, ethics, and ecclesiology. For one who did not have the privilege of studying directly with Niebuhr, Kliever's paraphrase of the structure of his thought seems to this reviewer, who *did* have that privilege, to be remarkably accurate and sensitive to the many subtle shades of his thought. Of the several recent books introducing Niebuhr's thought, Kliever's matches James Fowler's (*To See the Kingdom*, Abingdon, 1974) in accuracy and readability and does fuller justice to the theological foundations of his ethics.

Kliever traces carefully the paths Niebuhr followed in his pilgrimage of faith, a path leading between the late

19th-century liberalism in which he was nurtured and the 20th-century neo-orthodoxy in vogue at the time of Niebuhr's mid-career. If liberalism be flawed in its anthropocentrism, in Niebuhr's estimate, Barth's Christomonism Niebuhr faults as a subtle form of "homotheism," the setting of faith on the finite. Radical monotheism transcends these, as the faith in the infinite universal One, the ultimate source of Being and Value and the true object of trust and loyalty. Christ becomes the exemplar and mediator of that faith, rather than himself its final referent.

As Christian theology and ethics are closely intertwined, so Niebuhr's ethics of "responsibility" becomes the fruit of this radical faith. It means "becoming responsible to and responsible for a radically inclusive community of being and value." This is in polar contrast to all "natural" faiths and "natural" moralities, centering on some finite good as ultimate.

It is here, incidentally, that this reviewer has some troubles, not exactly with Kliever, but with Niebuhr's own position and with Kliever's failure, in his critical section, to address it. I may indeed subscribe with a whole heart to the norm of radical faith in its universalism and inclusiveness. But on earth my "existential" choices are never posed between this "radical" faith and morality and its "natural" opposite, but rather between conflicting partialities and finitudes. The "radically inclusive community" is never a live option, in political, economic, racial, and domestic choices. Niebuhr just kicks at this problem briefly (p. 140) and passes on. He was less concerned than was his brother with the ambiguities forced by the context of moral choice.

Kliever draws neatly the lines of Niebuhr's thought and ties the knots carefully. The over-all integrity of Niebuhr's position comes clear. At Kliever's hand it is almost *too* neat, *too* systematic. Whatever persuasions

Niebuhr came to were always, as he said, "present tentative conclusions," subject to revision. Kliever's over-view might have been a little less abstract and Hegelian if he had made use of some concrete examples and illustrations, which might make Niebuhr's points more empirically convincing. But again, that is Niebuhr's short-coming, not Kliever's, for, as he points out, "Niebuhr does seem a better architect than engineer of moral behavior." As such, one of the greatest of this century.

—Waldo Beach

God and Utopia: the Church in a Technological Civilization. Gabriel Vahanian. Seabury, 1977. 154 pp. \$8.95.

Gabriel Vahanian, whose academic duties shuttle him between Syracuse University and Strasbourg, has established a high reputation among theologians with his *Death of God*, as an analyst of the process of secularization. This reviewer came to this his most recent book with anticipation of finding clear guidance for church policy in a technological culture. After several tries, I came away defeated, baffled, lost in a semantic jungle, incapable of understanding what the author is trying to say.

This may be due in part to the reader's innocence of some find points in classical theology, but more largely, I suspect, because of Vahanian's idiosyncratic use of terms like "apocalyptic," "eschatological," "utopia," etc. He sets up his own special glossary and then plays a long Teutonic abstract word game with them. The reader cries out for an empirical example now and then, which could bring him down to earth.

The style is both turgid and cumbersome. Just to cite two sentences (albeit wrenched out of context):

"Unlike the soteriological religiosity of myth, focused on the return of man to his origins, the church, the eschatic body of Christ, takes place only where it can valorize

the utopian dimension of the human reality." (p. 94)

"As a matter of fact, the utopianism of the human reality could even, in the final analysis, consist of the Promethean concatenation of man by man, if not quite the vertiginous concelebration of the human, rather than of any dionysiac disembodiment of it." (p. 97)

What in the world would that mean to Archie Bunker or, for that matter, Thomas Aquinas?

Vahanian is neither a "technophile" nor a "technophobe." In general, the theme of the book calls for the church to revise its theology in an utopian way so as to give proper direction to technological change. But he might have said it more simply.

—Waldo Beach

The Meaning and Mystery of Being Human. Bruce Larson. Word Books. 1978. 201 pp. \$7.95. *If I'm So Free—How Come I Feel Boxed In?* Dennis Guernsey. Word Books. 1978. 160 pp. \$5.95.

A snapshot of a relaxed, casually dressed, smiling figure graces the dust jacket of the book; it is Bruce Larson. Well, no; he's not exactly the country club pro but he is the happy author of "11 best selling books What Bruce Larson has found—and what he wants to communicate to you, in your own search for wholeness is summed up in *The Meaning and Mystery of Being Human.*" But any perceptive reader of even *The Gospel According to Peanuts* quickly is grasped by the realization that Larson is not writing theology, he is selling cultural cottoncandy.

In the book's Introduction, Larson identifies the Holy Grail with his own "study of wholeness" (p. 14); a bold facsimile adorns each chapter lead in. As the pages and chapters glide by, the drawing of the Grail looks more like a country club loving cup; because essentially good old American upper

middle class aspirations of individual financial success are valued, accompanied by appropriate dosages of "well-being" that are injected to give this tract its theological fluff. Real theology is absent, and certainly a doctrine of the atonement—of suffering on the cross—does not figure in Larson's quest for human wholeness.

The essay never touches down theologically. Theological and psychological ideas, images, and notions are introduced but thematic implications are not developed. Quotes abound: lots of zippy oneliners from Frankl, Menninger, Perls, Berne, Szasz, Tournier, Erikson, Glasser, Laing. But they are like runaway cottoncandy, all over the place sticking everywhere but failing to meet either the intellect or spirit.

It's not that the quotes and snippets of insights are weak. It's the way Larson uses them—or fails to use them; they chirp out. "And now to quote from the famous Ben Franklin, the founding father of our country who once said in the heat of debate over the proposed U.S. Constitution, 'Good morning.'" Many of the therapists and pastoral theologians quoted are done a disservice, they and their works. These shared insights look pretty inviting till one takes hold! Yuk! only a sticky residue.

This book and the quest for a Holy Grail of human wholeness nicely serves—whatever else it does—as an ego trip for Larson. He intimidates the reader, dropping the names of his worldwide junkets—San Francisco, New York, the Black Forest of Germany, L.A., London; and all the big names he knows as intimates. Truly designed to impress. The reader is made party to his decision to buy into an exclusive isle residence off the west coast of Florida. (Do you have any idea how many bucks that pad costs? I don't think it's asking too much of an ordained minister to seek Christ and Him crucified, not a millionaire's hide away.)

There is no corporate sense of the church or its historic doctrines. Flaunted

for his "relational theology," Larson's theology is a cultic incarnation of upward economic mobility. But the stuff sells: (1) lots of good Christian cocktail party epithets and attention getters; (2) plenty of good sermon starters for empty vessels; (3) personal charisma and charm leapfrog over anything less than the business expense account lifestyle. There is no tie in with really real theological relations: Larson is a sanctimonious carbon copy of Robert Ringer's thesis "Look out for #1."

But why are so many laypeople and pastors "buying" this country club guru? Because frankly for a long while now pastors have revealed difficulty in "rightly dividing the Word of God." For a people who perish theologically, Larson's cottoncandy is—I suppose—a heap better than nothing at all.

By contrast, I am pleased to introduce Dennis Guernsey about whom—thank God—I have far less "detail" than of Larson, but whom I know a lot better as a pastor and theologian. He is helpful and adequate in dealing with practical problems of everyday Christian life.

Guernsey deals with "freedom in Christ" (John 8:36): "This book is simply meant to help those of us who are searching to be free. In Christ, we are meant to be 'free indeed.'" (p. xi) He does it with down to earth examples. His case studies show the compassion of a common man among common people dealing with freedom in Christ: "Free to Serve One Another," "Free to Be Free." I can identify with the theology and style of Guernsey. His tone is pastoral, the examples are authentic, the areas covered are diverse but related. In Guernsey's book there is pastoral theological nourishment that sustains.

If anyone needs day old cottoncandy, I know who is running a special on it this week.

—Paul A. Mickey

Overhearing the Gospel: Preaching and Teaching the Faith to Persons Who Have Already Heard. Fred B. Craddock.

Abingdon, 1978. 144 pp. \$6.95.

As a veteran of many hours of sitting in a pew, and of not quite so many hours of standing behind a pulpit, I have had occasion to wonder about the possible futility of the whole preaching enterprise. On the one hand, I have been so blatantly assaulted by preachers determined to convict me of all sorts of sins that I have closed my ears and my mind in self-defense. On the other hand, I have been so pampered and placated with vague notions of grace and assurance that these notions have at times become sterile and empty. And when it is my turn to stand before a congregation, I stand no less convicted than other preachers I have heard. Whether I am speaking or listening, it constantly occurs to me that "I've heard all this somewhere before." The Good News is really old news, and therefore hardly any news at all.

Such is the situation addressed by Fred Craddock, Professor of Preaching and New Testament at the Graduate Seminary of Phillips University, in his *Overhearing the Gospel*. The book is an outgrowth of Craddock's 1978 Beecher Lectures on preaching at Yale Divinity School, and in it he states the problem clearly: "How can we teach those who already know? How can we preach to those who have already heard?" (p. 6). Or elsewhere, "Our task is not just to say the word, to tell the truth, but to get the truth heard, to effect a new hearing of the word among those who have been repeatedly exposed to it" (p. 19).

Thus defining the task of Christian communication, Craddock moves to a more detailed presentation of the problem in Part I, "The Illusion." His principal rubric is an exegesis of a text from Kierkegaard: "There is no lack of information in a Christian land; something else is lacking, and this is a something which the one man cannot directly communicate to the other" (p. 9). Following this text throughout the book, Craddock parallels Kierkegaard's situation in Christian Denmark with that

of ours, finding validity and applicability in Kierkegaard's statement of the problems faced in communicating the gospel, and in his attack on those problems.

Chapter One is addressed to the method of Christian communication, and to "the illusion that the Christian faith can proceed effectively without giving prime time or our best intelligence to such lesser considerations as method and style of communicating" (p. 14). Craddock proposes that "there is such a thing as a *Christian* style, a method of communicating congenial to the nature of the Christian faith" (p. 20). The rest of the book is an effort to determine what that Christian style should be.

Chapter Two addresses the problem of the listener: that our church, and indeed our culture, has become so infused with Christian values and with information about Christianity that "there can flourish the illusion of participation where little or none actually exists" (p. 24). We have come to see Christian communication as supplying more increments of information about the gospel, yet we have become dulled and bored by this information, so that it no longer grabs us, challenges us, forces us to a decision. Our task, again, is "to help (people) hear what they hear every day, to learn what they already know" (p. 26).

Chapter Three strikes closer to home to those of us who are preachers and teachers, challenging the illusions that distance from the text, in the interest of objective scholarship, and distance from our listeners, so that we preach Christ and not ourselves, are to be valued as absolutes. To the contrary, such absolute values inhibit participation by the speaker in his own message and with his hearers, and therefore make participation by the hearers all but impossible.

Finally in Part I, Chapter Four is concerned with the illusion that the story itself, the Biblical witness, contains obstacles to communicating the faith. While admitting that "some of the difficulty of communicating lies within

the story itself" (p. 64), primarily because of familiarity, Craddock affirms that the Bible itself provides the best model of preaching and teaching the faith (pp. 65ff). Without negating the importance of Biblical scholarship, however, he defines a real problem in terms of methods of Biblical study that value distance, in the interests of objectivity, as the only means to truth, once again inhibiting participation.

Part II, "An Attack upon the Illusion," moves toward a resolution of this problem, a statement of how to present Christian truth so that people not only hear it, but are affected by it. Craddock lays the groundwork in Chapter One by analyzing Kierkegaard's favorite method of communication—indirect discourse. In Kierkegaard's day, "what was lacking was the intimate realization of the significance of what was already known" (p. 91). Contrasted to direct communication, which seeks to supply more information, indirect communication is that which seeks to bring to the surface what the hearer knows already.

Chapter Two hangs some meat on the framework by describing the experience of the listener, addressed indirectly, as one of overhearing. In overhearing the listener is addressed as if from a distance. He is not spoken to directly; rather, he remains anonymous, in private, able to listen as he will, neither bored with old information nor threatened by direct confrontation. And, surprisingly, once the listener's defenses are down, he is far more likely to be drawn into the discussion—that is, toward real and significant participation. "Overhearing (consists) of two elements: distance and participation" (p. 121).

The final chapter of the book asks the question of how one speaks so as to be overheard—whether overhearing just occurs, or whether we as preachers and teachers can do something to bring it about. Craddock decides for the latter, drawing examples from the Bible (such as the parables) and other literature, and making suggestions regarding delivery.

content, and style (or structure) that enhance the possibility of overhearing, and therefore effecting a new hearing, of the gospel.

At one point in his book (pp. 58ff) Craddock warns against our being overly critical of Kierkegaard's subjectivity, arguing instead that we view his approach as a corrective against the excesses of his day, and therefore not to be taken absolutely. The same remark can be made regarding Craddock's book. He states plainly that the Christian faith consists of objective and historical information (the Incarnation), and therefore requires some direct communication. Our solution is not to abandon past approaches completely, but to make indirect discourse a part of our repertoire, tailoring our form of communication to the specific needs of our hearers. And his criticisms of the excesses of Biblical scholarship and theological study are balanced by a healthy respect for their continuing contribution to the faith.

One should not assume that Craddock's proposal is of interest only to those who speak in our pulpits on Sunday morning with the community of faith, those who already believe, foremost in their minds. "Would it not be reasonable to assume that sermons addressed to the membership might be effectively overheard by any present who are not yet disciples?" (p. 108). Overhearing is possible and effective in evangelistic preaching services and, though Craddock does not address this issue, the dynamic might also be used in a creative and an imaginative way in those evangelistic exercises that occur outside the walls of the church. And as the title implies, overhearing can be effective not only in preaching the gospel, but in teaching also—whether in Sunday School or in seminary. *Overhearing the Gospel* is a creative, helpful, and inspiring aid for anyone involved in the task of communicating the Christian message.

If the book suffers from a flaw, it comes

in the final chapter. Craddock does his homework so well and lays such an excellent theological and methodological foundation for the validity of overhearing, that one might be let down considerably by the sparseness of what may be called the "how to" chapter. Some concrete suggestions are offered, such as the use of the metaphor and the narrative form; but these suggestions are sketchy and few in comparison with the depth of insight found earlier in the book. Craddock calls his work a "modest proposal," and modest it is.

Then again, perhaps that is as it should be. As he says, "It would be most satisfying to know that these reflections served as a rubric under which to gather your own good instincts about communicating" (p. 101). If so, then the entire book is itself a primary example of indirect discourse—drawing us to a fuller and more significant understanding of what we already know.

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