



**THE
DUKE
DIVINITY SCHOOL
REVIEW**

Fall 1977

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New Trends in Theology

by JOSÉ MÍGUEZ BONINO*

There is widespread talk about the crisis in present-day theological thinking. Let me begin with two incidents which symbolize the crisis.

Christianity and Crisis published in 1975 a series of articles under the title, "What Ever Happened to Theology?" As one of the editors explained to me, the idea for the title emerged in a conversation. New and exciting things were happening in other areas of human knowledge and research. But theology, which had once hit the front pages and preempted space in the media, had become silent. Thus, half mournfully, half cynically, the question was asked: "What ever happened to theology?" The question and the mood behind it came to me as a surprise. In my world (Latin America) theology was for the first time in history becoming an exciting thing. Theological articles, books, ideas aroused enthusiasm and opposition. A number of things, good and bad, could be said there about this theological production, but nobody would ever ask the question: "What ever happened to theology?"

We were preparing a Faith and Order Report on the unity of the Church for Nairobi at the Faith and Order Commission meeting in Accra (Ghana) in 1974. A draft came to the plenary. It had come out of a deeply moving and realistic discussion of unity and conflict in the Church (in particular relation to the situation in North Ireland). And the draft had the marks of the agony and passion of a search for that unity which God promises amidst the conflicts in which the Church is immersed. The draft received a violent criticism from the theological 'Fathers' of the Commission—with the final verdict of one of the old hands: "It doesn't measure up to the standards of a Faith and Order document." The incident has come back to my mind several times: What 'standards'? Who has defined the standards? Would a II Corinthians, or a I Timothy

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or the Letters of Ignatius 'measure up to standards'? Or perhaps they had nothing to say about the unity of the Church. Or perhaps they were not 'theological documents.'

Or perhaps our understanding of what is happening in theology should be both deeper and less pessimistic than is suggested by many critics today. I trust that you will not think that what I am going to say is the result of arrogance. But I am convinced that theology is at the threshold of a new and significant stage in its history. This means, of course, also that it is at the end of a stage. I want to suggest some of the reasons for this critical and promising situation as I see them.

I. A Longer View of the Theological Enterprise

In the first place, I think we need a longer and more encompassing view of the theological enterprise. I suspect that the discussion about 'what happened to theology' or the reference to the respectable 'standards' envisages a *theology* that has so completely dominated the field and dictated the criteria for the last two hundred years that we have come to believe that this is theology as such: *Theologie überhaupt!* In fact, it is *that* theology which emerged in Western Christendom, generally speaking, since the end of the great polemical theology of the Post-Reformation times. I shall refer to it as "modern theology."

1) The matrix of modern theology (again, with exceptions) has been the *academic* world—Tübingen, Erlangen, Paris, Oxford or the large seminaries and theological schools in this country—Yale, Harvard, Union, etc. Theology was created in the study, in the library, in the classroom, in the academic circle, at the meetings of theological societies, in the articles of the learned journals. This was a noble, profound and significant effort. Let me hasten to say that I have a deep respect and admiration for this great theological tradition. I have learned from it most of what I know (and I could have learned much more if I had been more diligent and intelligent!). And I don't want to renounce what I learned about persistent effort, concentration, disciplined intellectual honesty and painstaking research. But at the same time, there is a certain price that had to be paid.

This theology's encounter with human reality was necessarily second-hand, *mediated* basically through philosophical construction and through the philosophical presuppositions of historical sciences. It was the response to the interpretations of the world, history and human existence which at a certain time and in a certain place

seemed to constitute the most significant challenge—idealism, existentialism, process philosophy, logical positivism. In the nature of the case, the theologian was usually removed from a direct relation to the 'raw material' of human existence. His reflection was a *theoretical* effort which had little opportunity to draw from the direct experience of active participation or to test out its reflection in active specific commitments.

Such a situation obtained not only in relation to human life in general but even in relation to the Church. The theological faculty gained a certain autonomy which made it possible to free itself from the impositions of ecclesiastical politics. But at the same time it lost much of its explicit and immediate reference—faith as it is actually experienced, lived, acted out in the concrete life of the Christian communities. Certainly, this situation was much more pronounced in Europe than it was in America. But since American theology has depended so much on Europe, the problem carried over! American professors of theology went to church more frequently than their European colleagues—some were even involved in ecclesiastical activity. But Monday morning at the seminary, they taught 'respectable' academic theology!

This 'mediated' character was both demanded and reinforced by another unavoidable characteristic of modern academic theology: its *cumulative* character. The theologian enters a science which belongs to an academic community which slowly and painstakingly gathers the results of its research and reflection and creates a 'body of knowledge' which is presupposed in any individual work. This cumulative character of modern science requires at least two things. First, it needs an academic infrastructure: library, a team of people, research tools and assistants—an infrastructure which escalates continuously and can only be created in an academic center within a relatively developed and affluent economy. The second consequence of this cumulative nature of modern academic theology is specialization. No one can master the totality, so a branching-out is necessary. Thus 'theology' specializes in Biblical, historical, systematic, practical sciences—each one of which becomes more and more autonomous.

2) I think we hardly need to say that theology has not always been that way. These are neither the only patterns of theological reflection nor the only conditions of production of theology that the Church has known in its history.

Gustavo Gutierrez makes a distinction in his book, *A Theology of Liberation* (pp. 4ff.), between 'theology as wisdom' and 'theology

as rational knowledge.' This reminds us of the fact that in the early centuries theology was closely related to the 'development of spiritual life.' It consisted of meditation on Scripture meant to help the believer to deepen his apprehension of God's mystery. It was also a discussion of the practical problems that Christians met in their daily life (Tertullian's *De Spectaculis*, Augustine's *De Mendacio*, etc.). Much of Eastern theology has continued in that tradition for which holiness and learning were correlate terms. In the West, the classic form of *De sacra pagina* which dominated theological reflection until the XIIth century was meant to be a 'running' commentary on the Scripture in which the tradition was placed at the service of spiritual edification.

Needless to say, the theologian was not an 'academic,' but usually a pastor (recall the long tradition of 'episcopal theology' from Ignatius onwards) or a monk—a master of the spiritual life. As we know, this tradition corresponds also to the understanding of theological knowledge, for instance, in some oriental religions.

My point here is not to reject academic theology but to relativize it by relating it to other terms of reference and to a longer and richer history. Theology *need not be* this academic theology. The form and conditions of theological production need not necessarily be those of the specialized, cumulative, infrastructure-dependent modern theology. What I think is necessary is to break the monopoly and most of all the self-sufficiency of the academic pattern.

3) This is what is actually happening in several places in the Third World and in underprivileged groups everywhere: in the areas of the world, the classes of society, the races that Western society marginalized, instrumentalized and de-humanized in the process of its expansion. These people have begun to emerge from their captivity, rejecting the conditions, the structures and the ethos under which they were suppressed, and striving to create a new age for themselves and—unavoidably—also for their masters. Among them, not a few live this struggle and hope in the faith of Jesus Christ. They—blacks, Latin Americans, Africans, women—are forced to repossess their faith and tradition (the Scriptures, the creeds, etc.) in a new way, cleansing them from their servitude to the system and sensing the liberating and dynamizing motifs which have often been suppressed or distorted. Thus, a theology is being born.

Such theology emerges at different levels and in different forms. It is sometimes only a shout, a prayer or a hymn. It is a new solidarity which cuts across inherited patterns—institutional, liturgical,

devotional—expressing itself in new functions and gifts which are discovered or re-discovered. But it is also a systematic articulation which avails itself of the tools of sociopolitical analysis and critique and offers a coherent theory to the concrete commitment within the struggle.

Over against traditional academic theology, this theology has a 'first hand' contact with reality: its raw material is the living experience of this struggle. It certainly operates with theoretical categories in order to interpret this experience. But it is directly responsible, accountable, to the actual conditions of the struggle. One could call it a 'militant' in contrast to an 'academic' form of theologizing—in that sense much closer to Patristic or Reformation theology.

Two examples immediately come to my mind. The first is the emergence of 'black theology' in this country. Black theology is now present within 'the academy.' It has been responsibly elaborated by competent professional theologians. But it roots back in a concrete experience and a specific struggle. The singing, the marches, the sit-ins, the martyrs are the first form of that theology. It does not rest on a cumulative fund of research. It is not conceived as a solution to an intellectual problem. In a second moment it lays hands on such resources—but in a totally different relationship.

The second example comes from my continent. During the last ten years, Latin American Catholic bishops (and whole episcopal conferences), as well as some non-Catholics, have discovered a new exercise of their pastoral responsibility in the shepherding of human life: the protection of elemental human rights in the face of the repression unleashed by several governments under the ideology of 'national security.' They did not invent this function; they did not deduce it from some theological principle. It was forced upon them by the piles of letters coming every day, by the people queuing up at the door of the episcopal residence to present their case or to plead for a relative, by the anguished priests from shanty towns and student homes, on the verge of nervous breakdown under the weight of what they saw day after day—and even more, night after night—among their people. They began by timid and humble pleading before the authorities for this and that special case. And as events moved onwards, they had to raise their voice. They had to try to understand why their requests went unheard or unattended.

Of course, this 'subordinate' function which took more and more of their time and energy revealed itself as a true 'episcopal' function in the more profound and sacramental sense of the word. In a landscape of cruelty and death, of untold suffering, their modest work was "God's *episcopo*," God's visitation and vigilance over human life. For some it has become a true imitation of the pastor who lays down his life for the flock.

This episcopal function, in turn, is demanding a theological explanation and undergirding. When they are attacked for stepping out of their 'spiritual' function, when they have to show the evangelical foundations of their protest, when they have to find the words to speak to the people or to the authorities, they begin to articulate a theology—a Christology, a doctrine of man and creation, a doctrine of the cross . . . (Comblin's articulation).

We are not speaking of a 'functional' theology, of a theological 'stop-gap' that we have to use for 'circumstantial' reasons until we can go back to normal and dedicate ourselves to 'true theology.' This is *theology*, just as the Book of Revelation, or John of Damascus' Letters, or Luther's "Appeal to the Christian Nobility." It is not functional over against systematic, or pastoral over against academic, or practical over against dogmatic theology. It has its own internal coherence, objectivity, rigor and excellence in relation to the Gospel and to the Church—just as any systematic treatise of a German *Herr Professor*.

II. The New Insights Into the Nature of Thinking and Language.

A second element for an understanding of our present theological situation is, I think, a recognition of the new insights on the nature of human thinking and language which have emerged during the last hundred years and which we can no longer ignore in theology.

1) From the time of the Greek Fathers, theology has operated on *idealistic* presuppositions which have assumed the existence of an autonomous realm of ideas which has a consistency, coherence and verifiability of its own. (I am not using 'idealism,' therefore, in a strict philosophical sense—although it has also been dominant in that sense—but as a designation of the autonomous character ascribed to human thought.) Thus, the history of dogma, or of doctrine, is usually a description of the development of ideas, their opposition, their interplay, mutual influences. Indeed, the history of doctrine has usually been taught even apart from the history of

the Church, as if doctrine were an autonomous realm which had its own reality and dynamics in itself.

Idealism meant also the belief that conceptual and verbal formulations are self-authenticating: I say what I want to say and any honest and intelligent person will understand what I am saying. Theological and ecclesiastical pronouncements, therefore, mean what they say. In evaluating them one has simply to pay attention to their conceptual content.

2) These idealistic presuppositions are now shattered, because during the last hundred years, particularly since Marx and Freud, we have evolved cultural instruments for establishing more objectively the actual nature and significance of what we do as collective entities—e.g., as churches—within the framework and the dynamics of society as a whole.

We can now know with a higher degree of precision *what happens* with the words we use, the alliances into which we enter, the ways in which we use our influence and resources. Specifically, in the area of language, we know that the words and expressions we use are not only—and not mainly—received in the context of our own discourse but in the framework of a code prevalent in society, in which they evoke certain connotations. Words, to say it more precisely, have a *performative* function which does not necessarily coincide with their conceptual contents or with our intention. More simply, what we say functions differently depending on whom we address and in what circumstances. A word is as ambivalent as a pat on the shoulder—sympathy, paternalism, congratulation, complicity!

What do we do theologically with this knowledge? Can we go on as before, checking concepts against concepts, taking refuge in our intention? Or shall we face the responsibility for the concrete historical performative significance of our theological discourse? Shall we go on saying that *love, reconciliation, freedom* are 'true no matter' who speaks these words to whom, when, and what for?

Moreover, we should by now be aware of the reality of ideology and its role in society. And this knowledge should affect our theological enterprise in several respects.

We know that ideas are not born from ideas in some sort of 'virginal conception,' but that they are begotten in the womb of social reality. If our churches are part and parcel of certain groups and sectors of society, the sociology of knowledge will tell us that our thinking will reflect—however modified, corrected or slanted—the values, the ethos, the collective representations of life and the

world of that sector. In other words, all thinking is ideological thinking because no one can think outside time and space—i.e., outside a specific social formation with all that it implies. The recognition of this fact has led to an exposure of the 'hidden ideological presuppositions' of much that passes for objective, purely analytical academic 'knowledge.' Theology cannot escape this examination.

Ideology has a masking function which is hidden even—perhaps precisely—from the group that uses it. To what extent are our Biblical exegesis and hermeneutics, our theological articulations caught in this predicament? (During the last few years, for example, a number of theologians—Metz, Moltmann, Duquoc among others—have called attention to the unconscious 'depoliticization' that the trial and death of Jesus has undergone at the hands of Biblical scholarship. Dorothe Sölle has beautifully shown the acute ideologization of the Biblical concept of obedience in theological thought! Juan L. Segundo has analyzed the ideological-political motifs at work in Western interpretations of the doctrine of the Trinity!)

An ideology is always an over-simplification of reality, a caricature. But it is also an instrument which a group fashions in order to mobilize itself in a united way for carrying out a common project. In that sense, theology cannot avoid the question about whom shall it serve—since it cannot be neutral. This does not mean that theology has to become an ideology, or place itself at the service of an ideology. But it does mean that it must be aware of the dynamics of ideological thinking and ideological conflict—a dynamics in which it becomes inevitably involved.

3) All of this requires a new level in theological reflection, for which we are neither accustomed nor prepared: a level, at which we do not stop at the analysis of 'pure thought' but push towards the conditions of the *production of* that thought and the historical *operation of it*. Who does theology, for whom, where, in what circumstances? Theologians cannot anymore avoid these questions.

This task requires a new set of instruments which do not belong to the traditional baggage of the theologian: the social and behavioural sciences which make possible an analysis of the dynamics of a given situation. A new way of theologizing is thus born which consciously sets itself within temporal-social conditions and aims at a *performative* effect that will truly represent the interpretation of the Gospel in that *context*.

To return again to an example already mentioned: the recent

documents of the Roman Catholic episcopal conferences of Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay begin by an analysis of the national situation—living conditions, people's participation in the life of the country, ideological presuppositions of the national policy, procedures that are used in the economic, political and police areas. This analysis focuses the themes that must be analyzed theologically: for instance, the relation of State and Nation, the concept of development and the foundation for human rights in the Brazilian document. Again, traditional theological concepts have to be related to this situation: for instance, the traditional Christian notions of universal sin and universal grace are brought in by the Brazilian document in order to break the Manichean distinction between 'patriot' and 'subversive' on the basis of which the denial of human rights to the latter is 'justified.' What is pursued here is not a 'balanced' and exhaustive deployment of the totality of doctrine (is that possible anyway?) but a concrete exploration of the doctrinal resources of the Christian faith for the fulfillment of a Christian prophetic and priestly function in a particular time and place.

III. The Historical Predicament of the Western World

Finally, I think that an understanding of the present theological situation faces us with a very basic and comprehensive question: the historical predicament of the Western world (in fact, it may be more—but we confine ourselves to our immediate reference). The subject far exceeds both the time and my ability. We run the risks of all kinds of generalizations, unfounded judgments or self-dictated prophecies. But even so, I think we cannot avoid at least taking cognizance of this question.

1) I trust that you will not be scandalized if I say that there is not—and there has never been—a Christianity but rather *Christianities*. Or perhaps it would be more accurate to say that Christianity is the process of the creation, crises and transformations of *Christianities* in the course of human history.

I am not denying the continuity of the faith or the Church. But I am saying that this continuity cannot be seen in any simple and naive way, but in the ambiguities and conflicts of history. What we can see in history is a Byzantine Christianity, a Western Christianity, a Palestinian Christianity, a North African Christianity, etc.

2) The last of such *Christianities* is what we call 'Western bourgeois, confessional Christianity' as it emerged—both in the

Roman Catholic and in the other Western churches—from the crisis of the XVI century and as it took shape in the XVII and XVIII centuries in continental Europe, Great Britain and the USA. Sometimes we are so hypnotized by the differences and conflicts of the several confessional families that we do not see that sociologically, functionally, ideologically, they belong together as one Christianity, i.e., as a Christianity related to the emergence of the modern, bourgeois, capitalist world.

This 'Christianity' has developed certain interpretations of the Christian faith in which basic human values found recognition, expression and empowerment. It created the conditions for intellectual pursuit which permitted the flourishing of the academic theology which we have already mentioned. It explored the realm of personal subjectivity, thus opening a new territory for the projection of the Gospel message: the understanding of the experience of a personal appropriation of the Gospel—faith as existential commitment. It established the theological basis of the infinite worth of the human person—a deepening of the implications of the doctrine of creation, providence, universal grace for the affirmation of human freedom and creativity. It discovered interpersonal relations as constitutive of our humanity—and therefore the meaning of fellowship (*koinonia*), thus enriching ecclesiology and overcoming a purely juridical conception so dominant in late scholastic theology.

3) But the crisis of the modern, bourgeois, capitalist world becomes clearer and clearer for anyone who musters the courage to open his eyes: A culture that fails to provide meaning for the life of persons and a sense of direction for human societies; a social organization that is not able to develop structures in which the major conflicts (social groups, developed and underdeveloped countries) can be dealt with creatively; a form of production that threatens to destroy the very basis of human subsistence while it fails at the same time to provide for the maintenance of the larger portion of mankind; a culture which does not succeed in challenging creativity in the solution of its own problems—as the apocalyptic or cynic mood of Western *intelligentsia* today attests—all these things together point to a failure both of nerve and of structural and systemic ability to face the challenge of contemporary history.

I think we need to look with appreciation and gratitude to this great creation of a sector of humanity, but also to recognize without bitterness that it has come to the end of its useful course. And the

end of the Western bourgeois, capitalist world means also necessarily the end of the form of Christianity and the theology that had accompanied, sustained—at times corrected—expressed, assisted this historical formation.

4) But this is not the end. If I see right, this is at the same time a moment of hope and *alumbramiento*. There is the possibility of a new world. It is my conviction—as I said before—that this new world is being born in the poor of the world and in the world of the poor, among the oppressed and marginalized sector of our humanity. I have already referred to this, so I don't need to elaborate. But I want to make three brief comments insofar as this refers to theology.

I am far from suggesting that the poor and oppressed are subjectively better, or more innocent, or purer in their motivations. But I would claim that there is what Assmann has called 'an epistemological privilege of the poor,' the possibility of seeing and understanding what the rich and powerful cannot see and understand. It is not the perfection of the sight, it is the *place where they stand* that makes the differences.

Power and wealth have a distorting effect—they freeze our view of reality. The standpoint of the poor, on the other hand, under the pricking of suffering and the attraction of hope, allows them to intuit the dawn of another reality. Because the poor suffer the weight of alienation, they can conceive a project of hope and provide the dynamism for a new organization of human life *for all*. This is certainly not automatic, but, trusting in God's faithfulness, we can venture to see the birth of a new world, and of a Christianity that will encourage, sustain, correct and express the hopes, the efforts and the pains of the birth of this new world. Theology will have to find the processes, the forms of expression for this new Christianity.

The language which I have used—particularly under the pressure of time—may have the sound of an utopian affirmation of a total, sudden and spectacular transformation. History does not move that way but in a painful and long dialectics of small and large changes, progress and regress. We can see the magnitude of the bouleversement in retrospect. But we can only undertake today the small and minimal tasks that are within our possibilities. (Let no one think, therefore, that I am proclaiming the 'theology of liberation' as it has appeared in Latin America and elsewhere, as *the* theology of the new world, or the forerunner of a new Christianity. It is a simple, initial and ambivalent response to a dim

perception of a new task and a new responsibility. It is destined to die—may God grant that its life and death be fruitful!)

Sometimes this theology is perceived from Europe or the USA as strange and threatening. May I just remind us that this has always been so whenever a fundamental change begins to occur. If this theology is subversive, it is not so in the sense of being nihilistic or destructive, but perhaps in the etymological sense of being a sub-version: a version from below, a view of reality, an experience of faith, an appropriation of the Gospel from below, from another standpoint.

Such a new theology is not justified in itself. It stands under the judgment of the Word of God and it has to respond to the concrete demands of history. It has to prove that it is an interpretation of the Gospel. And it has to validate itself by its ability to serve the needs of all mankind. But certainly it does not have to justify itself before the theological standards of the academic theology of bourgeois Christianity!

The polemic and intransigent tone of some of these comments should not create undue concern. They are demanded by the brevity of our time. A more systematic analysis would require qualifications and nuances. There are scarcely such 'clean breaks' in history. The old and the new condition, interpenetrate and stimulate each other. But I think the basic point should be clear. Theologies are not born of theologies. Or rather, they are not synthesized *in vitro*. They are begotten in the intercourse of human life, thought, struggle—as these take place under the grip of faith and under the power of the Spirit. A new theology is born—or rather may be born—because and to the extent that a new Christianity is born in the struggle for a new human society for the whole of mankind.

Christology or Male-olatry?

by MADELON (MICKI) NUNN
M.Div., May 1977

Recently the Vatican issued a Declaration¹ designed, no doubt, to dash the hopes of a growing number of Catholic women in seminaries who feel called to seek ordination to the priesthood. Jesus Christ was a "man," the statemen said; and the priest, representative of Christ, must bear a "natural resemblance" to Christ: the priest must be a "man." In this employment "man" is clearly not meant in any "generic" sense; the conclusion identifies "man" as "male"—*anēr* rather than *anthropos*. "Since" Jesus Christ was a male and chose male apostles, all priests for all time must, "therefore," be male.

There are a lot of issues floating around in this "negative solution" (as the Vatican termed it) to the question of the ordination of women. Even though the statement did not say anything new, it hit a lot of people, women and men, Catholics and Protestants alike, with a strong force. I suppose that in the wake of the General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the US in Minneapolis hopes for new dialogue among Catholics on this issue were running high. But the time was not right and now I feel the necessity to examine some of the questions that have come to me as a result of the Vatican Declaration.

God became a human being, was incarnated, took on flesh, in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. This Jesus was a male; he had a penis and he did not have a vagina. Is this fact of Jesus' maleness an essential part of the Incarnation? (By "essence" I here mean "the property necessary to the nature of a thing"—Webster). The Vatican seems to be answering this question with a solid Yes. My first response to this answer was one of rage and disgust. But as I have been feeling and thinking about this issue, I am coming more

1. *The Ordination of Women: Declaration of the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith* (Rome: October 15, 1976). The Declaration concludes: "In an audience granted to the Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith October 15, 1976, the Supreme Pontiff Paul VI, Pope by divine providence, ratified and confirmed this declaration and ordered its promulgation." Thus, while the Declaration does not constitute an *ex cathedra* papal pronouncement, it is clear that the Declaration was prepared in consultation with the regnant Pope and conveys his full endorsement.

and more into agreement with the "yes" answer to this question, but for no doubt totally different reasons than those of the Vatican.

Being incarnate means being invested with bodily form (Webster again). God took on the body of a specific human being. Let's face it—if God was to be embodied there were only two choices: a male body or a female body. God chose a male body; and now the Vatican has restated strongly what has been said before, namely that the *maleness* of that body is very important. I let my mind do some travelling.

Jesus Christ, God incarnate, was in a male body. Jesus Christ redeemed all that he assumed, the Church Fathers told us. I am a female body. Was my femaleness assumed? Am I as a female body redeemed? In my head trip I began having grave doubts about my salvation. Maybe Mother Anne of the Shakers was right after all. A Messiah in a female body was needed to complete the work of redemption. Has she come yet? Did we miss her in the night? Did we send her to sweat boxes in the clothing factories? Did we see her burn at the stake somewhere in Europe or New England? Did she die in the pangs of childbirth in a slave cabin somewhere in the South? Or possibly she was raped as part of the spoils of victory during the march of the conquerors following any and every war in history.

Regardless of where my feelings might lead me, we as Christians confess that Jesus was in fact the Messiah. The Messiah was a male and not a female, and I as a Christian acknowledge this fact. I have at times wondered about God's choice; of course, such wonderings are fantasy but they are nonetheless interesting. For instance, if in the same time and place the Messiah came embodied in a female person, would anyone have noticed her? Most probably not—precisely because many of her activities would have been those culturally assigned to her as a woman. No one would notice anything unusual about a woman as a servant; a woman refusing to accept a position of authority, either military or as a political queen; a woman weeping over a city; a woman bending down to wash a friend's feet; a woman making the ultimate sacrifice for those she loved. *No one would have noticed.*

And so I come to the first point where I have to agree with the Vatican. Yes! The maleness of Jesus is of essential importance for the Incarnation. In order to bring a new word to the world the Messiah had to be a male. Servanthood was indigenous to the role of women in that culture; but a man speaking of being a servant in a radical way? *That* was new! A man refusing to accept

kingly authority and preferring instead to wash the dusty feet of his friends or to hold children in his lap—that was new. To the extent that only a man (male) could make this radical agapē message clear in a male dominated, patriarchal society—yes, the maleness of Jesus is essential for our understanding of the Incarnation.

Now back to the question of my salvation. I was questioning whether my female body is redeemed if we agree completely with the Vatican's interpretation about the importance of Jesus' maleness. Without question our bodies and the presence or absence of a vagina or penis determine in large part how we relate to the world as separate from our body and as part of our body. My view of reality is partially formed not only by my unique body but also by my female body. I have a space inside of me that waits for the possibility of holding and forming new life, the possibility of birthing, or creating. I am not able to forget these possibilities, for each month my entire system undergoes a massive hormonal shift and I bleed the blood of creative possibilities. The awareness of this interior possibility that is so much a part of my being puts me in touch with the God who is Creator, the one who birthed the universe and the fullness thereof. Certainly this awareness is not the only way I experience God. Nor am I trying to say with Thomas Aquinas and others that childbirth is my avenue to redemption as a woman. I am simply trying to say that in learning to be my female body I come in very close touch with the Creator God, Source of all Life.

I am all for a doctrine of Incarnation that recognizes the importance of bodiliness. It seems an incredible contradiction in terms that the tradition could so easily ignore "bodiliness" even in a doctrine of "Incarnation": *embodiment*. Nevertheless any small amount of study shows that this contradiction has been with us for lo these many years. And if the Vatican's recent Declaration can help us to recognize that Jesus had a body (albeit a male body) and the implications of his bodiliness, then I am glad the Vatican called our attention to this point.

But I still have not solved the question of my salvation. My mention of the tradition has sent me back to look at the early Christological discussions, especially the Council of Chalcedon. The task of this Council was to determine the relation of the human to the divine and of the divine to the human in the person of Jesus Christ. My question as I searched the proposals of Chalcedon was: Did *the Fathers* fight so hard with the various "heretics" to preserve

the conception of the *humanity* of Jesus Christ or did they fight to preserve the conception of the *male humanity* of Jesus Christ? Nowhere in the formulations do I find a mention of the importance of the maleness of Jesus Christ. The Fathers insisted on the full humanity of Jesus Christ, that he had a real body and a rational will, and that he “developed in time” just as all humans do. For whatever reasons (the work of the Holy Spirit, their Platonic essentialist views, or the fact that they were all males) the Fathers avoided defining the Person of Christ according to his divine and male attributes, but insisted on the divine and *human*.

It is clear, then, that *the Vatican Declaration* refers us back to medieval scholasticism rather than to patristic precedents. Aquinas wrote (following the example of Aristotle) that women are “misbegotten males,” inferior to men because as women they are only partial humanity. Only a male can be an example of complete humanity. Suddenly the maleness of Jesus becomes very important, for only a male could fit the bill of Messiah, i.e., one who could assume all of humanity. I suppose I should take heart at this doctrine, for according to Aquinas, my femaleness *is* included in perfect, full, male humanity, and therefore I am redeemed. . . . Somehow I do not feel any better, for now I am redeemed, but I am not a whole person in and of myself.

There is a very important issue just under the surface here that warrants attention at this point. According to this view held by Thomas and presumably held today by the Vatican, perfect humanity was best expressed by a male person. Two questions: (1) what does this view say about God in and of Godself; and (2) what does this view say about God as Creator?

It has long been believed in Judeo-Christian faith that the one way for human creatures to speak of our *relationship* with God is in *personal* terms. In spite of relatively recent efforts to dissuade us from this way of speaking (e.g., Tillich, MacQuarrie), I still opt for speaking of my relationship to God in personal terms. In our experience human persons are either male or female in their bodily form; persons exhibit characteristics culturally assigned to women and men called feminine or masculine characteristics; female persons often exhibit some feminine and some masculine characteristics, and male persons exhibit some masculine and some feminine characteristics. To speak of God in personal terms brings these images to mind. Part of the dilemma is solved in that we can easily agree that God doesn't have a female or a male body. God is *not a male or a female*.

But what about *masculine* and *feminine* characteristics? I would “like” to follow a line of reasoning which I see *implicit* in the Vatican acceptance of the anthropology of Aquinas: *God contains within Godself full humanity*. This understanding would certainly be confirmed by Gen. 1:27: “So God created humanity² in his own image; . . . male and female he created them.”

But I must face the fact that the line of reasoning *explicit* in the Vatican Declaration is apparently more like this: male/masculine humanity is more full/complete/whole than female/feminine humanity, and the reason must certainly be that *God is more male than female*. After all, Gen. 2:7, 21-23³ “shows” this “fact” since God really created a *male* person *first* and then *later* took *part* of that male person and made a *female* person. Since it is “obvious” that God is more male than female, we appropriately call God “Him” and Scriptures naturally refer to God as “Father”—*not* “Mother.” Lest the reader think this argument is purely tongue-in-cheek and no one could *really* believe this, let me assure you that this argument is very prevalent even today. See, for example, *Priest and Priestess*, by George Rutler.

As to my second question: What do my ruminations about the possibilities-for-creation that I am in my body have to say about God as Creator? Both males and females have the power of procreation, but women have a somewhat closer tie to creation because of our bodies. Using the kind of reasoning that I assumed in the

2. The Hebrew word *'adam*—unlike *'ish*, which means “male” in distinction from “female” (*'ishshah*)—means “humanity,” applying to both sexes. The Priestly creation story emphasizes here a corporate and complementary understanding of essential humanness: “male *and* female God created *them*. And God blessed *them*.” Male-dominant perspectives, such as those of the Vatican Declaration, ignore the significance of the fact that Jesus (in his “full humanity”!) appeals to *this part* of the Genesis creation stories (Mk. 10:2-6) as a scriptural basis for *nullifying* the authority of “Mosaic” tradition which allowed divorce as an exclusively *male* prerogative. (Deut. 24:1, 3: “If *he* find some fault in *her*”!)

3. A more appropriate understanding of the Yahwist paradise story would recognize that the real *significance* of Gen. 2:7 in relation to Gen. 2:21-24—beyond the typical Hebrew word-play on *'ishshah* as “from” *'ish*—is that “human creation is not *complete* until man and woman stand in *partnership* with each other” and that human “life is a *dialogue* between ‘I and thou,’ in relationship with God and in *partnership* with another human being” (Bernhard W. Anderson, *Understanding the Old Testament*, Third Edition, pp. 211, 212, emphasis mine). While this point may remain unrecognized by male-dominant perspectives, its significance *was* recognized by Jesus (in his “full humanity”!). Along with Gen. 1:27—Jesus invokes (Mk. 10:7-8) Gen. 2:24 and draws the conclusion which transcends the male-dominant “Mosaic” tradition: “So *they* are no longer two but *one embodiment*.”

last paragraph I can now say in light of this new evidence that God must surely be *more female than male*. After all, God is in *Her* most important role as Creator.

Now, this tug-of-war over which “part” of God—the masculine or feminine—takes precedence over which seems ridiculous in the light of objective, rational type thought. Nevertheless, these issues do tap something other than our objective, rational selves—otherwise people like theologians, who normally take care to be rational, orderly, and logical, would not go on at great length about such issues. It is obvious to me that a large number of us are so out of touch with our sexuality, our bodiliness, that we do not even know what we are arguing about. Deep-seated fears about the “opposite” sex and about “their” characteristics in ourselves cause us to project the whole argument onto God. And over the centuries this projection has led to what I call “male-olatry,” the patterning of our talk and thought about God after the cultural phenomenon of male-domination.

The Vatican Declaration elevating the maleness of Christ is another link in the chain supporting this male-olatry. It is precisely for this reason that I have violent reaction to considering *Jesus’ maleness as an essential part of the Incarnation in any way other than the way I affirmed earlier*: It is good that we recognize and admit that Jesus had a real body and that he had a male body and that he consequently related to the world in a particular way.

But let us also recognize the *essence* of Incarnation as being *embodiment to human form, a creature, one of God’s own*. I would rather relegate Jesus’ maleness to the category of “scandal of particularity” along with his Jewishness, his existence in a particular town at a particular time. We must not try to minimize this scandal or try to change the particularities; rather we should use them to help us understand more fully what it means to be human and what it means to have a body, as well as what it means when we affirm, “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.” (Gal. 2:20)

Life on the Boundary: The Paradoxical Models of Tillich and Pike

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"The man who stands on many boundaries experiences the unrest, insecurity and inner limitations of existence in many forms. He knows the impossibility of attaining serenity, security and perfection. This holds true in life as well as in thought . . ."

—Paul Tillich, *On the Boundary* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1966), pp. 97-8

"We have this treasure in earthen vessels, to show that the transcendent power belongs to God and not to us."

—II Cor. 4:7, inscribed on the tombstone of James A. Pike in Jerusalem

In recent years, two different streams of religious thought have created special interest in the relationship between religious life and thought. The first is the "Religion and Autobiography" movement, which has insisted that in order to understand the thought of a given person, we need to know salient facts about his/her life, interests, friends, and life-style. The basic premise behind this movement is that no one's thought comes out of a vacuum, but is colored by his/her life experiences. The problems we see and the answers we give to different issues intertwine in our own personal pilgrimages. We have long recognized this intertwining of life and thought in a number of the leading thinkers of an earlier generation, e.g., Bonhoeffer and the German Church Struggle, Reinhold Niebuhr and his years in the parish ministry in Detroit, Rauschenbusch and his experience in Hell's Kitchen. Recently, however, the theme has been picked up by prominent thinkers of a younger generation. Harvey Cox's *Seduction of the Spirit*, Richard Rubenstein's *Power Struggle*, Sam Keen's *Telling Your Story* and Gregory Baum's *Journeys* are all books which illumine the life stories of some major thinkers, and demonstrate how their approaches to theology, ethics, and social problems are intertwined with their personal lives. These autobiographical statements do not, in the last analysis, help us adjudicate the validity of a given thinker's

position, but they do help us in some measure understand why theologians see what they see and write what they write. James McClendon's book, *Biography as Theology* (Abingdon, 1974) gives us life sketches of Martin Luther King, Jr., Dag Hammarskjold, Clarence and Charles Ives and also contributes to this stream of modern thought.

The second interesting stream in recent theological writing has been the "ethics of character" movement. The foremost spokesman for this movement has been Stanley Hauerwas of the University of Notre Dame. Hauerwas' book, *Character and Christian Life* (San Antonio: Trinity University Press, 1975), is a serious attempt to recover the central place of character in the Christian life. As opposed to situation ethics or any other "contextual" approaches to ethics (which stress the unique decisions of the self as the model for the Christian life), Hauerwas attempts to recover the notions of moral growth and personal virtue and thereby gain perspective on Christian character. It is possible, he maintains, to train ourselves to respond in consistent ways in diverse life situations; hence we can (and indeed need to) talk about the place of character in the style of the Christian life. Hauerwas gets strong support for this position by James McClendon in the volume cited above, with McClendon contending that we need to recover the notion of virtue as pivotal in the Christian life, and that we have some clues about this in the lives of prominent religious leaders.

These two streams together reinforce the idea of consistency of character and the harmony of public and private lives of religious leaders. As long as we take as our examples such giants of the faith as Bonhoeffer, Martin Luther King, Jr., Albert Schweitzer or Pope John XXIII, this intertwining of life, thought and character works fairly well. The theory becomes much more problematic, however, when we consider biographies of two distinguished thinkers and religious leaders who died less than a decade ago, Paul Tillich and James Pike. The long-awaited biography of Tillich was published in 1976 by Wilhelm and Marion Pauck, entitled *Paul Tillich: His Life and Thought, Volume I: Life* (New York: Harper and Row). Pike's definitive biography has been written by his close friends William Stringfellow and Anthony Towne, entitled *The Death and Life of Bishop Pike* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1976). The public careers of both of these men are so distinguished, and yet their lives as reflected in these biographies are so problematic by any conventional canons, that they raise for us some serious questions about the relationship of biographical

information to religious truth. In this article I shall review the salient facts in the lives of both of these men as reported in these recent biographies, and then consider the problems that these troubled lives pose for the study of ethics in our day. First, however, I must justify the yoking together of these two men and clarify the limitations of this essay.

Although I met both men, I did not know either of them well and I lay no claim for having first hand awareness of their lives. I served as Tillich's host while he visited the Florida State campus for three days in 1962, and I met Pike and heard him deliver a lecture at Florida Presbyterian College (now Eckerd College) in St. Petersburg in 1966. (His lectures there precipitated the heresy charges from the Bishop of South Florida.) They were both heroes to me, however: Tillich for opening new theological vistas, Pike for his courageous churchmanship. At a formative time in my own career, their causes were my causes and their enemies were my enemies.

At first blush, Tillich and Pike appear to be an odd couple, more characterized by differences than similarities. Tillich was Germanic, a philosophical theologian, heralded on two continents for his seminal thought; Pike was quintessentially a Californian, a preacher and churchman, a popularizer—a "forensic" theologian. Tillich awed people, in spite of Nels F. S. Ferre's admonitions that he was a "dangerous" thinker for Christendom. Pike shocked people, and was censured by the Episcopal Church for heresy. Tillich seldom surfaced in controversial political issues while in America; Pike, it seems, always did.

What Tillich and Pike had in common were interests in depth psychology, a way of coming at theology which affirmed the symbolic quality of language, creeds and liturgies, and approaches to ethics which stressed love, risk and situationalism. Pike studied under Tillich at Union Seminary in New York, dedicated a book to him, and even claimed to have communicated with Tillich's spirit. Although Tillich's American career spanned a longer period than did Pike's, they were both prominent in theological and ecclesiastical circles from c. 1950-1965. Although they differed in temperament, there is justification, I believe, for considering them together as "paradoxical" models of the religious life.

On literary grounds, both of the biographies cited in this article are richer and more informative than my limited use of them here implies. The Pauck volume, which received an unduly harsh review by Jerald Brauer in *The Christian Century* (November 19,

1976, pp. 1017-20), contains a wealth of information about Tillich, both in his German and American periods. The Stringfellow and Towne volume sparkles in literary style, and follows an unorthodox pattern of treating the events relating to Pike's death first before it provides a chronicle of Pike's life. I will leave unanswered here how many lives could gracefully bear the scrutiny which these books bring to bear, or whether in the case of Pike his friends have done him any service with the extraordinary candor of their writing. Keeping these matters in mind, let us now consider the relationship of life and thought in Paul Tillich.

I

The basic chronology of Tillich's career is well known and does not have to be treated in detail here. Born in Starzeddel, Germany, on August 20, 1886, son of a Lutheran pastor, he studied at Berlin, Tübingen and Halle, and in 1910 received his Ph.D. degree from the University of Breslau. He was ordained in the Evangelical Church of the Prussian Union and served for four years as a chaplain in the German army from 1914-1918. He began his teaching career at the University of Berlin in 1919 and spent some time at the Universities of Marburg and Leipzig before going to Frankfurt in 1929. He was suspended by the Nazis from his post in Frankfurt in 1933, and (primarily due to the assistance of Reinhold Niebuhr) was invited to join the faculty of Union Theological Seminary in New York City. He taught at Union from 1933 to 1955, and upon retirement there went to Harvard as a University Professor from 1955 to 1962. Upon his retirement from Harvard in 1962, he spent the last three years of his life as the Nuveen Professor of Theology at the University of Chicago Divinity School. He died on October 22, 1965. In his career he published over twenty books and several hundred articles, and was generally regarded (along with Karl Barth) as one of the two leading Protestant theologians of the twentieth century.

Tillich liked to describe himself as a boundary thinker, and in fact published two editions of an autobiographical essay entitled *On the Boundary* (1936 and 1963). He described himself as being shaped as a person and as a thinker by the boundaries between city and country; between social classes; between theory and practice; between theology and philosophy; between church and society; between religion and culture; between Lutheranism and Socialism and between Europe and America.

The first inklings that the general public had of Tillich's troubled private life came with the biography published by Rollo May entitled *Paulus* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973) and the stunning book by Tillich's widow, Hannah, entitled *From Time to Time* (New York: Stein and Day, 1973). These books together rocked the theological world; in fact, the Hannah Tillich book was deemed by Tillich's friends in Europe as being so defaming that they have to this day successfully blocked the translation and publication of her book in Germany. Basically, Hannah Tillich described her dead husband as a philanderer—a man who had life long interests and contacts with other women in ways which were fundamentally hurtful to her. Rollo May, while acknowledging Tillich's propensities in this direction, described Tillich more gently by saying that he had a great capacity for friendship with women, but that his interests were more "sensuous" than sexual. How many women were involved with Tillich, where, when, and for how long is discreetly passed over. It does seem, however, that Tillich kept in contact with a number of these women (as indeed he did with many male friends) and wrote letters of endearment to many of them.

The broader community of people who were influenced by Tillich waited several years after the Hannah Tillich-Rollo May impasse to learn what perspective the Paucks would have on Tillich's private life. On the whole the Paucks seem to side more with Hannah Tillich than with May as they assess Tillich's relationships with women. They point out that although Tillich clearly chose this life-style, the abundance of relationships in these years produced in him a sort of sickness:

His guilt was double: he felt guilty in relation to each woman and thus never deserted a single one that he had come to know well; he felt guilty also in relation to the moral code, of which he never entirely rid himself and which continued to exert power over him. For a time he convinced himself that the dangers of paganism were less than the pangs of earlier confinement. Thus he chose the fascination of variety and freedom of expression over and against the single monogamous, bourgeoisie condition. At the same time, the choice created in him a fear that if his chaotic existence continued too long, he would find neither rest nor resolution to his conflict. (p. 83)

Concerning Tillich's interest in women, the Paucks observe:

On the one hand, he openly admired women—all women. It made no difference whether it was a waitress in a French restaurant or student in the classroom, the wife of a colleague or a sophisticated worldling who conducted a salon. He enjoyed talking with each one, admiring each one, having each respond to him, but did not become friends with them all.

Indeed, some women were offended by his advances and quickly rejected him. Others wanted much more than he was ready or willing to give. The lasting friendships were with women who were intellectually stimulating, interesting, unusual, open to him, and with whom he felt comfortable himself. Their work, their state of mind, and their development were of genuine interest to him. He comforted them and sympathized in their days of sorrow, he celebrated their joys and successes, he advised them, encouraged them to fulfill themselves in their personal as well as their professional lives. He preached to them incessantly to avoid the pitfalls of compulsive self-giving, which he felt was the great danger implicit in the monogamous relationship. He urged them to remain open, even as he was, to the infinite experiences of life. (p. 89)

Several other things complicate an appraisal of Tillich's life. Clearly his marriage to Hannah was an unhappy marriage from the beginning; divorce was considered several times, but Tillich felt that divorce would be detrimental to his professional career. Hannah Tillich, in the meantime, embarked on a number of liaisons herself both with men and with women. Their total life-style would not fit neatly into the confines of middle-class America. One gets the impression, however, that Hannah's search for other relationships was a defensive reaction to her inability to sustain a monogamous relationship with Paulus. Hannah Tillich's final assessment about their life is a bitter one:

Where did I come in? I had shared it, hated it, loved it, rebuked it. I had fought for survival, being submerged serving him, being aware when I was pressed between the leaves of a folder, cursing him for turning me into an abstraction. Every morning I was willing and glad to live again, every evening I felt shoved beneath a heap of stones. (*From Time to Time*, p. 242)

After she returned to their home in East Hampton, New York, after Tillich died in Chicago, she writes poignantly of burning his love letters and notes from his female admirers in their fireplace, being numb with sorrow yet feeling the loss of his presence.

The Paucks conclude that both Tillich's marriage and his personality remained paradoxical and mysterious, eluding final or complete definition. In his old age, the Paucks point out that Tillich felt that love was tragic and marriage sad, and his own self-doubt was great (p. 92). The great man, heralded so widely on two continents, appears to have suffered much guilt, unhappiness and anxiety in his personal life.

II

As a theologian, James Pike was less well known than Tillich, but he was clearly one of the most colorful and controversial clergy-

men of 20th century America. Born in Oklahoma City in 1923, he was raised in California, attending the Jesuit University of Santa Clara and also the University of California at Los Angeles for his undergraduate work. Although born into the Catholic faith he repudiated it in the course of his undergraduate studies and began a restless search for another viable church. This quest continued during his studies in law at the University of Southern California and subsequently at Yale. He earned a doctorate in law at Yale in 1938, moved to Washington, D. C., as an attorney with the Securities and Exchange Commission, and married Jane Alvies. (This marriage ended in divorce two years later.) He quickly made a name for himself in administrative law and became well known in Washington legal circles.

In the early 40's Pike remarried, joined the Episcopal Church and began to chart for himself a second career as a clergyman. He matriculated at Union Theological Seminary in New York City and finally earned his Bachelor of Divinity Degree in 1947. After an initial appointment at Christ Episcopal Church near Vassar College in Poughkeepsie, New York, and a three year stint (1949-52) as Chaplain and Chairman of the Religion Department at Columbia, Pike was appointed Dean of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City in 1952 and remained in that post for six years. It was from that highly visible position that he became a national celebrity.

In 1958 Pike was elected Episcopal Bishop of California and moved back to the West Coast to assume responsibilities at Grace Cathedral in San Francisco. After a stormy eight year tenure in that position he resigned as Bishop in May of 1966, and joined the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions as a Senior Fellow in Santa Barbara, California. He was affiliated with that Center until shortly before his death in 1969.

Unlike Tillich, Pike was essentially a churchman and preacher. Although he authored 14 books, he wrote more for the general public than did Tillich, and clearly understood himself as more of a popularizer than as a seminal religious thinker. He co-authored five other books, and it should be noted that his casebook in administrative law is still regarded as a standard reference work in that legal field. He was a person of extraordinary intellect, drive and creativity. To know him, some have said, was an event.

Pike became prominent in his career because of his colorful style, his hyperactivity and his willingness to be embroiled in public, social and theological controversies. While he was Dean of the

Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City, he publicly and frequently tilted with Francis Cardinal Spellman, who saw himself as the major spokesman for the Roman Catholic community in New York City. Cardinal Spellman's conservative theological and political views are well known and do not need to be spelled out in detail here. Suffice it to say that Pike took upon himself the task of being a countervoice to Spellman over such issues as the stature and public image of Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt (whom Spellman said was "unworthy of an American mother" because of her advocacy of planned parenthood); the moving picture *Baby Doll* (inasmuch as it raised the issue of obscenity and public morals); and the rebaptism (in 1965) of Luci Baines Johnson. Pike was also a fearless social crusader for civil rights, labor and the poor. He saw his ministry as extending to atheists, cynics and secularists as well as to growing persons of the faith. While at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, he was noted for his dialogue sermons, for the creative way in which the Cathedral was engaged with the artistic community, and for his flair for celebrating the great festival occasions of the church year. For a number of years he had his own television show (called "The Dean Pike Show") which was conducted as a talk show, and on which he courageously addressed himself to practically every major theological, social and political issue of the day.

While Bishop of California, Pike alienated the wealthy elite of the Episcopal Church by being an outspoken person on political issues, and by lending his support for fair housing referenda, farm workers, racial justice and community organizers. He strongly supported the work of Martin Luther King, Jr., and Saul Alinsky, much to the delight of some persons of liberal persuasion and to the near apoplexy of his conservative constituency.

As a theologian, Pike tilted with the high church and triumphalist wings of the Episcopal Church. He had been deeply influenced by Tillich's concept of the symbolic nature of theological statements; he accordingly pressed beyond the creeds and doctrinal definitions of the Church's faith to illumine the deeper realities of the tradition. [See his *A Time for Christian Candor* (Harper and Row, 1964), *What Is This Treasure* (Harper and Row, 1966) and *If This Be Heresy* (Harper and Row, 1967).] He was a kindred spirit to John A. T. Robinson, and in fact dedicated *What Is This Treasure* to Robinson and Tillich. Pike felt that the modern age required new forms of theological discourse, and that doctrines and/or issues which were important for the church at earlier times

were no longer critical issues in the life of faith. (He liked to use the doctrine of the Trinity as an example of this.) He wanted the modern church to "travel light" in terms of doctrinal baggage. Pike was unfortunately somewhat flip about this posture, and advocated it in his TV show, in magazine interviews and in humorous lectures on college campuses. Had he been a theological professor he might have been tolerated by his Episcopal brethren, but as a Bishop of the church he evoked bitter antagonism.

Because of his showmanship and personality, Pike was never a conventional Bishop. He handled the pastoral and administrative responsibilities of his appointment adequately but seemed to chafe under the administrative load. It was, of course, the penchant for being a celebrity which finally led to ecclesiastical troubles for Pike. At three different times, groups of Episcopal clergymen brought forth heresy charges against him, the most substantive of these coming in 1966 from the Reverend Henry Loutitt, then Bishop of South Florida.¹ Loutitt had rounded up support from a number of other bishops and pressed heresy charges against Pike at the Episcopal Convention of Bishops in Wheeling, West Virginia, in 1966. A motion of censure for Pike was voted at that meeting, but Pike subsequently demanded a trial (much to the consternation of the Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church, who felt that such a trial would be a public embarrassment to the church). In typical administrative fashion, a committee was subsequently appointed to investigate the procedures of a heresy trial and to ensure due process should any such trial take place. That committee made a report in Seattle in 1967, which for all intents and purposes vindicated Pike from the heresy charges.

The controversial dimension of Pike's life, however, was far deeper than the professional resume implies. His marriage to his second wife Esther had been in serious trouble for a number of years, and prompted Pike to seek four years of psychoanalysis trying to deal with the tensions of that marriage. He finally moved out of the Bishop's residence in San Francisco in 1964 and thereafter (as Stringfellow and Towne suggest rather discreetly) "lived out of a suitcase." He and Esther were divorced in 1967. In and through those marital troubles, Pike was an alcoholic at least from 1952 to 1964; he joined Alcoholics Anonymous on June 30, 1964, and for the last five years of his life essentially solved that problem. In February of 1966 his son, Jim, Jr., who long had a problem with drugs, committed suicide with a high-powered rifle in a hotel room in New York City. In 1967 Pike's associate and mistress, Maren

Bergrud, committed suicide at Pike's apartment in Santa Barbara with an overdose of sleeping pills. Pike, embarrassed and confused by the circumstances, attempted to move her body (as well as some of the clothes which were in his apartment) to her own apartment, but the whole matter was discovered by investigating officers and was rather clumsily handled by Pike. In February of 1968 his daughter Connie attempted suicide, so Pike's life seems to have had an abundance of sadness and tragedy.

Stringfellow and Towne point out that Pike's marital troubles were compounded not only by his alcoholism, but by some of his infidelities. He had a private telephone installed in San Francisco where he could communicate with women; clearly there were a number of them in Pike's life. His associate and mistress was a public embarrassment in his life before his divorce from Esther became finalized. In addition to that, during the last three years of Pike's life following the suicide of his son Jim, Jr., Pike became openly interested in spiritualism, and on several occasions he publicly announced that he had communicated with the spirit of his deceased son. (He also claimed to have communicated with Tillich, which brought an indignant letter from Hannah Tillich.) He was engaged with mediums in this country, Canada, and in England, much to the bewilderment and consternation of many of his friends. (Stringfellow and Towne have a dubious view of this dimension of Pike's life.)

Even Pike's death was extraordinary. In 1969, after he had resigned his position with the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions in Santa Barbara, he and his third wife Diane made a trip to Israel to pursue Pike's research interests in Christian origins. While there, they decided to explore the Judean desert, in part out of Pike's conviction that perhaps Jesus needed to be seen (in the heritage of John the Baptist) as being a figure from the wilderness. The Pikes rented a car, drove into the desert without a guide, and were deep into the desert when they lost their way and the car broke down. In the events that followed they apparently did everything wrong. They left their car and began to walk; Pike collapsed after several hours and his wife went on without him. By some miracle she found her way out of the desert and came to a small community of Arabs. Pike, in the meantime, wandered through the desert by himself, began to climb up the wall of the canyon, slipped and fell, and it took over a week for a team of searchers to find his broken and putrified body. He was buried in a modest grave in Jerusalem.

III

The question is, what shall we make of the life and thought of figures such as Tillich and Pike: people of great stature and ability, yet obviously persons with tragic, if not broken, personal lives. We are becoming accustomed to learning that our public leaders are often persons whose private lives show some marital indiscretions—witness the recent disclosures concerning Dwight Eisenhower, F. D. Roosevelt, John F. Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson, as well as some of our congressional leaders—but somehow the problem seems more acute when we see it in religious leaders: those who would speak about and lead us toward the moral life or even divine disclosures. Let us face the hardest question first: Were they phonies? Did they preach one thing and live another? Is there a dramatic inconsistency between the religious insights which they shared with the public, and the ethical styles of their own lives? Tillich apparently worried about this, but Stringfellow and Towne suggest that Pike did not. Both Tillich and Pike published books on ethics, Tillich publishing *Morality and Beyond* (Harper and Row, 1963), and Pike publishing three books: *Beyond Anxiety* (Scribner's, 1953), *Doing the Truth: A Summary of Christian Ethics* (New York: Doubleday and Co., 1955) and *You and the New Morality* (New York: Harper and Row, 1967). Tillich also published three volumes of sermons which dealt frequently with ethical themes, and in the latter part of his career, lectured widely on ethics even though many of those lectures did not find their way into print.

I have elsewhere explored the relationship of Tillich's ethics to his life.² In his ethics Tillich attempted to straddle the boundary between the philosophical theme of self-fulfillment and the religious theme of self-denial, but finally opted for an ethic of self-fulfillment. He was, in a broad sense, a situation ethicist because he believed that the norm of love was the basic ethical norm and that personhood could finally only be realized through risk. Tillich understood the wisdom of the conventional moral codes, but felt that in many circumstances such codes could be breaking to the human spirit.

In Tillich's sermons one finds repeated emphases on the problems of human sinfulness, brokenness and despair. He was interested in the phenomenon of "new being," healing and reconciliation. Tillich's basic theological premise was that our hope lies not in our getting any better as persons year after year, but rather in being touched by grace even when we feel most unworthy. In a

moving passage from his famous sermon, "You are Accepted," Tillich wrote:

Grace strikes us when we are in great pain and restlessness. It strikes us when we walk through the dark valley of a meaningless and empty life. It strikes us when we feel that our separation is deeper than usual because we feel we have violated another life, a life which we have loved but from which we were estranged. It strikes us when disgust for our own being or indifference or weakness or hostility and our lack of direction and composure have become intolerable to us. It strikes us when year after year the longed for perfection of life does not appear. When the old compulsions reign within us as they have for decades, when the despair destroys all joy and courage. Sometimes at that moment a wave of light breaks into our darkness and it is as though a voice were saying you are accepted. Accepted by that which is greater than you and the name of which you do not know. Do not ask for the name now; perhaps you will find it later. Do not try to do anything now, perhaps later you will do much. Do not seek for anything; do not perform anything; do not intend anything. Simply accept the fact that you are accepted. (*The Shaking of the Foundations* [New York: Scribners, 1948] pp. 161-2.)

One might quarrel with Tillich's understanding of the human situation (he is, of course, quite close to Luther on this point), but one cannot say that Tillich was inconsistent or hypocritical in his approach to ethics and in how he lived his own life. It is closer to the mark to say that Tillich understood the elements of fear and guilt engendered in those persons who know that their lives are not conventional lives by middle-class standards. He refused to believe that such persons were beyond the realm of grace. In a strongly Protestant way Tillich affirmed that the good news of the gospel lies not in our own merit, but in our acceptance by God.

Pike's life and ethics likewise show some affinities. In his book *Beyond Anxiety* he took a basically Tillichian stance towards the human situation by affirming that God accepts us in spite of our brokenness and anxiety. He speaks in the indicative about God's grace rather than in the imperative about human obligations. In his book *You and the New Morality* (a case study of 74 different hypothetical situations) Pike denies that there is any "code ethic" which will clarify in advance how persons are to deal with complex situations. He encourages a "responsible" approach to all decisions, although he does not put much emphasis on matters of duty or obligation in his treatment of responsibility. Two other major clues to Pike's ethics include his valuing of *eros* love (not *agape*) ahead of all other human responses, and his affirmation of fulfillment as well as "service" as the normative style of life. Generally speaking, Pike felt any legalistic or code ethic could not deal with

unique circumstances or special occasions in life. In terms of classical ethics Pike felt that moral codes could describe the right but not always the good. Pike wrote, "To love and to be loved, to want and to know one is wanted—precisely at the right time—is not the most common thing in the world. There are times for spontaneous action as well as for lengthy deliberation." (*You and the New Morality*, p. 97).

Clearly Pike was a troubled and restless man during most of his adult life. His life was complicated by going through two divorces; combatting heresy charges within the Episcopal Church; being alienated from his second wife while he was a public figure as Bishop of California, and by being plagued by problems of alcoholism. It would appear, however, that Pike's stress on the "new morality" had a self-serving function to justify some of his liaisons with women, even while Bishop of California. To my knowledge Pike's sermons have not been published in any form which would let scholars review the persistent themes or motifs in his preaching. One might fault his life-style or find his life tragic, but the truth is that his life was not inconsistent with the way in which he approached ethics. One could certainly ask, however, as to whether Pike was responsible in terms of his public appearances with his mistress, and it is hard to condone his secretive sexual liaisons, given his public stature, even when his unhappy marital situation is taken into account.

Pike's personality, as described by Stringfellow and Towne, is not particularly winsome. Like many celebrities, Pike liked to hear himself talk and seldom showed sensitivity to other people's opinions. (Even the Archbishop of Canterbury had to tell Pike to "shut up.") The reader detects a narcissism in Pike that is not flattering. His friends apparently knew these things about him and loved him in spite of them.

IV

One must be careful in dealing with these biographies of Tillich and Pike lest the framework of morality be drawn too tightly into the arena of male-female relationships. Both men were impressive public figures. Tillich spent a great deal of time helping German refugees get settled in this country, communicating with the Jewish community, interpreting the impact of the war to the German people by weekly radio broadcasts, and he lent his voice and support to such important political causes as the establishing of the

United Nations, disarmament and limiting atomic testing. Pike was on the forefront of the racial struggle for civil rights, decent wages for farm workers and such heated matters as obscenity laws, birth control and abortion controversies, and focusing the church's energies on people rather than on buildings. Both men were prodigious stewards of time: they wrote insightfully, lectured extensively, traveled widely and influenced national opinion.

Were they "immoral" men, unworthy of the trust that their friends and followers put in them?—Not unless we tightly restrict what we mean by "morality." Morality surely also involves the struggle for justice, the opposition to oppression, and compassion for the needy. We have seen enough instances where persons lead conventional private lives but exploit or deceive the public (witness Richard Nixon and his entourage around Watergate) to recognize the complexities as to who or what is a moral person. We may note that Tillich and Pike appeared to lack integration of their public and private selves without concluding that they were fundamentally "immoral" men.

But let us press other complex questions. Do their life-styles follow inevitably from their theologies?—Not necessarily; here one has to deal with their own situations, personalities and needs. Both men, aware of human frailty, would undoubtedly maintain that whatever truth there might be in their theological insights must not be yoked to their own impeccable witness to it. Difficult marriages, national fame, temperament and even narcissism shaped their life-styles as much as their theologies. Can a person be liberal in theology and non-legalistic in ethics but still lead a responsible and disciplined life, both personally and professionally? Clearly so, as thousands of less well-known personalities bear modest testimony.

Perhaps the best thing to say about both Tillich and Pike is that they lived "on the boundaries" and their lives were paradoxes. They each lived on the boundary between the church and the world, between Christianity and secularity, between *eros* and *agape*, between theory and practice. Tillich appears to have been the gentler man, more modest and interested in other persons. Pike was the showman: nervous, hyperactive, intense, enjoying publicity and the public eye. They also need to be seen in the context of their times, and with some sensitivity as to what they were struggling against personally and professionally: Tillich clearly believing that there was a demonic dimension to middle-class morality, and Pike trying to present theological and ethical alternatives to

a church which was woodenly creedal, politically conservative and content with historic forms. (As Charles Davis has observed, it is the Episcopal Church that is the real tragedy in Bishop Pike's life.³) They were not models for an ethic of character; but they were impressive in energy, creativity and risk. They both showed a rare human capacity for the broken, needy, sick and unconventional people who never feel comfortable in the ranks of a middle-class church. Lest we attack their thought on an *ad hominum* basis, I would also stress that I do not think their theological insights are mitigated by the complex and tragic circumstances of their lives. To learn from them theologically or ethically does not mean that one need emulate their life-styles.

V

On broader theological fronts, the life models of Tillich and Pike illustrate the limitations of the "biography as theology" approach. Biographical information is interesting and illuminating in many ways, but it is not determinative in unlocking, let us say, Tillich's *Systematic Theology* or *System of the Sciences*. There are technical aspects of religious thought which go beyond personal data. I would not go so far as to say, however, (with one of my colleagues) that there is no place at all in the assessment of a theologian for any awareness of his/her life. When a thinker moves into the area of ethics and/or preaching, we are entitled to have consistency between life and thought, and a correlation between the public self and private self.

The study of these lives does suggest to me, however, that an important emerging frontier might be closer theological and psychological interpretations of selfhood. One might analyze Tillich and Pike as psychological types and note what characteristics tend to be associated with such persons. Just as William James once characterized the major distinctions of Western philosophy as growing out of two different psychological types (soft-minded and tough-minded), so we might consider approaching theology and ethics from the standpoint of personal temperaments. It is clear that people with different life experiences approach the problems of morality from different perspectives; this awareness might illumine much of the controversy in contemporary ethics.⁴

Perhaps those of us of more modest gifts would do well to recognize the insights of conventional wisdom, and understand that in most cases moral codes point to an accumulative prudence

about the human experience. There do seem to be limits in life which we break only with risk and peril. Persons in the professional fields of religious leadership (or even religious studies) might be reminded that laypeople look to them not just as orators but also as examples. The lives of Tillich and Pike remind us, however, that morality is a complex phenomenon, and that public witness as well as private sensitivities are a part of the moral calculus. I would conclude this analysis by saying that I believe there are serious deficiencies in the life-styles of both men; they seem to have more to teach us by their creative thought than by their examples. They are clearly not the only models we have for implications of situation ethics, but neither are they especially impressive exemplars of that mode of understanding and living the Christian life. St. Paul was right, and both Tillich and Pike knew it: any treasure we have is in earthen vessels, for the transcendent power belongs to God and not to us.

FOOTNOTES

1. The various circumstances leading to the heresy charges against Pike and the nature of the proceedings have been described by Stringfellow and Towne in *The Bishop Pike Affair* (New York: Harper and Row, 1967).

2. "Morality and Beyond: Tillich's Ethics in Life and in Death," in John J. Carey, ed., *Tillich Studies: 1975* (Tallahassee: The North American Paul Tillich Society, 1975), pp. 104-113.

3. *Commonweal*, Vol. CIV, No. 2 (January 21, 1977), pp. 53-4.

4. Carl Jung has already done some suggestive work in this area: see his "The Problem of Types in the History of Classical and Medieval Thought," *Collected Works* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), Vol. 6, pp. 36ff.

The Disappearance of God in American Literature

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"That's what we care about," says Ivan Karamazov. "Young Russia is talking about nothing but the eternal questions now. Just when the old folks are all taken up with practical questions. Why have you been looking at me in expectation for the past three months? To ask me, 'what do you believe, or don't you believe at all?' . . . Masses, masses of the most original boys do nothing but talk of the eternal questions."¹ Dostoevsky's words in *The Brothers Karamazov* accurately describe nineteenth-century Russia, but they could as easily apply to the American writers who from the beginning of literature on this continent have never ceased to write about the eternal questions, the existence of God or the disappearance of God. God's existence and providence have been a standard theme and one that has been exhaustively explored, but the disappearance of God has not been treated so completely.

The disappearance of God is an interesting, if not surprising, development and it is certainly not confined to the literature of America, nor even to literature. An interesting example of this can be seen in the art of the late Middle Ages. It was, as Francis Schaeffer has observed, a shift from an emphasis on grace to nature, or the disappearance of God and the emergence of man. One miniature entitled *Grandes Heures de Rohan*, painted about 1415, depicts a miracle story of the flight of the Holy Family into Egypt. They pass a field where a man is sowing grain and miraculously, within an hour, the grain is ready for harvest. The pursuing soldiers ask the farmer: "How long ago did they pass by?" When he replies that it was while he was planting the seed, the soldiers turn back. It is not the story told by the miniature, however, which is of interest to us, but rather it is the arrangement of the picture. The figures of Mary, Joseph, and the baby are at the top and dominate the picture by their size. The soldiers and the farmer are at the bottom and are greatly reduced in size. Moreover, the Holy Family is outlined in gold. The picture, thus, represents the domination of the divine and the subjugation of the human.²

But notice what begins to take place. In 1410, at approximately the same time, Van Eyck was beginning to paint nature realistically, of value in and of itself, and not just as the realm in which God reveals Himself. One of Van Eyck's miniatures is on Jesus' baptism, but the subject takes up a small area in the center. The rest is dominated by a very real river, castle, houses, hills, etc. Another of Van Eyck's paintings is entitled *Madonna of the Chancellor Rolin*. Rolin, his patron, is shown facing Mary holding his hands in an attitude of prayer, but the significant thing is that he is the same size as Mary. Fillippo Lippi made still further a step. In his painting of the Madonna, Mary is no longer a spiritual being, a symbol of the divine, but she is a very beautiful Italian girl holding a baby in her arms. But even further, the girl who served as his model was his mistress, and all Florence knew she was his mistress. In effect, God was disappearing and man was taking his place.³

The movement in American literature exhibits a striking parallel. Apart from the early historical accounts of the colonies the earliest American writings were religious in nature like Thomas Hooker's *The Soul's Preparation* in 1632, or the *Bay Psalm Book* in 1640, the first book printed in America, or the extremely popular theological poem of Michael Wigglesworth, "Day of Doom."

It is not necessary to give a survey of colonial literature to show the important place that religion occupied to instruct the people, to resist heretical doctrines, and to keep before the people the absolute sovereignty of God and the base and corrupted nature of man. Jonathan Edwards will serve as a good example for this period. For Edwards and his Calvinistic audiences God is King, all-demanding and all-powerful. Man is a lowly worm deserving of damnation, but subject to the grace of God to elect him to salvation. Expressing this was Edwards' total concern as we can see by looking at the extent of his writings. Except for a few early scientific papers they were all either sermons, theological treatises, or narratives of his own religious experiences. Even his autobiography has been called "The Narrative of My Conversion," as often as it has been called "A Personal Narrative."

In Edwards God's place and man's are clearly defined with man occupying the diminutive, lower half of the picture. Man's worth is often called into question as Edwards refers to him as a worm, a spider, a loathsome insect, or chaff to be burned. God is not removed from the world, but instead He plays an active, dominant part within it. Man does not just happen to become sick, but as he writes in his autobiography, "it pleased God to seize me with

pleurisy." When he fell into sinful thoughts or acts, "God would not suffer me to go on with my quietness." Edwards' world view was one where God had created man, where God continually intervened in man's daily actions, and where God would finally stand to claim His elect.

This is one extreme on the continuum; the other is that of the transcendentalists, best exemplified by Ralph Waldo Emerson. Their basic premise is that man is the spiritual center of the universe and in man alone can one find the clue to nature, history, and the world itself. Rather than using God to explain man (i.e., a fallen creature of God) they prefer to explain man and his world as much as possible in terms of man himself. This emphasis, however, is not on man as an individual but on man as a universal. Emerson's American scholar is not an American student at Harvard, even though that was his initial audience, but the generic "Man thinking."

Despite this emphasis on man I would not call this an instance of the disappearance of God, but rather a redefinition of the meaning of God and a reexamination of God's relationship with man. Whereas Edwards saw God as a transcendent sovereign looking down upon man, his subject, Emerson saw God as immanent, living within man, and looking out from man's eyes. Emerson's great concern was God and he wrote about Him constantly, but the name of God was changed. It was no longer Jehovah, but the "Grand Mind," the "Oversoul," the "Realized Will," or simply God.

Transcendentalism, as Emerson formulated it, was a reaction against the Calvinistic view of the absolute sovereignty of a Jehovah standing outside man's history and against the Unitarian faith in which he had been reared and which was itself an answer to Edwards' Calvinism. Emerson believed that God was not outside man, nor was He only a "spark or light of God" within man's soul. For Emerson God was immanently present in man, coming to full realization in human life. In *Nature*, the book called the Bible of American transcendentalism, Emerson wrote: "The Supreme Being does not build up nature around us, but puts it forth through us, as the life of the tree puts forth new branches and leaves through the pores of the old. As a plant upon the earth, so a man rests upon the bosom of God."⁴ He wrote later in the same work: "A man is a god in ruins. . . . Infancy is the perpetual Messiah, which comes into the arms of fallen men, and pleads with them to return to paradise."⁵ Thus, returning to our analogy to

painting, Emerson would say that Filippo Lippi's mistress was not only a suitable model for the Virgin, but that she was a full incarnation of God.

When we consider the writings of Nathaniel Hawthorne, we begin, I think, to deal with the topic, the disappearance of God. Hawthorne is a figure who stands somewhere between Edwards and Emerson, but who draws from both. He is an Emersonian man of hope born into the time-burdened world of Edwards, and it is this bifurcated heritage that causes the presence of God to take a less dominant place in his writings. His early sympathy with Emerson would not allow him to accept Edwards' view of God, but at the same time his deep roots in Calvinism would not let him accept Emerson's immanence of God.

In Hawthorne we begin to see man becoming alienated. As R. W. B. Lewis has observed, Hawthorne's hero is "alone in a hostile, or at least a neutral universe. He is thrown back on himself and becomes isolated."⁶ A part of this isolation is the retreat of God. Even though most of Hawthorne's novels and stories are about faith in God, God does not play a direct part. It is more man's struggle to find God, but man struggles alone with little help from the outside. Man knows he is not God, but he has to try to live in the world as if he were.

Sin is a central theme of his stories, but not as a theological problem. His treatment of this theme is instead the psychological effect of the conviction of sin on the lives of his characters. The setting of many of his stories is Puritan New England, and he depicts the Puritan's belief that sin is an awful reality which must be avoided to gain the promised salvation, but this is the view of the characters in the stories, not of the author. Hawthorne, the humanitarian heretic, sees sin as the admission to the brotherhood of man and as a result, he writes little about the reward in an afterlife. Man's search for God is really man's search to find a way to live with himself.

Hawthorne's treatment of the Puritan community shows that in spite of its religious framework God has become an anachronism. The faith in God which should quicken and make alive has deadened its believers into strict moralists, as illustrated by John Endicott and his Puritan followers in "The Maypole of Merry Mount" or Young Goodman Brown after his trial in the forest. This moralism, when carried to an extreme, becomes perfectionism, which is only the religious disguise of man's pretension to be God.

It is, as Gabriel Vahanian has observed, theism slipping into atheism.⁷

A classic case of such perfectionism is the short story "The Birthmark." Alymer lets his love for science overshadow even his love for his wife. He makes science his religion, and he as the scientist is his own god. It is his task to remove the earthly imperfections, in his case Georgiana's birthmark. As a scientist he must correct the faults that God has left, and, if successful, he will surpass God. The birthmark is to him "the visible mark of an earthly imperfection." Alymer sees it as a form of human sinfulness, and to eradicate it is a pious act. Religion says that man sins because he is finite, but Alymer reverses this to mean man is finite because he sins. Thus, if he removes the sign of sin he will become infinite.⁸ Of course, Alymer's experiment fails; man cannot become God. For Hawthorne man has to acknowledge his sinfulness in order to gain admittance into the brotherhood of man. If man can do this he finds partial meaning in life and learns to live in the world without being destroyed.

A similar case could be made for Herman Melville who shared Hawthorne's power of blackness. It was no accident that he chose the name Ahab for his central character in *Moby Dick*, for it was the biblical Ahab who renounced the religion of Yahweh for the false God Baal, the god of his wife Jezebel. Melville's Ahab sets sail in defiance of his prophet, Elijah, on Christmas Day in his own attempt to destroy the white whale and deify himself. Melville, himself, has been called "a fugitive from God" because of his own search for some order in a chaotic world.⁹

It is an entirely different situation when we consider Stephen Crane, for as the first truly naturalistic writer in America, he had a highly ordered world, but it was a world without God. This can be seen by his views of nature, man, and God. Nature was for him not a reflection of God's order, as it was for Emerson, but it was, on the contrary, a purposeless machine, impossible to control. It was like the sea in his short story, "The Open Boat," vicious, but uncaring. Billy the oiler is the strongest member of the crew, but he is the only one who drowns. Man is a helpless victim in this mechanical world, having no control over it. His actions are completely determined by either external forces—the physical environment or social pressures—or internal forces—heredity or physiological needs. God is not denied, but the world He created is malignant and subject to sudden change. God is no longer in

control or even available. He absents Himself, either uncaring, asleep, or dead. One cryptic poem of Crane says:

A man said to the universe:
 "Sir, I exist!"
 "However" replied the universe,
 "The fact has not created in me
 A sense of obligation."¹⁰

Another poem in the same vein tells of a man hanging onto a slim spar adrift in a merciless sea, until finally his strength gives out and his "pale hand" slides off the spar and he is drowned. Throughout the poem we have the refrain, "God is cold."

None of this philosophy seems to fit the strict religious upbringing of Crane's youth in a Methodist parsonage, yet he accepted this new naturalistic belief somewhat like a religion. Most of his stories are about a youth who faces life at one of its moments of crisis to see whether he could live through it and survive. It might be the testing of his courage by Henry Fleming in *The Red Badge of Courage* or it might be Maggie Johnson's ability to bear shame in *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets*. This initiation into life filled the need felt by religious men for acknowledgment of sin and rebirth. The correspondent in "The Open Boat" survives this initiation and is brought into the community of man. One point of this story, I think, is that alienation from God is inescapable, but the alienation from one's fellowman can be fatal. Human acceptance and co-operation must be achieved if man is not to be destroyed.

One might think that Crane's pessimistic naturalism is the outermost limit of the theme, the disappearance of God, but there is at least one further step, atheistic existentialism, as shown in the contemporary novel *The Floating Opera* by John Barth. It is well known that existentialism is a broad term embracing such different men as the Christians, Søren Kierkegaard and Gabriel Marcel, and yet extending to the atheistic belief of Jean Paul Sartre and Albert Camus. It is the influence of the latter two that we see in John Barth. Barth accepts the centrality of man—his concrete existence, his contingent nature, his personal freedom, and his consequent responsibility for what he does or makes himself to be. This is fundamental to all existentialism, but Barth goes further to accept Sartre's belief that there is no universally binding moral law and no absolute moral values. All values are relative to a man who is free and responsible only to himself. Because of this freedom and responsibility all man's alibis are unacceptable. There are no gods responsible for his condition, no original sin, no heredity or environ-

ment, no race or caste, no father or mother, no wrong-headed educator, no teacher, no complex or childhood trauma. Man is free, but his freedom makes him stand alone in the universe responsible for what he is, perhaps to remain in his lowly state or perhaps to rise above his highest dreams.¹¹

This is the condition of Todd Andrews, the hero of *The Floating Opera*, who wakes up one morning and decides to kill himself. Albert Camus had written in his essay, "Absurdity and Suicide": "There is but one truly serious philosophical problem, and that is suicide. Judging whether life is or is not worth living amounts to answering the fundamental question of philosophy. . . ." ¹² This is the question Todd asks and he decides life is not worth living. The novel shows us what Todd does on this day he thinks will be his last and what has brought him to this point.

Barth presents in his story of Todd Andrews almost a classic case of the development of existential man. First, Todd loses his idealism when he discovers only mirth in his first sexual encounter. He laughs at their likeness to animals and human love from then on is impossible. Next he discovers guilt when during the war he unnecessarily kills a German sergeant. Upon his discharge from the army the doctor tells him of a heart condition which brings on an awareness of imminent death. Next he rejects the world after a former friend, now a prostitute, tries to kill him with a broken bottle. The next step is the loss of communication when he returns home to find that his father, with whom he had just begun to communicate, had hanged himself. His final step is ultimate despair. One night in his hotel room all the masks he had used in the past crumble and he sees the futility of his life. Todd writes: "Futility gripped me by the throat; my head was tight. The impulse to raise my arms and eyes to heaven was almost overpowering—but there was no one for me to raise them to."¹³ Since there is no God and since life has no value, he concludes there is no reason for living. The next morning he calmly begins to prepare for his suicide.

This, it would seem, is the logical boundary of our theme. God has not only disappeared, but life itself has lost all value and meaning. Although it is the outer boundary, there is one further movement that should be mentioned, for there are American writers, such as Flannery O'Connor, who have recognized this trend in life and literature, but who have not felt that this was the final word. They have noted that God's disappearance is more apparent than

real. If God is not seen in man's world, the fault does not lie with God's reality, but rather the fault is with man's vision.

Before turning to Flannery O'Connor, we may first note the development of this interpretive theme in T. S. Eliot. In the poems written before his conversion to Anglo-Catholicism no one wrote more profoundly of the absence of God from man's life. In "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," "Gerontion," "The Hollow Men," and, most especially, in *The Waste Land* he recorded the shrunken state of the Western religious tradition and modern man's preoccupation with his own self-destruction.

The Waste Land is a concentrated summary of the sterile and barren world ours has become because man prefers to live with death rather than life. Throughout the poem Eliot uses the myths of the fertility gods who are buried to insure life the following spring, but in the modern waste land it is a sterile planting. Thus, April is the cruelest month for those who live without any hope of new life. As Cleanth Brooks has observed, the poem is based on the contrast between two kinds of life and two kinds of death. Life devoid of meaning is death, but sacrifice might be life-giving.¹⁴ Those in the waste land can only accept the living death. For them life is reduced to the pursuit of comfort and the satisfaction of physical needs. God is present throughout, although He may appear as Osiris, Buddha, or Christ, but modern man does not recognize Him. In the final section the figure who begins to walk with them up the white road is hooded and they cannot recognize him, although the reader knows it is Christ on the road to Emmaus. For them, living in their death in life, God is still dead, and they cannot recognize that God has risen. The poem ends with a series of images of destruction. The rain which would bring the promise of life to the parched land has not come, but the thunder has spoken. At least one has heard and has begun to set his lands in order.

To most of those living in the waste land God is still unseen, but Eliot makes it quite clear that God is there if man will only open his eyes. The poems and plays written after this were Eliot's attempt to show man where to look.

Another writer who shares the same concern as Eliot is Flannery O'Connor. Although she was not born until three years after *The Waste Land* was written, she understood fully what Eliot had said about a world that chose to live as if God did not exist, and she made it her principal task to correct this imbalance. Her concern is primarily religious. Most of her novels and stories deal with the

question of belief in one form or another. For her Christianity is shocking, a scandal, in the sense that St. Paul used the word, and she shows this in story after story. In "A Good Man is Hard to Find" the Misfit, an escaped murderer who is about to murder the grandmother in the story, says, "[Jesus] thrown everything off balance." Mrs. Turpin, the nominal Christian in the story "Revelation," discovers in her vision beside the pig sty that Christ puts the bottom rail on top, or, as St. Matthew wrote: "Many that are first will be last, and the last first."

God's message to man is delivered in unorthodox ways. In a world that no longer believed in burning bushes, flaming chariots, or angels Miss O'Connor selected very unorthodox messengers: an escaped murderer, a fat, ugly girl with acne who goes to Wellesley, a hitchhiker, two guitar strumming farm boys, or even the plaster figure of a Negro boy, called the "Artificial Nigger." She felt that such unconventional messengers were necessary in a world that lived as if God did not exist. In her essay, "The Fiction Writer and His Country," she wrote:

The novelist with Christian concerns will find in modern life distortions which are repugnant to him, and his problem will be to make these appear as distortions to an audience which is used to seeing them as natural; and he may well be forced to take ever more violent means to get his vision across to this hostile audience. When you can assume that your audience holds the same beliefs you do, you can relax a little and use more normal ways of talking to it; when you have to assume that it does not, then you have to make your own vision apparent by shock—to the hard of hearing you shout, and for the almost blind you draw large and startling figures.¹⁵

Her shock technique, her shouting, her large and startling figures were necessary, she felt, because the world had gone so far in denying God's relevance or existence. By showing her readers that their vision was distorted, she hoped to restore the meaning to life that had been lost by God's disappearance.

In conclusion, let me say that this treatment has not been exhaustive in its consideration of authors nor in the different developments within the theme, but I think it points out in a very general way one distinctive theme in American literature. One quotation from T. S. Eliot's "Choruses from *The Rock*" might serve as my most effective summary:

But it seems that something has happened that has never happened before; though we know not just when, or why, or how, or where. Men have left God not for other gods, they say, but for no god; and this has never happened before.¹⁶

FOOTNOTES

1. Fedor M. Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, ed. Ralph E. Matlaw (New York, 1976), pp. 214-215.
2. Francis A. Schaeffer, *Escape from Reason* (Downers Grove, Illinois, 1968), pp. 13-14.
3. Schaeffer, pp. 14-16.
4. Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Nature* (New York, 1903), p. 64.
5. Emerson, p. 71.
6. R. W. B. Lewis, *The American Adam* (Chicago, 1955), p. 110.
7. Gabriel Vahanian, *Wait Without Idols* (New York, 1964), pp. 49-52.
8. Vahanian, p. 55.
9. Vahanian, p. 72.
10. Stephen Crane, *The Poems of Stephen Crane*, ed. Joseph Katz (New York, 1971), p. 102.
11. Walter Kaufmann, *Existentialism: From Dostoevsky to Sartre* (New York, 1956), pp. 46-47.
12. Albert Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus and Other Essays* (New York, 1967), p. 3.
13. John Barth, *The Floating Opera* (New York, 1967), p. 222.
14. Cleanth Brooks, *Poetry and the Modern Tradition* (New York, 1965), p. 137.
15. Flannery O'Connor, "The Fiction Writer and His Country," in *Mystery and Manners* (New York, 1961), pp. 33-34.
16. T. S. Eliot, *The Complete Poems and Plays* (New York, 1971), p. 108.

Biblical Wisdom and Christian Ministry*

by ROLAND E. MURPHY
Professor of Old Testament

God of my fathers, Lord of mercy,
you have made all things by your word, . . .
Give me Wisdom, the attendant at your throne.
(Wisdom of Solomon, 9:1, 4)

It may be somewhat late in the day to be reminded in a baccalaureate service of the example of Solomon praying for wisdom. Ruefully, one might say that it should have taken place three or four years ago. But no! One can maintain that such a request for wisdom remains a constant throughout life.

The Bible tells us that wisdom is a quest; it even warns us against thinking that we are wise:

You see a man wise in his own eyes?
There is more hope for a fool than for him.
(Prov. 26:12)

And we read in Jeremiah (9:23): "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom." Wisdom is a fragile gift from God, so fragile that it is more a quest than a conquest, more an attitude toward living, than holding on to life. This is illustrated for us in Solomon's original prayer for wisdom in 1 Kgs 3:9: "Give your servant, therefore, a listening heart." A listening heart—*lēb shōmēā'*. That's what wisdom is about: listening to the lessons of daily experience communicated to us by the human beings to whom we minister, by our teachers, by our peers, and by God—listening to the traditions handed down by the wise who have gone before and who live among us. Your years of theological study are only the beginning of your quest for wisdom.

Biblical wisdom had many faces. The Book of Proverbs (1:6) tells us that the beginning of wisdom is "fear of the Lord," that awe before the mystery of a God who was beyond human wisdom (Prov 21:30), and yet the very one who bestowed it. On the other hand, wisdom's preoccupation was with human beings, their moral

*Baccalaureate sermon, May 7, 1977.

and spiritual formation, their relationships with each other, the kinds of qualities they should develop and those they should avoid.

This view of human growth was worked out on the basis of experience and traditional social values. The great ideals of the Ten Commandments were assumed, they were not legislated. In the same way, the specifically Israelite experiences of Exodus liberation, Sinai Covenant, the promises to the patriarchs, these are not even mentioned in the wisdom books, though they were taken for granted. It is on the level of creation theology that the sages of Israel moved: What have we to learn from the world in which the Lord God placed us? "Where were you when I founded the earth? . . . Who determined its size; do you know? Who stretched out the measuring line for it?" (Job 38:4-5).

A frequent reaction of one who delves into the Book of Proverbs is a sense of recognition. One recognizes there many a saying that, in perhaps a varied form, one has heard in one's own culture, in one's own family. The biblical proverbs have enjoyed a considerable life in being handed down in one form or another in the Christian community. But one might be inclined to say that these sayings are all "old hat," so to speak. That is to say, the biblical proverbs tell us things we already know, things we have heard many times before. This very fact should indicate that the content of the sayings is important and to a certain extent timeless, if they have survived centuries of experience.

But there is another lesson here for the one who would cultivate wisdom: namely, that it is not so much the content as the method, the style, that matters. Like the sages of Israel, we must be ever alert to the lessons of experience, and especially to the antinomies, the contradictions, that experience reveals. The Israelite sages were particularly conscious of the confusing signals that reality sends out: What is the meaning of silence? A sign of maturity, or of indifference and folly? How is poverty to be viewed? As the result of personal laziness, or of social oppression? And so the sage attempted to analyze the meanings of the various facets of life in telling ways. Sometimes the lessons, the sayings, are not particularly profound. But that is not the issue here—it is the style, the constant questioning of experience, the trust in God and in one's own faculties to arrive at what Wisdom promised:

The one who finds me finds life,
and wins favor from the Lord.

(Prov. 8:35)

A peculiar and lovable quality of Israelite wisdom is its ability to criticize itself. The author of Job and Ecclesiastes, the Preacher, saw to that. They both challenged wisdom when it became too complacent about the ways of God and the ways of humans: "Man is unable to find out all God's work that is done under the sun . . . and even if the wise man says that he knows, he is unable to find it out" (Eccles. 8:17). "Just as you know not how the breath of life fashions the human frame in the womb, so you know not the work of God which he is accomplishing in the universe" (Eccles. 11:5).

But let us stop here. This is not the time or the place to rehearse all the diverse aspects of biblical wisdom. Let us ask what the minister can profitably single out from wisdom's rich understanding of reality. Does Israel's growth in wisdom mirror your experience of the last few years in Divinity School? You have gained insights into the great Christian tradition, you have surveyed the theological interpretations that have succeeded one another in history, you have pondered how these might be inserted into human experience—knowing that in the end there remains God, or as Paul puts it in 1 Corinthians, "Christ . . . the wisdom of God" (1 Cor. 1:24). Now there is forthcoming your adventure in Christian ministry. What choice would you make from the heritage of biblical wisdom? A choice is perhaps not unchangeable, because you know that you will change as you are shaped by the varieties of ministerial experience. But all of us will have reason to consider these points:

First, our readiness to learn and grow from our experience in the light of the tradition handed down to us; second, our ability to be self-critical, as the wisdom tradition was. Neither of these stands alone; both traits are part of the wisdom heritage, and both are important for Christian ministry.

Your teachers, your fellow students, your relatives and friends have been, for the most part, your field of ministry thus far. Your engagement with them has been an experiment in wisdom, and now your experience is to be widened to the Christian community the Church calls you to serve. Ask, as Solomon did, for that "listening heart," that in your ministry you may emulate him who was "meek and humble of heart."

The Need for Visions*

by HARMON L. SMITH
Professor of Moral Theology

Can I tell you a very personal, and you may think earthy, story? Last spring a very good friend of mine, who happened also incidentally to be a very 'spikey' Episcopalian—'high church'—threw an embolus to his brain, completely without any sort of notice or warning. He lay there in a hospital bed, entirely immobilized, staring vacantly out into space, unable to speak, unable to move even his eyelids; paralyzed by the stroke. Circulation was so poor that his left foot, to the ankle, had to be amputated; he was incontinent of bowel and bladder; he was helpless to communicate and so far as anybody knew he was helpless to respond to anybody else's communication. I visited him several times. The last time I went to see him, which as it turned out was the afternoon before he died the next morning, I stood by his bedside as I had several times before, and I said to him something like this: "I know that you can't respond, Bill, but I think that you may be able to hear what I'm saying; and since I know that you care about the church, and that all your life long you have understood and intended yourself as a faithful and devout disciple of Jesus Christ, probably in a time like this, *in extremis*, you'd want the ministrations of a priest; so before I go, I'm going to sign you with the Cross." As I made the vertical mark on his forehead, he soiled himself in the bed; and it was quite apparent to his wife and to me, so I hesitated a moment before I made the horizontal mark across his forehead. And his wife said, "Oh, Dr. Smith, I'm so sorry that he did that while you were here." And I thought then, and I've thought since: What better time is there to be signed with the Cross, the symbol of our hope, than in a time when we are so completely and desperately helpless as to embarrass ourselves in the presence of people we love and care for? What better acknowledgement, I thought, of the reality of the grace of the Resurrection than the confession that Jesus, who was like as we are in all things save sin, who shared our humanity, who participated in our kinds of hurt, that Jesus

*Opening Convocation address, September 6, 1977.

accepts us just as we are, reclaims and reforms us, and commits to us that great treasure which is his gospel?

Since I was asked to take on this assignment—and reflecting on what I ought to say to you, or what you'd want to hear, or even what might be appropriate in this situation just now—my thoughts, like Maurice Ritchie's at the chapel service last week, have turned on the great wealth of opportunity and privilege which lies before us in this place and I have wondered about what, at the beginning of another year, we will make of it. You ought to know that this is more than idle rumination for me; and there are other reasons than a superb library and a learned faculty and all those other obvious assets that underlie those thoughts.

My father, for example—like many others who denied the “call to preach” until middle-age—didn't get to seminary; in lieu of that, he arose every morning at four o'clock to study—a regimen he began when he was “admitted on trial” to the North Mississippi Conference in 1945 and continued until his death in 1962; and he used to say, without I think the slightest exaggeration, even though he had gone to Ole Miss and Vanderbilt, that he'd gladly give his right arm to have been a Divinity student.

Beyond that kind of awareness, however, I've also talked with some recent graduates of this school—like Sam Mann, class of '66, now in a poverty-ridden inner city parish in Kansas City, and Martha Loyd, class of '71, now establishing a ministry to the victims of the Tug Valley flood in West Virginia—who say to me: “Beyond all that I got from my seminary days at Duke, I wish I had applied myself and gotten all that I could have gotten; I wish there had been some things to get that weren't there; and I also wish I could say this to the students there now, because lots of them—like myself—are going to miss too many opportunities that are irreplaceable in their preparation for ministry.”

So thoughts of the beginning of a new year, and of unfulfilled destiny and unrealized promise, have insinuated themselves into my inclination to say some other things. I think that I know why this is how it is with me just now—it's because I have a vision of this place, of what it can be, of what it ought to be, of the kinds of things that should be happening here and the breed of students who come and go; that I think there is an urgency about how we use this time and opportunity because I believe that my friend Bill's situation last spring is paradigmatic on our condition—frail, tenuous, vulnerable; and that my vision, while it confirms the good

that we do, simultaneously keeps me dis-eased and discontented with anything less than its full realization in our common life.

Amos Wilder wrote, in 1972, that "It is at the level of the imagination that the fateful issues in our new world-experience must first be mastered. It is here," he said, "that culture and history are broken, and here that the church is polarized. Old words do not reach across the new gulfs, and it is only in vision and oracle that we can chart the unknown and new-name the creatures. Before the message there must be the vision, before the sermon the hymn, before the prose the poem. Before any new theologies, however secular and radical, there must be a contemporary theopoetic. The structures of faith and confession have always rested on hierophanies and images. But in each new age and climate the theopoetic of the church is reshaped in inseparable relation to the general imagination of the time."*

I believe that Wilder is eloquently correct, and I want us somehow to honor his gentle admonition.

My vision, in part, of this school is of a place where faith seeks understanding, where the intellectual love of God and a passionate zeal for social justice are inseparable; of a place where everything we undertake to do here coinheres—where Biblical and historical and theological and professional studies depend on each other, talk to each other, and by some miracle manage to coagulate, to move together in a coherent and decisive purpose; of a place where desks become altars and our common worship is something more grand than 20 minutes at daily chapel; of a place where all the ugly and profane constructs that categorize and separate persons are overcome and a sense of genuine community among us refuses to make labels—man/woman, black/white, faculty/student—definitive of who we are and why we are here. If I were asked, these are some of the ways I would begin to unpack the freight of my vision.

I also know, of course, that doubtless everybody here has a vision, too; and that I have no corner on that market. One of the most serious institutional weaknesses of this place, however, in both the University at large and this Divinity School, is that insufficient occasion is provided for serious and sustained sharing of the dreams and aspirations and hopes which different ones of us have. We celebrated our fiftieth anniversary as a school last year; and, as we embark on the second half of our first century, it would seem to

*Amos N. Wilder, *Grace Confounding: Poems* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1973), p. ix.

me both highly desirable and entirely appropriate—indeed, I think it's necessary—to invest the time and energy necessary to reassess the kind of theological education we propose to do here against the several visions that different ones of us have. With forty per cent of our faculty having come here within the last ten years, a significant proportion of our classes populated by women and black students, dramatic changes in both the church and its environing society, and all the rest, we live—whether we like it or not—on that precarious edge between Martin Luther's "A mighty fortress is our God, a bulwark never failing" and Bob Dylan's "the times, they are a'changing." It is, to be sure, only my opinion; but I believe that we cannot fail to bring our several visions to consciousness, and display them in a forum of collegial mutuality, except at the most profound risk to our continuation as a school and to the stewardship with which we have been entrusted.

Surely those of you who are entering students have come here with a purpose, a dream, a prospect for who you want to become and what you want to do . . . a vision that may very well be chastened, or even despoiled of its innocence, during the next few years . . . but I desperately hope that you will manage somehow to hold onto it; and if not the vision with which you begin, then another and better one with which you can leave this place to live a useful and happy life.

Visions, however, are made of more durable stuff than self-serving expediency; and I want to remind you that they are always rooted in memory. Without a past, there is no present or future; and that means, at least in part, that our visions—yours and mine—are not autonomous . . . they are not entirely self-generated, nor are they radically private possessions. For those of us who understand and intend ourselves as Christians, they derive from and are presided over by God's intention for us and our determination to respond to that intention through faithful and obedient discipleship. For those of us who understand and intend ourselves as Christians, our visions also issue from the *communio sanctorum*, from that long and largely nameless company of men and women who, for two thousand years now, have preceded us in this way. These twin sources of our vision generate problems for us—that will become all-too-evident in the next few weeks—but they also allow us to have a distinctive identity . . . one which both ennobles and scandalizes us.

I have wondered, especially in recent years, what it is that makes the "academic study of religion" so attractive to so many. The

answers I most typically get allow as how this approach is more intellectually respectable than, say, a more confessional approach because it's dispassionate and objective—like Sgt. Friday on “Dragnet,” all that's wanted are “the facts, m'am, just the facts.” Fine! But who determines what the “facts” are, and who venturing to communicate them can avoid simultaneously a bit of interpretation? Bultmann's little essay, “Is Exegesis Without Presuppositions Possible?” ought to be required reading in every class which presumes to do *only* an academic study of religion; then it would be plain to everybody that nobody is immune to subjectivity, that intellectual inquiry is value-preferenced from catalogue-course-description to final examination, and that reason without sentiment is both a deception and a fraud.

Does this mean that we probably should not back away so readily from some kind of “orthodoxy,” some kind of right and true opinion, in this place? I tend to think so; that this is not a place where “anything goes” and everybody is unencumbered in “doing their own thing”; and that a right and true opinion of ourselves and what we do is indispensable to our integrity and authenticity. Simultaneously, I'm far from certain about what kind of orthodoxy and how extensively it ought to permeate what we do here. In any case, the principal reason that this question is important is that the issue of orthodoxy is closely allied to the question of identity.

I increasingly believe that “identity” is our critical existential problem, very much as “authority” is the crucial theological problem of the 20th century. We have been so bombarded by the demand to be all things to all people—change-agents, counselors, preachers, exegetes, theologians, moralists, educators, mimeograph machine operators, an all-purpose balm in Gilead—that it's not unreasonable that we should sometimes have gut-wrenching questions about who we are and whether what we're about is our appropriate business. Indeed, private conversations with students and faculty alike convince me that these are agonizingly real questions for lots of us.

I came home from Dallas last spring with a genuine cowboy hat for our five-year-old son. And like any child with a new toy, he was initially obsessed with that hat, wore it constantly, and pretended to be a real cowboy himself. But a few days later, he came in to see me wearing his “Robin the boy wonder” outfit. He stood directly in front of me, waited patiently until I finally acknowledged that he was there, and asked “Who am I?” It's a

game we sometimes play, and I guessed several wrong answers—“You’re a cowboy—you’re Batman—you’re the Cookie Monster.” Finally, to counter his growing suspicion that his father is not terribly bright, I said, “You’re Robin the Boy Wonder.” “That’s right,” my son said, “you finally got it right.” “But I thought you were a cowboy,” I said. “I was,” he said, “but that was yesterday.” “Then do you just change your identity—from this to that to somebody else?” “Yes.” “Then how do you know who you are?” Looking just a little annoyed, my son pointed to the letter “R” on his Robin costume: “You see this?” he said, “When you see this, I’m Robin.” “But you can be so many different people,” I said, “how can I ever be sure?” “Just look close,” he said.

That admonition, like much of the wisdom from children and others not privileged to enjoy the sophistication and maturity we think we have achieved, is I believe right on target! But the tragedy of growing up—and I’m bound to think especially for folks like us whose self-identity is fully wrapped up in being faithful and obedient disciples of Jesus Christ—the tragedy of growing up is that lots of people continue to play that game and engage in an endless process of alternation. I know that I’d be more comfortable with myself if, when on an airplane or after a lecture somewhere away from here somebody asks, “What do you do?” I could say, “Just look close.” But I also know that ‘looking close’ is often the last thing I’d want other people to do, because my understanding and intention of myself to be a faithful and obedient disciple of Jesus Christ couldn’t stand up under that kind of scrutiny. I suspect that you know as much about yourself. All the same, it’s not the kind of pious and precise imaging and etching of ourselves as being unambiguously this sort of person that worries me. I’m sufficiently committed to the doctrine of original sin, whether as “totally depraved” or “very far gone,” to believe that the best we’ll ever achieve in this life is an approximation; so a certain realism informs what I’m meaning to say. But it’s exactly a satisfaction with nothing more than approximation that generates my dis-ease.

I was returning home after taking services a couple of years ago, and idly listening to the radio, when one of those ubiquitous Sunday afternoon religious programs caught my attention with its opening announcement. But I could not really comprehend what I thought I heard; so I decided to hear the program through in the hope of catching that announcement again. At the end, I wasn’t disappointed. The evangelist repeated his offer: “We need your support in order to continue this radio ministry,” he said,

“and if you will just send us a donation, we will send you a beautiful plastic tablecloth with a genuine simulated replica of Leonardo da Vinci’s immortal painting of ‘The Last Supper’ imprinted in four colors in the center. Now listen to this carefully,” he concluded, “This is not a cheap imitation; it’s a genuine simulated replica of the real thing.”

The more I contemplated that offer, the less novel I decided it was; because my imagination raced over all those goods and services, and sometimes people, that in my experience had already provided free of charge just what the evangelist offered: genuine simulated replicas of the real thing!

I chose the Old and New Testament lessons for tonight because they both speak of the need for visions, of how important it is for people to have rich and rhapsodic imaginations—and I also chose them because I hope that you burn with a great and creative vision that, in some way, this Divinity School can support and share and celebrate. If you haven’t yet lived long enough to verify it by your own experience, you should know history well enough to appreciate the wisdom of Solomon: Where there is no vision, the people perish. And if you haven’t yet been caught up in the ecstatic and transforming power of an insight, or a discernment, or even a peek into recondite truth and mystery, you have surely known others who have. In the face of such an experience, there are really only two choices: you can acknowledge the vision and be obedient to it, as St. Paul did on that Damascus road, or you can reject and disavow it—but at great peril to yourself and others.

Despite the toll which orientation and registration and all those other housekeeping details are bound to take in the early days of a new academic year, this place is full of wonder and possibility and promise. We are set in the midst of a great University, and there is plenty of opportunity for those who want it to test their fledgling theological wings in the rarefied atmosphere of other academic disciplines. We are a school which stands, by history and indenture, within the Christian tradition and which has its distinctive roots and lineage in the Methodist Church; but we are also a school which, from its inception, has been ecumenical in its aspiration, its faculty and students, and its practice; so there is the remarkable opportunity here, unlike some places, to be “truly catholic, truly evangelical, and truly reformed.” When our students graduate, they are presented to the President of the University as persons who have been prepared for informed and discriminating discharge of the historic offices of the Christian church; which

suggests to me that before us lies ample occasion to acquire knowledge of this tradition, to enhance our own spirituality, to appropriate the discipline and piety which ought to make our vocation.

What you will make of it I do not know. But I cherish for all of us a vision of who, by God's grace, we can become. And I cherish for this school a way of doing, by God's grace, its work that roots deeply our personal and professional formation in that primitive confession, *kurios Iēsous*. I know, of course, that we bear this great treasure in a fragile, earthen vessel; and while it may have been the special obligation of Liberalism to emphasize the tenuous and breakable character of every historical container, I think that we may need now to re-accentuate the extraordinary richness of this treasure committed to our care.

When Karl Barth advised his students to carry the Bible in one hand and a newspaper in the other, there was no suggestion that either was optional. Since Reinhold Niebuhr popularized Barth's aphorism in this country, the tendency, however, has been to read and believe the newspaper but confine the Bible to OT 11 and NT 18. In subtle and insidious ways, our curriculum and the conduct of classes may reinforce that misanthropic notion. But part of the reason for challenging you to claim a vision of yourself and this place is to give you responsibility for your own education; you must, on occasion, do better than we teach you. Our problem is only in part that we don't know enough—much more serious is that we don't do as well as we know.

Our most pernicious temptation here is to be and act as though this were all there is, to lose sight of that reason for our being which transcends all the scut-work that ineluctably accompanies formal education, to let that love affair with the gospel which brought us here in the first place be transformed into dull domesticity by term papers and quizzes and lectures and book reports, to compartmentalize faith according to the major divisions of the curriculum.

Perhaps all this sounds too hortatory, and not sufficiently academic, for such a serene and august occasion as this. If it does, I would venture to remind you that graduate-professional education takes place within—indeed, at its best it acknowledges and embraces—a pair of paradoxical commitments. On the one hand (and fully conscious of what I said earlier about the “academic study of religion”), we are committed to disinterestedness, to objectivity, to truth wherever we find it and despite the threat it may pose to established and comfortable ways of perceiving ourselves and our

world. On the other hand, we engage in this quest and mount this enterprise in order to be involved in the existential processes of our times; we seek truth in order to be passionately engaged in its impact upon our common life. That paradox, of the interplay between disinterestedness and involvement, is the burden of folks like us. It is also the reason that just any old vision will not do, that our vision must be of a particular sort—disciplined, informed, discriminating, faithful, obedient—if it is to be worthy of our commitment to God and our service to neighbors.

I have told some of you already of my visit, now a little more than three years ago, to the site of the Nazi concentration camp at Dachau on a spectacularly beautiful Saturday afternoon. The sun was brilliant, and a lovely breeze swept over the Lagerstrasse which was lined with poplars the prisoners had planted. We entered the compound through a Carmelite convent, which is just outside the wall, at the end of the campsite where three memorial chapels—Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Jewish—have now been erected. The Roman Catholic and Jewish memorials are not regularly staffed and are used only on special occasion; but the Protestant “Church of Reconciliation” has a resident chaplain, Pastor Christian Reger, who himself was an inmate in Dachau. Pastor Reger was then seventy years old, but more alert and active than some I’ve known who were half his age; and he provided me one of those landmark experiences in my life by talking with me for three hours. Two hundred thousand (200,000) men and women passed through Dachau as prisoners—that’s one hundred (100) times Duke Chapel filled to standing room only capacity; thirty thousand (30,000) died in this camp alone—that’s fifteen (15) times the Duke Chapel filled to standing room only capacity, two hundred (200) times this (York) Chapel filled to overflowing.

After we’d talked for a while, Pastor Reger sent me off to the two crematoria with a guide who had also been an inmate and a victim of the medical experiments conducted there. It was a grisly tour; and inside the smaller crematorium I could swear that I smelled burnt flesh. I went outside for fresh air, thinking that my imagination might be inducing that sensation; but even after going in and out four times, I could still smell it. So when I returned to Pastor Reger, I asked him whether it was possible—thirty (30) years after the fact—that my mind had tricked my olfactory senses. No, he said, it was a true sensation because the bricks were porous and had thoroughly absorbed the odor.

As I was preparing to leave, we were talking about how such a monstrous thing as National Socialism could have happened, how the evil vision of a Hitler could have achieved such eminence, how otherwise good and decent people could be seduced by a lust for power which resulted in a horror of such proportion as the world had not seen before. And Pastor Reger explained it to me, peering over his thick rimmed, national health service glasses: Hitler could not have risen to power, he said, apart from the indifference and carelessness of the German people; they permitted it, he said, because Hitler filled the vacuum created by the absence of vision.

The pertinence of Pastor Reger's assessment bears upon that paradox which I mentioned a moment ago. The German people in the '20's and '30's had committed themselves to one aspect of the paradox—disinterestedness—but they had neglected or rejected the other, equally important, feature—involvement. If it were within my power to do it, I would want you to understand that this is a temptation, a seduction, to which people like us are particularly susceptible. The power and status which our training and position vests in us easily turns to preoccupations with objectivity, dispassionate observation and analysis, busy-ness and insularity from any self-conscious regard or accountability for the humane dimensions of our work, insensitivity for and indifference toward the unlovely, the oppressed, the dispossessed. But I covet for you a vision, a prospect for the indispensability of passionate engagement in our common life which is rooted in the intellectual love of God.

At the end of our conversation, Pastor Reger leaned toward me—and in a voice barely larger than a whisper, said: “You know, Professor Schmidt, vere dere is no *vision*, dere is no *risk*; and vere dere is no *risk*, dere is no *witness*; and vere dere is no *witness*, dere is no *gospel*; and vere dere is no *gospel*, dere is no *hope*.”

When I left Dachau that day I was deeply moved by what I had seen and heard; and I vowed then never to take lightly my obligation as a teacher, nor to allow my students to treat their education frivolously, because I knew emphatically that what goes on here must make a profound difference. So when we exited through the Carmelite convent—“of the Precious Blood,” it's called—I bought this cross, blood red enamel on bronze, to help me remember: Where there is no vision, there is no risk; where there is no risk, there is no witness; where there is no witness, there is no gospel; where there is no gospel, there is no hope.

Help for Churches in Transitional Communities

by MARK R. SILLS

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Cities are a fact of life. Not only are the cities growing at a rapid pace, but they also become more and more important to the total society as they grow. Even rural areas are identified by and influenced by the cities that lie nearby. The old saying that God created man and man created the city has never been more true than it is today. Indeed, it may be argued that cities are becoming the natural habitat of the human animal. Civilization is impossible without the city. Technology, the schizophrenic boon/bane of modern society would be totally impossible to develop or maintain without the city. Cities are more than streets and buildings and crowds of people. Cities are creations in themselves and they are essential to civilization. As Oswald Spengler has put it so well, "What his house is to the peasant, the city is to civilized man."¹

Cities are natural manifestations of humankind's urge to create. Contrary to much popular thought, cities are not unnatural or plastic. Cities are, in fact, so much a part of the history and psychology of humankind that it could be argued that the social, mental and spiritual health of humankind depends in large measure upon the city. The modern fad of retreating to the countryside represents not a flight from the cities, but a failure to cope with the very real problems that infest our cities. If all of the cities were destroyed in some giant cataclysm, the very people who now flee the cities would immediately set about rebuilding them.

Cities are places of many things, but perhaps the most outstanding characteristic of cities, as of the individuals who live there, is change. Even in the early days of human civilization cities were places of change. Today, change is taking place at a pace that is hard to comprehend. Change is the most basic fact of life not only for the city and its institutions, but for the individuals who are, in themselves, the very agents of change.

In spite of the fact that the Church had its beginning in the heart of the city and has continued to be centrally organized around

1. Oswald Spengler, *Der Untergang des Abendlandes*, IV (Munich: 1922), p. 105.

cities, the Church has never fully come to terms with the city. Protestant churches especially have failed to understand or trust the city and have thus tended to remain essentially rural or small town in style of ministry and structure. It may be that the basis for this failure lies not in the size or the technology or even the complexity of the cities, but in the most basic fact of cities: transition. The Church has simply been unable to cope with the fact of steady and relentless change.

In 1876 the Washington Square Reformed Dutch Church in New York City voted to close "owing to the moving away of the class of population in this quarter whose needs are met by such a church."² Such closings, along with mergers, relocations, and the creation of commuter churches have continued until, today, it is a rare urban church that actually serves the community in which it is located. Many of the churches organized when the cities were first experiencing boom growth have now either closed or relocated outside the central urban areas. In fact, the problem of the churches in transitional communities may well be the paramount problem facing the Church in the United States today.

Even those churches which have managed to remain active and well-financed while continuing to occupy land in the central city often fail adequately to address the needs of the city. Many, if not most, have become what is commonly referred to as "cathedral" churches, whose members commute from the fringe areas around the city in order to attend a large, socially prestigious congregation. While some of these central city churches have organized missional thrusts into the immediate communities surrounding their buildings, these activities tend to be token at best. When real issues are addressed by such programs they tend to lose their funding. There are exceptions, of course, but all too often such "inner-city" programs represent less than serious attempts to minister to the persons and institutions of the central city. Those few churches which have accepted a ministry to the city are frequently under-staffed and poorly funded and their impact upon the city is thereby impaired.

Transition is rarely a simple phenomenon. More often than not the transition taking place in a given community is a complex mixture of ethnic change, economic and/or social change, and sometimes even basic theological change. For instance, in some South-eastern cities white, Protestant, middle-management persons are

2. Quoted by Howard Hageman, *The City Church* (New York: May-June, 1959), p. 2.

moving out from the central city to be replaced by Hispanic, Roman Catholic, blue-collar workers. Churches left in the midst of such a changing community face traumatic adjustment if they are to survive as an authentic presence and witness in that situation.

Within the Southeastern Jurisdiction of the United Methodist Church, a coalition of urban church clergy, community workers, and urban ministry professionals have joined forces to seek ways to address the special needs and problems of the urban church in transitional communities. This organization, known as the *Southeastern Jurisdiction Urban Workers Network* (SEJUNW) draws upon the experiences and special training of a large number of Christian professionals committed to the *strengthening of the local church within the context of the urban environment* in order to conduct workshops, training events and consultations for clergy and laity in churches facing transitional situations. A number of these events have been conducted throughout the Southeast in recent years. Perhaps the most significant recently occurred in Chattanooga, Tennessee, when eleven certified urban church consultants from throughout the Jurisdiction conducted a District-wide Consultation with 19 self-identified churches in transitional communities.

Chattanooga is a rapidly expanding city that exhibits the characteristics of any metropolitan community. The churches in Chattanooga are typical of the inner-city, city and suburban churches in most any major city. With the exception of one large, well staffed and socially prominent congregation in the midst of the central business district, most of the city churches are experiencing a gradual decline both in membership and attendance which can be dated back to the early or middle 1950's. As membership declines in the city churches, the suburban churches have grown. Even here, however, due to open housing and other changes in social customs, the problems of transitional communities are evident and are having an effect upon the churches. Thus the consultation included a number of suburban congregations facing the problem of ethnically and/or economically changing neighborhoods.

Perhaps the single most significant characteristic of the city churches in Chattanooga is the large number of commuting members. In several of the churches the number of commuting members totaled more than 75% of the active membership. A commuting member was defined as a person driving more than three miles to attend church. In at least one church, 76% of the active member-

ship drove more than five miles to attend services. One somewhat surprising discovery of the Consultation was that this commuting pattern is as much true of the Black congregations as it is of the White congregations. If one critical statement were to be made of the city churches in general, it would be that they are doing a poor job of relating their ministries to the people who live most directly adjacent to the location of their buildings.

The situation is not a great deal different with the suburban churches. While distances driven to church by active members is somewhat less than in city churches, suburban churches still tend to spend the overwhelming portion of their energies and financial resources upon their own membership and buildings. The church in direct ministry to the community is the exceptional church. Often, even the ministry to membership suffers due to the lack of careful planning and failure to establish realistic assumptions as a basis for planning.

The task of the *SEJUNW Consultation Teams* is (1) to assist local churches in the gathering and analysis of data concerning the kinds of transition that are taking place in their communities, (2) to analyze the membership characteristics of the church, (3) to assist the programming committee of the local church in development of realistic assumptions as a basis for planning, and (4) to provide tools for planning that hold promise for progress in the total life and ministry of the church. The process utilizes a variety of skills and tools including the gathering of demographic data from census tract studies; windshield surveys; analysis of age, occupational and commuting characteristics of the active membership; as well as the tools of strategic church planning and management by objectives. The consultants serve as facilitators who are able to direct a process of "self-study" for the congregation. Once the initial consultation is concluded, the participants should have developed sufficient skills to be able to continue the process without professional guidance in the future.

In the Chattanooga Consultation, the churches went through a two-day, intensive consultation designed primarily to check assumptions against realities. Planning was kept to a minimum due to the lack of time for going into long-range planning. However, the participants in each church were introduced to the tools necessary for sound church planning and some initial planning steps were taken in most situations.

It will be some time before the results of this District-wide Consultation for churches in transitional communities can be properly

evaluated. However, some initial responses from clergy and lay participants indicate something of the value of this process. According to one pastor, "My church has come alive this week. We are finally ready to become involved in an active ministry in a realistic fashion." Another pastor who had been so frustrated by his appointment that he had asked his District Superintendent for a move after less than a year told his Consultation Team that he was now ready to stay and work. He said that for the first time he realized that his people were "serious about being in mission and willing to face the kind of changes that this will require." Among the decisions his lay people made during the Consultation was one to try actively to recruit members from among the Black families moving into this community. He knows that his church has a long way to go, but he also feels that a first step has been taken and a commitment made. A group of lay persons in a church facing death in a matter of ten or fifteen years due to aging and declining membership decided that they could be in mission on their own through a "mission group" model. While most of the people in that church had resigned themselves to "business as usual with the church closing in a few years," these persons decided to become actively involved in a ministry to persons in their community. The pastor of this church, who had described his congregation as "hopeless" at the start of the Consultation, said that it had found "new life" by the end.

Among some of the plans made by churches participating in the Consultation were strategies for activating inactive members, developing programs of outreach to ethnic minorities in the immediate neighborhood around specific churches, special ministries to children, youth and adults, and planning for a cooperative approach to the special needs of the central city and its inhabitants.

If the Church is ever going to become effective in its ministry of presence and service in the city it is going to have to take seriously the problems of transitional communities and the need for careful analysis and systematic planning. If the *United Methodist Church* is going to reverse the recent trend toward declining membership it will be necessary for it to do much more than traditional evangelism. The *SEJUNW Consultation Teams* hope to be *one tool* for the revitalization of the local church in the Southeastern Jurisdiction.³

3. Coordinator for the SEJUNW Consultation Teams is Dr. Bill Tyson, Director, Urban Action, Inc., 159 Forest Avenue, N.E., Atlanta, Georgia 30308.

Book Reviews

REDATING THE NEW TESTAMENT?*

by D. MOODY SMITH, JR.

The blurb on the dust jacket announces: "Now—from the author of *Honest to God*—comes a book that may require the rewriting of New Testament histories, introductions, theologies, text books, references and resources." As the co-author of one of the textbooks and a contributor to one of the reference volumes in question, I can hardly be uninterested in this possibly epoch-making book, which may require such an effort of rewriting on my part!

As is well known, J. A. T. Robinson is a Bishop of the Church of England. He is presently fellow and Dean of Chapel of Trinity College, Cambridge, as well as Assistant Bishop of Southwark. His most recent previous work, *The Human Face of God*, I heard him deliver as a series of lectures at The Divinity School of Cambridge University. Never one to mince words or avoid harsh alternatives, Robinson in those lectures was bold enough to contemplate the possibility of Jesus' illegitimate human paternity and to consider the likelihood that his corpse long ago mouldered away in a Jerusalem grave. From such radical theological ventures one might conclude that Robinson periodically rocks the theological boat, or ark, usually by jumping out on the left side. Now he has done it again by taking a belly-whopper, so to speak, out the right side.

One might surmise that having previously heard from Robinson the left-leaning theologian we are now to hear from Robinson the conservative bishop. I prefer, however, to think that having previously heard the pastoral and theological insights of the bishop, concerned about the possibility and shape of faith in the modern world, we are now to hear from the Cambridge don. Robinson has tired of fuzzy-thinking chronologers and has decided to draw the attention of the scholarly world to the slim evidence on which the widely accepted dating of New Testament books is based. At the beginning of the book Robinson asks, "When was the New Testament written?" He goes on immediately to assert that datings which are commonly accepted are much less secure than the wide consensus of scholarly opinion would suggest. Among others, he sets forth the datings proposed by Harnack, H. von Soden, Kümmel, and Perrin. It is worth our noting that the dates proposed by Harnack in the 1890's are not so different from those presently favored by Kümmel, as a comparison of the first two columns from the left will show in the table on the following page.

The principal differences between Harnack and Kümmel involve Ephesians (if one takes it to be authentic), Matthew, which Kümmel is willing to date as much as twenty-five years later (but perhaps only five or so years later), James, which Harnack puts as much as 40 years later, and II Peter, which Harnack dates from twenty-five to thirty-five years later. On balance the dates of Kümmel are a bit earlier than those of Harnack, with only II Peter being certainly or significantly later than the turn of the century. For purposes of comparison, I have given the dates at which Robinson has arrived at the conclusion of his

**Redating the New Testament*, John A. T. Robinson. Westminster, 1976. 369 pp. \$15.00.

work in a third column on the right. Obviously they are much different from those of Kümmel and Harnack except for the uncontested Pauline letters, which are dated by Robinson at about the same time.

One notices that Robinson's dates are virtually all lower than A.D. 70, approximately the end of the so-called Apostolic Age. But that is not for Robinson the crucial consideration. Instead, the observation that nowhere in the New Testament is the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 mentioned as a past fact becomes the keystone of his redating of the New Testament. It is, as Robinson acknowledges, mentioned in prophecy or prophetic statements, particularly in Mark 13:2, Matthew 22:7, and Luke 19:41-4; 21:20-4. While there is a division of opinion as to whether the famous prediction of Mark 13:2 ("Not one stone will be left upon another . . .") must be interpreted as a *vaticinium ex eventu* (prophecy after the event), it is widely agreed that references to the destruction in Matthew and Luke can only be understood as emanating from the time after the Roman War. From this widely held consensus Robinson strongly dissents (Chapter II), arguing that there is no compelling reason to think that the Matthean and Lucan passages could only have been composed after the event. Moreover, the Matthean and Lucan redactions of the Marcan Little Apocalypse do not reflect the post-70 knowledge of the destruction of the temple which one would have expected. They are difficult to interpret if they are taken to have been composed after the destruction of the temple.

In a long chapter on the Synoptic Gospels and Acts (IV), Robinson concentrates initially on the question of the date of Acts, whose historical validity he generally credits. Acts does not mention the fall of Jerusalem and, in fact, concludes with Paul under house arrest in Rome in the early 60's. The simplest and most natural inference from this data is that Acts, as well as Luke, was written before the destruction of the temple and before Paul's fate (i.e., death) had become known. In the remainder of the chapter Robinson sets forth his view of the development of the Synoptic tradition and Gospels in the light of the external, as well as internal, evidence. While Robinson seems unwilling simply to abandon the Marcan hypothesis in favor of Farmer, or Griesbach, he avers that he can no longer regard it as one of the assured results of criticism. The relationship among the Synoptics is too complex. The production of the Gospels, running on parallel, separate, but interconnected tracks, takes place between A.D. 30 and 60+, with the gradual commitment to writing occurring between 40 and 60+.

Robinson's treatment of Pauline chronology (III) is for the most part unexceptional. In fact, he does an exceedingly careful and painstaking job of assessing the relatively meager and ambiguous evidence of the epistles and relating it to the very few relevant known points of Roman and Jewish history. The only real surprise and novelty is Robinson's effort to incorporate the Pastorals into the lifetime of the Apostle Paul by placing them within the framework provided by Acts and the acknowledged letters. Apparently he is happier with this chronology than with the ascription of the Pastorals directly to Paul, for he proposes that they may be letters written on his instruction, but not actually penned or dictated by him.

In succession Robinson considers the Epistle of James (V), Peter and Jude (VI), and Hebrews (VII), contending in each case that nothing in them requires that they be dated after A.D. 70. Admittedly in most of these documents the absence of any mention of the fall of Jerusalem says little about their dates. The obvious exception is Hebrews, in which the argument about the supersession of the old covenant and sacrificial system by Jesus might have been admirably clinched by reference to the destruction and end of the Temple and its service. In its absence the logical inference is that the event had not yet occurred.

The Book of Revelation (VIII) is placed, not in the reign of Domitian as much ancient tradition and modern scholarship has it, but in the reign of Nero. Robinson finds in it no reference to the destruction of Jerusalem or its temple, although probably there is reference to the siege (ch. 11). Thus a date just before A.D. 70 appears appropriate. Moreover, this would fit the symbolism of the Roman emperors in Rev. 17:9-11, in which the "sixth king" (counting from Augustus), who is then reigning, is apparently Galba, who briefly succeeded Nero (d. 68). The most natural inference from such evidence is that Revelation was written ca. 68 and 70, just after the death of Nero, whose burning of Rome is reflected in Rev. 18, and just before the conquest of Jerusalem by Roman forces.

In a final major chapter on New Testament chronology (IX), Robinson argues for a pre-70 date for the Gospel and Epistles of John. In the case of the Gospel, at least, one would have expected some reference or hint of the catastrophe of A.D. 70 had it been written after that event, but there is even less hint of it in John than in the Synoptics. Over and beyond this, recent research has underscored the Jewishness of John, its relation to Palestinian sectarianism (Qumran), and the accuracy of many of its references to Palestinian customs and traditions, as well as geography. The wide agreement among modern scholars, as well as some ancients, that John was written late, or at least after the other gospels, is not really demanded by the evidence. On the contrary, the most relevant considerations point to a date just before, rather than after, A.D. 70. Robinson is strongly of the opinion that the Fourth Gospel is the work of the Apostle John, the son of Zebedee. A penultimate chapter (X) deals with the dates of the Didache, I Clement, the Shepherd of Hermas, and the Epistle of Barnabas; these Apostolic Fathers Robinson moves forward into the latter half of the first century. (The Didache may be as early as 40!)

In evaluating Robinson's work it is, of course, impossible to deal with it comprehensively in the relatively brief compass of this review. I shall confine myself to: (1) indicating areas of agreement or cases in which he seems to have called into serious question the commonly held dating of certain New Testament writings, and (2) reviewing crucial aspects of his arguments for an early date for Luke-Acts, the Pastorals and the Gospel of John.

I

In the case of Hebrews, I Peter and Revelation Robinson submits a strong case for their earlier, i.e., pre-70, dating. In each instance, as he himself makes very clear, the earlier dating represents a well-established alternative of contemporary criticism, albeit held by a minority of present-day scholars. I have long been uneasy with a post-70 dating of Hebrews, for exactly the reasons specified by Robinson. On the other hand, if the author was writing to Christians in Rome or elsewhere in the Gentile world in the year 90 and arguing solely on the basis of scripture, it is possible to conceive of his not mentioning the destruction of the temple. On the whole, however, I find Robinson's arguments cogent, and am not disposed to counter them.

The same may be said for his case for dating Revelation in 68-70. Here, however, I am less willing than Robinson to dismiss the possibility that earlier sources or visions—e.g., from Nero's reign—have been incorporated into a later work. I wonder also whether Irenaeus' testimony that the Apocalypse was written during the reign of Domitian would have been so quickly dismissed if it had been on the other side of the issue. Yet if the Book of Revelation is to be credited to Johannine circles, as I (with Robinson) suspect that it is, an earlier rather than a later date would comport better with any theory of development within such a school of thought.

The date and authorship of I Peter has long been a bone of contention among scholars. (Robinson carefully and rightly distinguishes questions of authorship from questions of date, although in this as in many other cases they cannot be separated.) In attributing I Peter to the apostle and dating it before 70 Robinson has the support of a sizable number, if not the majority, of English scholars. He seems to me quite right, however, in refusing to resolve the problem of how Peter, the rustic Galilean fisherman, could have written such good koine Greek by the phrase (5:12), "By Sylvanus . . . I have written. . . ." In any case we cannot be sure what is meant or implied by *dia Silouanou*. Is Sylvanus the amanuensis or only the deliverer of the letter? Probably most advocates of a later dating and of pseudonymity will not be convinced by Robinson. The letter is intelligible as an epistolary tract written at, or just before, the persecutions of Domitian or Trajan, and its general address (to Christians in Asia Minor) accords well with that theory, although it certainly does not prove it. (Robinson concedes that the Letter of Pliny to Trajan seems to describe conditions not unlike those anticipated in I Peter.) Perhaps not incidentally, Robinson tends to call into question the significance of the persecution of Christians under Domitian at the end of the first century in urging an earlier date for I Peter, Hebrews, and Revelation, favoring the evidence for a Neronian persecution in the sixties. It is worth remarking that the evidence for either is slim or ambiguous. While we do have the reliable testimony of the Roman historian Tacitus that Nero conducted a pogrom against Christians in the aftermath of the burning of Rome, I believe it is still regarded as unclear whether this was a widespread and systematic persecution of Christians as such. Nevertheless, one cannot deny that Robinson has ably stated a case for the early dating and authenticity of I Peter, and this is enough to give pause to anyone who has assumed that it belongs to the late first century (Domitian) or early second (Trajan).

To remark briefly on three other Catholic Epistles, I must say that in these instances Robinson is not so plausible or persuasive. It is not clear that the recent work of Sevenster (*Do You Know Greek?*) and others on Greek in first-century Palestine does more than make James' (the brother of the Lord) authorship of that Epistle conceivable, whereas to an earlier generation of scholars it seemed incredible that the Galilean Jew could have penned such excellent Greek. While it is quite possible that James, and Jesus, could get along in Greek, is it very likely that James could have written so well? Perhaps. But what if the epistolary greeting is secondary? There is no corresponding conclusion and no other indication that the author is writing to anyone. (Contrast I John 2:1, 7, 12, 26.) In that case there is also no reference to James, not to mention any hint of a personal relation to Jesus, in the letter. *Non liquet*, but Robinson has at least shown that a case for early authorship (47 or 48!) and authenticity can still be intelligently made. Somewhat by contrast, I feel that the author stretches our imagination, or invites credulity, in arguing for an early date (early 60's) and apostolic authorization, if not authorship, for II Peter and Jude. I am not sure whether, in this case the author has been led astray by his considerable powers of argumentation or whether having set out to prove that every New Testament book is early he has simply refused to cavil even before this unlikely prospect. In any event, his asides to the effect that at the beginning he would have found what now turns out to be his own proposal incredible leave me wondering whether he has fully convinced himself. His arguments that "this is now the second letter" (II Peter 3:1) does not have I Peter in view (II Peter is dated before I Peter!) and his efforts to persuade us that references to the (Christian) fathers having fallen asleep (3:4) and to all the letters of Paul (3:16), which are put on the same level as the "other scriptures," do not imply a late, or second-century, date I find quite unconvincing.

II

Doubtless very important for Robinson, and for us in determining the significance of the work, are his efforts to show that the Synoptics and John should be dated before the fall of Jerusalem. Also his attempt to date the Pastorals within Paul's life-time, if correct, would have serious implications for our understanding of the development of the early church. I shall leave out of account Robinson's arguments for a pre-70 dating of Mark, since there is by any accounting good reason to accept such a date.

Robinson carefully scrutinizes the texts and analyzes the relevant data in order to show that Luke-Acts is pre-70. In order to take this position he must, of course, demonstrate that the prophetic descriptions of the destruction of the city in Luke 19:41-44 and 21:20-24 (the Lucan version of the Little Apocalypse) are not *vaticinia ex eventu*, but are merely stereotypical formulations that would fit any siege or conquest. This it seems to me is a very big order, especially when one notes the positive correspondence between these Lucan passages and Josephus' lengthy description of the siege in the Jewish War. Luke's statements are brief and somewhat cryptic, as befits a prophecy, and it is difficult to argue that he knew Josephus' account. But I find it also difficult to believe that Luke did not write with knowledge and a visual image of the fall of Jerusalem at his disposal. The specificity of Luke on this point stands in some contrast to Mark. Whereas according to Mark the prophecy of the temple's destruction could have been fulfilled in some other way (e.g., an earthquake, the apocalyptic cataclysm), Luke appears to know how it actually took place, whether or not his language is stereotypical. The commonly held view that Luke edits the Marcan apocalypse in light of his knowledge of what actually took place still seems the most adequate explanation. If there remain historical anomalies in Luke 21:20-24, as Robinson thinks, they can be credited to the fact that Luke is working with traditional material over which he is reluctant to exercise an absolutely free hand.

Turning to Acts, Robinson understandably makes much of the point at which it ends, with Paul freely preaching the gospel in Rome. Acts also has no hint of the coming destruction of Jerusalem. (One might wonder, however, whether Paul's sharp denunciation of his people in 28:25-28 and his announcement that salvation *has been sent* to the Gentiles does not anticipate the catastrophe.) Yet because the latter part of the book is about Paul, and because the narrative stops without divulging his fate, that is surely the more basic problem with the conventional dating, and one of which Robinson makes a great deal. There is no denying the problem, but is it the case that Luke is unaware of Paul's fate? More than one commentator has seen in Paul's speech to the Ephesian elders (Acts 20:17-36) his valedictory address. Moreover, he announces (vs. 24-25): "But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may accomplish my course and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God. And now, behold, I know that *all you among whom I have gone about preaching the kingdom of God will see my face no more.*" (Italics mine.) At the end of the speech Paul gets a farewell whose finality Luke underscores (vss. 37f.): "And they all wept and embraced Paul and kissed him, sorrowing most of all because of the word he had spoken, that they should see his face no more." Did Paul at this time actually know his ministry was over? Romans 15:22ff., which following Robinson's own excellent presentation should be put at or about this same point in his career, gives no indication whatsoever that he did. In fact, it speaks altogether on the other side. What is the solution of this anomaly? Is it not simply that Luke, writing years afterward, knows Paul's fate, whereas Paul quite naturally did not?

Why then does Luke end his account where he does? One might guess facetiously that he follows the sound rule of not writing the history of anything within thirty years, or until a generation has passed. Thus Luke-Acts might be dated in 92. In fact, there are good and cogent, if not absolutely compelling, reasons for Luke's having ended his account where he did. He wants to show Christianity triumphant in its westward push. What better way to do this than to portray Paul at the end preaching the gospel and confuting opponents in the capital of the Roman Empire? To what advantage would he have told the story of Rome's, or Nero's, hostility and the death of the champion of the gospel? Clearly Luke wishes to demonstrate that Christianity was not a subversive cult within the Roman Empire. (We may recall that he changes the centurion's cry at Jesus' death to read, "Certainly this man was innocent"—Luke 23:47.) To have shown Romans executing the chief exponent of the gospel in the Eternal City would have scarcely advanced his purpose. Moreover, I Clement leads us to believe that Paul's (and Peter's) death was accompanied by division (if not betrayal) among Roman Christians (I Clement 5:1-6:1), something that Luke would not have wanted to recount. The simplest way of avoiding the necessity of depicting such things was to end the Acts narrative where he did.

For the Gospel of Matthew Robinson can make a somewhat stronger argument for a pre-70 date than for Luke. Matthew has nothing comparable either to Luke 20:20-24 or to Luke 19:41-44. In the view of most scholars Luke places his depiction of the fall of Jerusalem at what seems to him the proper point in the unfolding events of the apocalypse, which he drew from Mark. Matthew's apocalypse, however, contains no more explicit mention of the destruction of Jerusalem than does Mark's, and if one takes the "abomination of desolation" (24:15) to refer to the destruction, he must concede that Matthew misses the opportunity to describe it explicitly. Moreover, as Robinson points out, on that assumption, "immediately after the tribulation of those days . . ." (24-29) must mean "immediately after the destruction of the city." This creates a problem, because it suggests that the coming of the Son of Man (vs. 30) is to follow immediately after the devastation of Jerusalem. Furthermore, the word "immediately" (*eutheōs*) is not found in Mark and has therefore presumably been added by Matthew. Therefore Matthew must have expected the parousia, and must have written, very soon after 70. In Robinson's view a post-70 date for Matthew therefore becomes difficult, for one must imagine him writing the Gospel just after the fall and while expecting the parousia at any moment. Isn't this improbable?

But what if it is not assumed that Matthew, even if he wrote after 70, must have interpreted Mark and written up the apocalypse as a prediction of the destruction of Jerusalem or the Temple? In fact, he gives the question of the disciples which opens the discourse as follows: "Tell us, when will this be and what will be the sign of your coming and of the close of the age" (Matt. 24:3). Matthew has introduced the references to the parousia and the close of the age, which are absent from Mark (and Luke), and has thus already shifted the focus of the discourse away from Jerusalem, if it was ever there. Possibly Matthew does not know how to fit the fall of Jerusalem into any apocalyptic scheme, and therefore does not wish to draw attention to it.

Robinson naturally does not concede that the reference to the king's destroying the city of those who refused his invitation to the marriage feast (22:1-10) is a *post factum* reference to the fall of Jerusalem. But just this seems even clearer here than in the Luke passages. The references to the sending of troops and the burning of a city are totally incongruous with the scenario of the parable unless one assumes that Matthew understands it as a parable of the Messianic Feast, which the Jewish contemporaries of Jesus refused to attend!

Then in the light of the destruction of Jerusalem his insertion of this sentence (22:7) becomes intelligible. The destruction of the city is the punishment of Judaism for rejecting Jesus. Other hints of the fall of Jerusalem may possibly be found in 23:34-39, esp. vs. 35f. ("That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed on earth . . .") and vs. 38, addressed to Jerusalem ("Behold, your house is forsaken and desolate.")

In conclusion, I cannot agree that Robinson has demonstrated that a pre-70 date for Matthew and Luke is more likely than a date between 70 or 75 and 100.

As to Pastorals, Robinson's view that they are basically Pauline and were composed during his lifetime is represented also by scholars such as Reicke, Kelly, and Jeremias. It can hardly be called eccentric or fundamentalist. More unusual is Robinson's effort to fit the Pastorals into the framework provided by Acts and the other epistles rather than positing a further period of activity after the house arrest described in Acts 28. In fact, most of the section dealing with the Pastorals (pp. 67-85) is devoted to arguing that the (earlier) dating of these letters within the chronological and geographical framework of Acts is preferable to dating them in a hypothetical later period of Paul's ministry. Thus he is in actuality debating with those who also accept the Pastorals as Pauline.

What Robinson does not do is debate seriously the question of whether the Pastorals can be considered the work of Paul at all. There are a handful of references to the work of P. N. Harrison, a bench mark in this discussion, but no effort is made to refute his linguistic and stylistic arguments against regarding the Pastorals, several sections or fragments excepted, as the work of the Apostle Paul. Robinson makes a perfunctory bow to such objections against Pauline authorship by suggesting (p. 83) that the Pastorals, unlike the other letters, are comparable to documents composed, or commissioned, by a modern missionary bishop in anticipation of an archidiaconal visit. Maybe so. Certainly it is difficult for one who can still recall the abrupt changes in language and syntax he encountered in the Pastorals as he first read straight through the Greek New Testament to agree that they were written or dictated by Paul.

But Robinson's dating of the Pastorals evokes further difficulties which go beyond matters of language and style. Conceivably Paul could have ordered the letters written on the basis of a general formulation of their content. (But the tone of the letters is quite personal, so that it is hard to imagine anyone other than Paul, or an imitator of Paul, having written them.) More important, however, is the question of whether the view of Christianity and the church represented by the Pastorals is construable as that of Paul or of the Apostolic Age. Robinson raises legitimate questions about the use of the concept of development in dating. But the discrepancies in perspective and emphasis between the Pastorals and the other Pauline letters which suggest they belong to different generations are considerable. These fall into roughly three areas: doctrine, ministry, and discipline.

The Pastorals do not contain *doctrine* not found in Paul, or contrary to Paul, so much as they seem to represent a stage in the development of doctrine beyond Paul. Faith is now not so much a relationship to God, the receptive pole of grace, as a deposit of doctrine (I Tim. 4:1, 6) or even a personal quality (II Tim. 3:10; I Tim. 1:5, 19). There is much concern in the Pastorals for right teaching and doctrine, as there is in Paul. What differentiates the Pastorals is their tendency to equate faith with right doctrine, so that being a faithful Christian comes to mean not so much awareness of standing in and under God's grace as possessing or affirming the correct and true doctrines which one has received from tradition (II Tim. 1:13f.; Cf. I Tim. 6:3, 20f.; Titus 1:13f.). It is perhaps characteristic of the Pastorals that faith is referred to as "the faith," i.e., the deposit of right doctrine (I Tim. 4:6). It follows that there is a great concern about heresy and its dire potential for corrupting the purity of the

faith. Thus I Timothy begins with a warning against certain wrong teachings (1:3ff.) and concludes (6:20) with an injunction to "avoid the godless chatter and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge" (i.e., *gnosis*=Gnosticism). The mention of Gnosticism has itself been enough to lead some scholars to posit a second-century date for the Pastorals. Certainly Paul is concerned that a Christian's belief correspond with the truth of the gospel, but there is a subtle difference. He regards that truth to be a valid insight into the nature of the faith relationship to God through Christ, and its implications for life. He does not equate faith with believing right doctrine, a tendency we see beginning in the Pastorals.

Moreover, in the Pastorals those who are endangering the faith are not addressed directly. They have fallen out of any meaningful dialogue with the author and his hearers. The latter are regarded as "in" and only need protection from dangers and temptations emanating from without. Naturally Paul also speaks of dangers posed by those whom he is not addressing, or cannot address, in his letters. His letters, however, are not addressed to "pure and holy" churches who need protection from dangers lurking without, but to people who though justified are still sinners and need themselves to be reminded of the truth of the gospel. In other words, in Paul the concept of heretics who are beyond the pale and are simply to be shunned has not developed. When he can, Paul still addresses directly those who are falling away from the truth. In the Pastorals there has developed, or is clearly developing, the notion of the "ins" and the "outs," orthodoxy and heresy.

There is also a distinctive difference in that the Pastorals reflect the concept and reality of ordained *ministry* that is missing in the Paulines. One does find references to bishops and deacons in Phil. 1:1 (only instance in Paul). Yet it is a question whether they constitute an ordained ministry. In fact, there is no evidence that they do. Elsewhere Paul's letters indicate the existence of various functions and gifts within the Body of Christ (I Cor. 12) but no distinction between ordained clergy and laity. Just that distinction is, however, very evident in the Pastorals.

There are extensive instructions concerning the necessary qualifications of those who aspire to the office of bishop (I Tim. 3:1-7), elder (Tit. 1:5f.), and deacon (I Tim. 3:8-13). Timothy himself has been ordained by the elders (I Tim. 4:14), and by Paul (II Tim. 1:6). He is exhorted not to be hasty in granting ordination (I Tim. 5:22). Provision is made for the compensation of elders (I Tim. 5:17f.) by taking up the language and arguments Paul employed in defending the *apostle's* right to support from his churches (I Cor. 9). The very tone and tenor of the address to Timothy suggests a situation in which a ministry of ordained professionals is becoming well-established. Their duties and the congregations' expectations of them are generally accepted and widely known. This, I submit, is not the case in the other Pauline letters.

Together with the growth of ordained ministry goes a concern for church order and, especially, *discipline*. What conduct befits the Christian life and the Christian community? Not only are the necessary requirements of character and conduct for ordained clergy given, but expectations for the conduct of various groups are spelled out in detail: older men (I Tim. 5:1f.), widows (I Tim. 5:3-16); slaves (I Tim. 6:1-2); women generally (I Tim. 2:9-15). One has some such instructions in Paul, but there they are qualified by a lively sense of the Spirit's guidance and of the near end of the present world (i.e., eschatology). In the Pastorals, however, one has the impression that the church is settling down, becoming an institution with organization and rules, and necessarily so. The excitement and adventure which is so pervasive in the Pauline letters is missing. When Paul's own career is mentioned, it is largely in terms of past achievements (II Tim. 4:6-8). I am not suggesting that the Pastorals are therefore

inferior or of less value, but they bespeak a Christianity that has long since passed out of its infancy and into adulthood, if not middle age.

For this reason, unlike Robinson, most defenders of the authenticity of the Pastorals place them in a later period of Paul's career not described in Acts or reflected in the other letters. This is not just because of difficulties in fitting them into the earlier period. There are difficulties in any case. Rather it is to allow time for the developments in doctrine, ministry, and discipline to which they attest. It seems to me, however, that adequate time for such development is best gained by ascribing the Pastorals—or at least the present form of them—to a period well beyond the end of Paul's career.

Such a dating allows for the temporal span suggested by II Tim. 1:5, where we read of the faith "that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you." It also comports well with the statement (II Tim. 3:14ff.) that Timothy *from childhood* has been acquainted with the sacred writings "which are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus." True, in Acts 16:1 it is said that Timothy's mother was a believer and that Paul circumcised him to placate some Jews. But there is no hint that Timothy became a Christian in childhood. At the time we hear of him he is at least a young adult. The reference in II Timothy to his grandmother and mother, however, conveys the impression of a faith passed on from generation to generation. Moreover, if the reference to sacred writings (or scripture) in II Tim. 3:15 means distinctly Christian writings and not the Old Testament, we are in a period when the concept of a New Testament canon is beginning to emerge. Certainly the description of these writings as being "able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Jesus Christ" suggests they are distinctly Christian. In fact, I should say that this description fits the genuine letters of Paul remarkably well!

While I would not go so far as to claim absolute certainty for the view just expressed, although it is very widely held, it does, it seems to me, allow us to understand the Pastorals within the context of an intelligible framework of church history that is amply attested in the texts themselves. To regard them as the work of the Apostle himself, on the other hand, creates severe and unnecessary difficulties.

Robinson indicates at the beginning of his work that the impetus for it lay in his changing his opinion about the date of John. Yet he postpones the treatment of that Gospel until the end of the book (IX). It is clear that Robinson thinks that the earlier dating of the Fourth Gospel opens the way for putting all the New Testament books (aside from the uncontested Pauline letters) earlier.

After reviewing the external evidence for dating John relatively late, Robinson pronounces it mostly worthless. In this he may well be right, in that it is not based on independent historical information or traditions about the Gospel. He then traces the tendency of critical scholarship since F. C. Baur to date the Gospel earlier and earlier, so that there is now a wide consensus in favor of the last decade, or the last two decades, of the first century. The discovery of two early second-century papyrus fragments, one of the Gospel of John (P 52) and another from a gospel which employed John (Egerton Pap. 2), have rendered impossible a date very far into the second century and have made a first-century date appear quite likely. If a *terminus ad quem* at or just beyond the end of the century is well-established, the *terminus a quo* is not so clear. This is true especially if we can no longer assume that John used—and is later than—the Synoptics. In denying that John knew the Synoptic Gospels Robinson is in all probability correct, and he makes much of this. Moreover, he finds it incredible that this Gospel, addressed to Jews, should make no mention of the fall of Jerusalem if it was, in fact, written after A.D. 70.

(It should be noted that Robinson agrees with much recent scholarship in reading John against a Jewish background.)

One recently proposed *terminus a quo* for dating John is the twelfth benediction of the ancient Eighteen Benedictions of Jewish liturgical tradition, which experts date about A.D. 85. It pronounces a curse upon Nazarenes (Christians) and heretics, and was apparently intended to identify Christians, who could not recite it, so they could be rooted out of the synagogue. Correspondingly, in John 9:22, 12:42, and 16:2 it is said or implied that people are being put out of the synagogue for believing in or confessing Jesus. Robinson points out that there are ample indications of Christians getting rough treatment and being expelled from synagogues, far earlier than this. It happens repeatedly to Paul in Acts. Therefore, the Twelfth Benediction affords no basis for dating John. Yet it is not clear that in these earlier instances the reason for expulsion is specifically belief in Jesus as the Messiah. (When Paul goes back to Jerusalem, the leaders there are worried not about his belief that Jesus was the Messiah, but by his reputation for carelessness about the law.) In John, however, it seems to be, and this accords with the purpose of the post-Jamnian Twelfth Benediction. Following the same line of argument, Robinson rejects the view that John reflects the post-70 situation of Judaism, and not the situation that prevailed before the War, when there were various interests and sects. Yet the only Jewish party which figures in John's narrative is the Pharisees, and this is precisely the party that dominated post-70 and post-Jamnian Judaism. Furthermore, Pharisees and Jews are not sharply distinguished in John, so that he seems to regard them as one and the same.

The linchpin of Robinson's early dating is, however, the contention that the Gospel knows nothing of the fall of Jerusalem. Robinson dismisses the high priest's warning that if Jesus is allowed to continue performing his signs, "everyone will believe in him, and the Romans will come and destroy both our (holy) place and our nation" (11:48). His argument that this is an unfulfilled prophecy, inasmuch as they did not allow Jesus to continue but the Romans came anyhow, strikes me as somewhat lame. Why should Jesus' signs suggest the possibility of massive Roman retaliation against the temple and nation unless the war and destruction of the temple and city were already common knowledge, i.e., past historical events. It seems to me that this catastrophe makes an otherwise strange warning completely intelligible. John's characteristic irony is often expressed in such fashion. His statement appeals to a knowledge the Christian reader would possess, although the contemporaries of Jesus remain ignorant or do not know the real import of what they are saying or hearing. Moreover, to maintain, as Robinson does, that the Farewell Discourses could be expected to reflect knowledge of the fall, if it had already occurred is scarcely plausible. To argue, as he does, that every other feature of the Synoptic discourses is found there is to ignore the fact that precisely the apocalyptic element is missing from the Johannine discourses. Therefore, one would not expect to find in them a prediction of the fall of Jerusalem.

I mention briefly several other points at which I cannot follow Robinson. I am not convinced there is no presentiment of the destruction of the temple in John 2:19. Jesus says, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up," to which the Jews respond, "it has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?" It is at least arguable that this version of the saying, which is distinctively Johannine, presupposes that the temple actually is in ruins, although this is not certain. In addition, I agree with Raymond Brown, against Robinson, that the best explanation of 21:23 ("The saying spread broad among the brethren that this disciple was not to die; yet Jesus did not say to him that he was not to die, but, 'If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you?') is that the disciple in

question had died. Otherwise, the explanation loses its point. Brown also seems to me to read the passage correctly when he infers a considerable interval between the death of Peter (predicted in 21:18f.) and that of the other disciple. Finally, Robinson's affirmation of the ancient tradition which ascribes John to the Son of Zebedee ignores the evidence advanced by such scholars as Kümmel and Cullmann against the identification of the author, whoever he may have been and whenever he wrote, with the Son of Zebedee. For example, even if one grants that the Beloved Disciple is the author of the Gospel (21:24) in some sense, it is by no means clear that the Beloved Disciple is the same as John the Son of Zebedee. That identification is not made in the text. As Kümmel points out, none of the Synoptic incidents in which the sons of Zebedee figure are found in the Fourth Gospel. Moreover, the Son of Zebedee was a Galilean, while most of the action in John takes place in Judea; and the Beloved Disciple appears only in Judea until the resurrection scene of Chapter 21.

One could go on to argue on the basis of source or redaction theories, which Robinson admittedly regards as indecisive, that much of John's material is indeed early (pre-70) but that the present recension of the Gospel is later. This still seems more probable to me, although it perhaps cannot be said with absolute certainty that John was written after the fall of Jerusalem.

Not without reason Robinson rejects or sharply questions arguments for date based on alleged theological development. Paul's theology was in many ways remarkably developed. Nevertheless, John has seemed to many readers, ancient as well as modern, to represent an advanced stage in theological, especially eschatological and Christological, reflection which presupposes some considerable temporal distance from the events it describes. Moreover, the absence of apocalyptic eschatology from John—although motifs originating in apocalyptic thought appear—bespeaks a later date. I find Barrett's insight that John's abandonment of apocalyptic thinking is related to a general disenchantment with apocalyptic in Judaism and early Christianity after the Roman War quite persuasive (*The Gospel of John and Judaism*).

Perhaps sensing that the dating of the entire New Testament within the pre-70 period leaves very little Christian literature from the next thirty or forty years, Robinson moves Barnabas, The Shepherd of Hermas, and the Didache forward into the first century. I Clement is already generally thought to fall within it, and there has been some question as to whether the Didache belongs slightly before or slightly after 100. Whether Robinson's view that all are first-century and all are considerably earlier than generally thought (e.g., the Didache is placed between 40 and 60) is anything more than the consequence of his early dating of the New Testament others will have to judge.

Robinson begins by asking when "the New Testament" was written. I wonder whether this is the proper question. He frequently says or implies that the earlier dating of one document makes easier the case for an earlier dating of others. Especially the early dating of John opens the door for dating other writings early. This is not entirely untrue, for some of the same considerations apply in each case. Yet aside from the Synoptic Gospels and Paul (about whom there is no argument) the case for each document has to be made separately. There is no legitimate snowballing effect. By introducing the criterion of the fall of Jerusalem Robinson seeks to provide a universal solvent. It is certainly a relevant item, but was it necessarily as important for early Christianity everywhere as Robinson thinks? To ask that question is, however, to open up a whole range of problems which cannot be discussed here. But they merit further consideration.

In conclusion, I should say that Robinson has indeed shown that the evidence for a post-70 date of some New Testament books (Mark, Hebrews, Revelation) is very shaky. He has also called attention to the difficulty of dating

most of the New Testament documents, which contain few, if any, clear references to political or other dateable public events. I might add that he is not the first person to notice this! That he has succeeded in showing that his pre-70 dating of the Gospels and Acts is more likely than the conventional dating is another matter. He has advanced sophisticated arguments that will gladden the hearts of some folk who, on other grounds, have defended earlier dates. His views will be ascribed all the more weight, coming as they do from one identified with a radical theology. They may appear to lend scholarly certainty to opinions which some have previously held in faith. But the historian of New Testament and early Christianity has to deal with probabilities. Has Robinson shifted the balance of probability his way? In my judgment he has not.

C. S. Lewis: The Shape of His Faith and Thought. Paul L. Holmer. Harper & Row, 1976. 116 pp. \$6.95 hardcover, \$3.95 papercover.

When C. S. Lewis died in 1963, he left a rich legacy of some forty books, including works of literary criticism and history, children's fantasy, science fiction, poetry, theology and apologetics, and a few pieces not easily classified. Much of this corpus, especially the fiction and Christian writings, retains wide popularity. Besides being a major scholar of English literature, Lewis was the foremost apologist of his day, a time when many notable laymen took pen to defense of the faith.

It is noteworthy, then, that Professor Paul Holmer of Yale Divinity School has added a useful book to the growing literature about C. S. Lewis and his writings. This little book (one might wish it were longer) has met with instant popularity, going through several printings already. From his position of philosophical, theological, and literary expertise, Holmer provides insights frequently lacking in the literature about Lewis.

Holmer is not offering a summary of Lewis' thought, or an account of the "real" C. S. Lewis. Rather, he intends "to stress what seems again so important and to draw attention to what may be so easily overlooked." There is "a wisdom to be learned" in all of Lewis' pages. By pointing out the salient themes of this wisdom—*aesthetic, moral, and religious*—Hol-

mer helps the less informed reader toward a full appreciation of Lewis' corpus.

In various ways, through fiction and polemic, Lewis attacked modern academic preoccupations which cloud the task of making sense of our lives. He wrote to help his audience understand literary, moral, and religious traditions, not to replace them. We do not need theories and explanations in these matters so much as we need reminders to guide our appreciation. With ample illustration, Holmer draws these themes out of Lewis' pages, to help our reading of Lewis and not to replace it.

Prof. Holmer's volume is in five chapters. The first is an overview of Lewis' literature, and introduces the themes later expanded. The second chapter deals with Lewis' literary criticism. Lewis did not repudiate the quest for knowledge, but thought experts were not needed in morals, religion, and aesthetics. For general theories do not explain the nature of human achievement in these areas. Literature, for example, shows us what the world and humanness are like by acquaintance with the possibilities for human living and seeing.

The third chapter discusses the traditional moral foundation which is implicit in all of Lewis' pages, and explicit in some of his writings. Lewis is not preachy about morality, but he is convinced that the tissue of life is moral. As a personal achievement, morality is the ground of living rationally, of making sense of our-

selves and the world by ordering our wants, wishes, desires, cares. For Lewis, the traditional virtues provided an irreplaceable vocabulary for the universal task of moral understanding and responsibility.

The fourth chapter describes Lewis' view of human nature, a fundamental aspect of his thought. Lewis did not offer a theory of man; instead, his work is a wide-ranging recognition that modern reductionist attempts to give an account of human nature are inadequate and misguided. Lewis had a high regard for the human consciousness, but he did not exalt raw individualism. Rather, he saw that individuality, selfhood, is an achievement by which one comes to know reality. What we know depends on who we are and what we have made of ourselves. Lewis' varied pages show the form of human life with its noble and ignoble possibilities. That portrayal of life draws us to his pages, and consequently to wisdom about what people are.

The final chapter of Holmer's book is "On Theology and God." Lewis was quite familiar with modern theology, but rejected most of it in a reassertion of what he called "mere Christianity." His religion was stringent and traditional, and he cast it in the language that Christian people speak naturally and spontaneously. As such, his writings are popular; they speak to all who would make religious sense in an age when even theologians seem to get in the way of that sense. Lewis did not think the gospel required accommodation to modernity; rather, the individual needs to be reshaped by fundamental Christian concepts. But Lewis was not a fundamentalist. Indeed, he belongs to no one theological camp, and is associated with no extremes. He asserts a Christian rationality that is available for every person, as a cogent way of Christianly knowing and talking about the world. Lewis' appealing picture, like the gospel itself, speaks to our deepest longings.

Holmer does an admirable job of displaying the constant wisdom of Lewis' literature and describing the modern contexts in which much of Lewis' writing has its polemical thrust. Only the final chapter leaves one feeling a bit short-changed: one could wish for a bit more detail on the scope and substance of Lewis' Christian pages. This criticism, of course, may be only a function of the present reviewer's own preoccupations. Occasional reference to thoughts of Søren Kierkegaard and Ludwig Wittgenstein clarify some of Lewis' themes, without complicating matters. Thus, Holmer brings a philosophical and theological sophistication to his pages, without limiting access by a wide audience. And this book does deserve a wide audience. For, unlike much of the literature on Lewis, it does not allow appreciation to preclude any appropriate criticism; and we get that along with the volume's other virtues, the primary one being a sure hold on just what C. S. Lewis was doing. Holmer writes in a clear, persuasive style, noticeably devoid of sexist language. Anyone with an interest in Lewis will find Holmer's book, then, both enlightening and a joy to read.

E. Dale Madren

Human Sexuality: New Directions in American Catholic Thought, Anthony Kosnik, et al. Paulist Press. 332 pp. 1977. \$8.50.

Let me begin this review with the effusive generalization that reading this book and a follow-up study it stimulates could be a rewarding educational experience for Protestant ministers and teachers in an area of life that is characterized by controversy, confusion and emotional rhetoric. I hope to be more explicit regarding this evaluation in the latter part of the review.

The factor that prompted an elite Catholic group to initiate this book is clearly stated in the opening paragraph of the Preface: "Human sexu-

ality has become in recent years a subject of extensive study, research, reflection, and debate. Profound changes in sexual attitudes and behavior patterns in America and elsewhere have led to serious questions regarding the adequacy of traditional Catholic formulations and pastoral responses to sexual matters. (Italics mine.) In the fall of 1972, recognizing its responsibility to the American Catholic community and its pastors, the Board of Directors of the Catholic Theological Society of America commissioned the establishment of a committee to do a study on human sexuality in the hope of 'providing some helpful and illuminating guidelines in the present confusion.' The committee consisted of three priests, a nun, and one family man, representing training and experience in systematic and moral theology, the parish ministry, church history, medical and sexual ethics, and law. After several years of research and wide consultation that produced two preliminary drafts for distribution and criticism, and a preliminary report to the CTSA membership, the committee made its final report last fall. As stated in the Foreword, the CTSA Board "voted to 'receive' the report and to arrange for its publication." But it continues: "These actions imply neither the approval nor disapproval by the Society or its Board of Directors of the contents of the report. The publication is intended as a service to the membership of the Society and a wider public of interested persons by making available the results of this research." The publication has probably exceeded the expectations of its sponsor because, according to one prominent Catholic reviewer, "it is causing a sensation," with virtual battlelines readily constructed by caustic critics and enthusiastic supporters. But more of this later.

The book has a logical sequence in its development and impressive clarity in its literary style, reflecting long and intimate consultation of its

writers. Indeed, a definite impression is its uniform composition which is unusual in a book with this many authors. The first two chapters provide an essential historical overview of the biblical foundation and Christian tradition regarding human sexuality with a special effort "to separate what is revealing and lasting" in both sources "from what is culturally conditioned and subject to change." The third chapter reviews pertinent empirical data from the social and behavioral sciences, with solid evidence that recognized authorities in these fields have been consulted on a variety of sensitive subjects in human sexuality "in order to take due note of new developments and information which recent studies have afforded." The fourth chapter, entitled "Toward a Theology of Human Sexuality," begins the core of the book because it "attempts to integrate the biblical, historical, and anthropological data into a theological synthesis" which provides the base for a definitive Christian view of human sexuality. Here it is claimed that "contemporary moral theology is challenged to attempt to articulate a theology of sexuality that is both consistent with Catholic tradition and yet sensitive to modern data." How well the authors achieve this challenge is at the epicenter of the stormy response they have created.

Having established their base the authors devote the bulk of the book (140 pp.) in its final chapter to presenting "pastoral guidelines for human sexuality under the following four major categories, three of these with significant specific subjects subsumed under the major topic: *Marital Sexuality* (emphasis mine)—call to responsible partnership, call to responsible parenthood with contraception, sterilization, artificial insemination, and child-free marriages treated as special problems and common law marriages, communal living, swinging and adultery described as "variant patterns"; *Non-Marital Sexuality*—sex relations outside marriage, dating and court-

ship, the single state, and celibate and virginal sexuality; *Homosexuality*; and *Special Questions*, about masturbation, sexual variants, sex clinics, transsexualism, pornography and obscenity, and programs of sex education. Such a wide swath of considerations allows only a brief treatment of a number of these and therefore invites the criticism of superficiality. The authors in a Postscript acknowledge this: "In retrospect, we recognize our undertaking to be so vast in its proportions and implications as to have been almost foolhardy. Yet we assumed the task—because our own pastoral experience indicated a critical need for it."

In this reviewer's estimate the most sensitive subjects are dealt with in an approximate in-depth manner. Furthermore, I found the typical treatment of these most controversial subjects both instructive and surprisingly consonant with a sound Protestant educational approach. Take for example "sex relations outside of marriage." First, pertinent scriptural references and the teachings of Catholic tradition are critically examined. Secondly, "current approaches to the morality of pre-marital sexuality" are described in terms of positions and possible options promulgated by various authorities with merits and objections succinctly stated. Thirdly, the authors identify their own position. Finally, from this base, they offer flexible guidelines for "pastoral reflection" and counselling, leaving the ultimate responsibility for decision-making to the informed conscience of the person seeking help.

And now the question which the reader has probably been impatiently expecting: Why is this book "causing a sensation?" Kenneth L. Woodward, general editor of the section on religion in *Newsweek*, presented in the July 11 issue an overview of reactions, mostly con, with the hierarchal warning from the chairman of the doctrinal committee of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, William Cardinal Baum, that many of the

study's conclusions "are not in accordance with the teachings of the Church"; and a writer in *Commonweal* (Sept. 2) pointed to "the prompt assurance given by Archbishop Joseph Bernardin, as president of the U. S. Bishops Conference, that the hierarchy's theological commission would respond to the document." At this writing this response has not yet been published, but its predictability obviously conveys hierarchal concern, to say the least.

In my study of the book and a half-dozen reviews in Catholic publications, I have attempted to discern the fundamental causes for the book's basic rejection by its critics. Due to lack of space I shall have to point to these briefly and hence inadequately.

First, *Human Sexuality* has precipitated an open confrontation of a debate that has been going on "in private or in restricted professional circles." John G. Milhaven in the *National Catholic Reporter* (June 17) reveals that "most of the report's propositions now hotly criticized have been defended for some time by a good number of respected theologians and applied in pastoral guidance by a good number of respected pastors. . . . But none of them has brought as many propositions together for public discussion as this report does." I get the solid impression that the hierarchy of the Church and some moral theologians oppose this open confrontation.

This point leads to the storm's center, namely the book's definitive interpretation of human sexuality and its application to the pertinent subjects and problem areas enumerated above. Contending that their interpretation is grounded in the timeless insights into human sexuality found in the Scriptures and Church tradition and increasingly supported by empirical evidence, the writers formulate their view: "Wholesome human sexuality is that which fosters a creative growth toward integration. . . . This terminology seems to reflect more accurately the profound and radical understand-

ing . . . expressed in the Church's more recent documents. Vatican II's dynamic concept of personhood . . . provides the basis for this new approach further extended in the 1975 *Declaration of Sexual Ethics*. . . . Given this new concept of Christian personhood and proclaiming 'the nature of the human person and his acts' as the harmonizing principle, it is our contention that the older expression of procreative and unitive (as the purpose of marital sex) is too static and limiting to be of value in guiding the development of a theology of human sexuality. Such a formulation too narrowly restricts the meaning of sexuality to the context of marriage as has been the case throughout much of our tradition." (Pp. 86-87) The determining criteria for "creative growth toward integration" is whether or not sexual behavior is "self-liberating," "other-enriching," "honest," "faithful," "socially responsible," "life-serving," and "joyous." And to obviate the criticism that this personalistic approach is latent, if not explicit, humanism the authors repeat their claim "that all of these values must be enlightened and permeated by the core principle of Christian conduct, the Gospel law of love" (pp. 92-95).

As is apparent, this proclamation of the meaning and purpose of human sexuality not only reverses the priorities of the Church's official teaching but amplifies the unitive function primarily in personalistic terms. This radical subordination of the procreative function in marital sex makes morally licit, under certain circumstances, the use of most of the birth control methods currently prescribed and even endorses, again under certain circumstances, sterilization and intentional "child-free marriages," which also contravenes official teaching. Hence, the reader can anticipate "radical" departures in the treatment of other areas of sexual behavior which cannot be considered "intrinsically evil." This treatment "departs widely from the authoritative teach-

ings of the magisterium," hence, is "next door to heresy," according to one critic.

Let me succinctly point to several other prominent criticisms, several of which are partially justified in my opinion, while others are not: The authors' claim that they base their pervasive thesis on scriptural and doctrinal teaching is not only "strained," according to one reviewer, but here is "distortion of relevant ecclesial documents"; according to another, "the fact that the authors are always 'open to further evidence' suggests the marshmallow character of their moral criteria"; "it is weak on social norms and naive about the tragic aspects of sexual relationship"; and finally, it is "a fatuous report by people who have no real scholarly standing"! (?)

But a keen observer and widely read author in this field, Eugene Kennedy, professor at Loyola University, while critical on several points, strikes an affirmative note: "One should be grateful that the book helps to articulate a major change in the relationship between contemporary men and women and institutionalized religion. It should be read with an awareness of the break in history which it documents" (*The Washington Post*, July 17).

Space restricts reference to only several significant values I see for Protestant ministers and teachers as they consider reading this book. First, any retention of the myth—if there is such after Vatican II—that Roman Catholicism is monolithic, lacking in freedom to debate and even promote radical dissent, should be dispelled once and forever. Secondly, any minister or teacher who regards himself or herself as a competent counsellor in problems of sexual behavior will become acutely aware of the complex nature of these problems and will exercise greater restraint in giving "expert advice." Thirdly, the book offers abundant resources for education or continuing education toward increasing competence and confidence in dealing with these matters, not

only because of the self-analysis it stimulates and its suggestive pastoral guidelines, some of which one can identify with, but also because of its rich biographical references in the footnotes and bibliography. Here is an invaluable resource for help in a critical area of life.

In essence, I see in this book an example of what is greatly needed in Protestant denominational circles. One may disagree vehemently with some of its conclusions on sensitive issues but one should only welcome the high level of dialogue and debate it stimulates with the hope that Protestant officialdom will do likewise in similar study publications. Several denominations have done so. The last General Conference of the United Methodist Church rejected such an opportunity—in this reviewer's estimate, a serious failure and loss to this Church's progress in these crucial considerations.

J. H. Phillips

Ministry and Imagination. Urban T. Holmes, III. Seabury, 1976. 279 pp. \$10.95.

Ministry and Imagination may prove to be the most significant contribution to pastoral theology in this decade. Urban Holmes, Episcopal priest and Dean of the School of Theology at the University of the South, is among our leading Protestant-Roman Catholic pastoral theologians, and this is his finest work. By combining incarnational theology and the insights of anthropology with his own life of ministry and imagination, he has given the church a much needed, unique, insightful book.

For too long, pastoral theology has been restricted to the fields of pastoral care and counselling, just as for too long religious education has been restricted to concerns about schooling and instruction, and ministry to institutional administration and preaching. At the very minimum, we should be indebted to Dean Holmes for re-

establishing the proper, inclusive, holistic field of pastoral theology. But there are more important reasons why we should be grateful, especially we who are concerned with catechesis as an aspect of pastoral ministry.

Catechesis includes all pastoral activities which make divine revelation known, which aim at awakening and developing faith and which equip persons for apostleship in the world. *Ministry and Imagination* speaks creatively to these very issues. Indeed, the main point of the book is that ministry needs to focus on the awareness of God's Word. Dean Holmes rightly insists that if a community of faith perceives God's presence in the world, our individual and corporate lives will be transformed. No one has ever made a better case for the unity of religious experiences and radical social action. More important, he has provided the insights necessary for the development of a liberating, transforming catechesis.

Ministry and Imagination is divided into three sections: "The Context of Ministry," "Toward A Contemporary Piety," and "Patterns in Ministry." Focusing on the need of congregations to be responsive to the presence of God in their midst *now*, the substance of the book is an exploration of the natural need and possibility of people living in an enchanted, God-filled world. Ministry, while concerned with the meaning and rooting in mystery, is *in* the world. Further, ministry is a shared communal transmission of and confrontation with the meaning of transcendent experiences as manifest in the ordinary world of daily life rather than something done to or for others by a professional. Drawing on his experience and knowledge as a priest, theologian and anthropologist Dean Holmes affirms the centrality of the church's *internal* life. Thus he returns piety to its proper understanding and place in the religious life. We humans are naturally pious, that is, created for the life of imagination. The truly radical life of the Christian in the world is only

possible for those whose imagination has been freed. Having the ability to be aware of and responsive to the Word of God in everyday life, a Christian congregation can truly understand and live in the freedom and joy of God's grace. Congregational life lived in the reality of transcendental experience will create a necessary productive tension between being a conserving-intimate and radical-innovative community.

Thus rather than shutting the church off from concern for the world, the life of true piety helps the community more clearly to appreciate and perceive God's actions in history, even as it stimulates the community to engage in creative action in the world. If the church is to become a community of Christian faith it needs more than leadership with a set of professional competencies; it needs a "mana-person, clown, storyteller, wagon master," for a priest and a congregation in search of spiritual depth. If the church, as a storytelling community, could once again learn to live a life of imagination rooted in mystery in a world seen as "enchanted," it would be able to break free from its ghetto existence and be led back "into the world as revolutionaries for the sake of the kingdom."

Our contemporary secular world suppresses and distorts our God-given piety, the ministry has become a profession of pastoral administrators, the church a ghetto mirroring the culture, and religious education has become instruction about religion. *Ministry and Imagination* with its focus on the Christian story-tradition, personal and corporate piety, ritual, religious experience, and action in the world provides a foundation for transforming our understanding and ways. This is a rare book, worth more than its price. It is essential reading for all concerned Christians, clergy and laity alike, and it should be required reading for all seminarians and persons in the field of religious education.

Ministry and Imagination is the most significant contemporary work

on the church's ministry, the most satisfactory, inspiring response to the present crisis in church and ministry. It is a rare contribution to both theory and practice—both a scholar's and practitioner's dream. If I were to name the one most influential book I have read this year, *Ministry and Imagination* would be it. Needless to say, I unreservedly and enthusiastically recommend it.

John H. Westerhoff

One Hundred Years of Old Testament Interpretation. Ronald E. Clements. Westminster. 1976. 152 pp. \$4.95.

It is entirely appropriate, given the fact that a century has passed since the publication of the formative works of the great German scholar Julius Wellhausen, that modern scholars seek to clarify the origins of their thought and to take stock of the ground that has been covered since that time. Clements' volume proposes only to sketch the main lines of development and to do so at a level which is comprehensible not only to the student but to the general reader as well.

The following topics are surveyed, comprising the chapter titles: Pentateuch, Historical Books, Prophets, Psalms, Wisdom Literature, and Old Testament Theology. There is a concluding section entitled "Retrospect and Prospect," plus an index of authors. Surprisingly, there is no treatment of apocalyptic literature, to which much energy has been devoted in very recent publications. Deliberately omitted are treatments of developments in the area of linguistics and archaeology (the latter being the only area in which Americans have played a predominant role).

Since few will question the accuracy of Clements' portrayal (he is a scholar of the first magnitude), and since he has attempted no more than a sketch of the major developments, there is little point in elaborating on the contents here. It is perhaps sufficient to stress that this is a volume of unusual clarity and admirable literary style.

which will likely replace such works as Herbert Hahn's *The Old Testament in Modern Research* (1954, expanded in 1966). It is recommended for any pastor who is concerned to understand "where things are" in a modern view of the Scriptures. And the price, it should be noted, is a bargain, and all the more so given the quality of the product.

Lloyd Bailey

Covenant and Promise. John Bright.
Westminster. 1976. 207 pp. \$10.00.

How does one explain the breadth and tension of opinion among the Biblical prophets about Israel's immediate future? On the one hand, Isaiah seems to argue that initial military setbacks, however severe, are not indicative of the final outcome: the city of Jerusalem will not, indeed cannot, be taken by an enemy (speaking specifically of the Assyrians in the seventh century, B.C.E.). On the other hand, Jeremiah will argue that the entire country, including the city of Jerusalem, will fall to the enemy: all resistance is futile, and one ought to surrender to the enemy (speaking specifically of the Babylonians in the sixth century, B.C.E.). Bright argues, quite properly, that the difference is not merely political opinion nor has it anything to do with changing historical circumstances (such that Isaiah might later have agreed with Jeremiah in his unique situation). Rather, enduring and canonical theological perspectives are reflected, perspectives grounded in Israel's ancient identity-forming traditions. First is the Mosaic (Sinaitic) Covenant, with its stress upon obedience in view of God's prior gracious deliverance (Exodus) and with its clear warnings of the consequences of disobedience (Deuteronomy). Second is the Davidic Covenant, with its stress upon God's gracious, eternal, unconditional promise to preserve the dynasty (2 Samuel 7) and the royal city (Psalm 78: 132). Bright traces the origins and various inter-

pretations of these two covenantal self-understandings from their beginnings through the exilic period (sixth century), showing how elements of them can be complementary or how they can be pressed into utter tension.

The nucleus of the book was presented in the Currie Lectures at Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary in 1971, and thus to those current in their Biblical scholarship the issue and its solution will sound a bit dated. Still, it is the best introduction to the problem that I have seen: well organized, uncomplicated in syntax, devoid of the obscure terminology so dear to some writers in this field, succinct, and relatively well balanced in its conclusions. Although it is going beyond Bright's purpose in the volume, my suggestion is that the pastor will find in it helpful background for speaking to the contemporary sickness called "civil religion" (or perhaps the issue should be posed in terms of "establishment" vs. "non-establishment" theology).

At least two basic questions may be raised about Bright's perspectives on this issue.

1. He repeatedly stresses that in prophetic eschatology (a problematic term concerning which he gives a helpful discussion), while there is no suprahistorical terminus, there is the expectation of a new age in history "beyond which there was no need to look . . . it would endure forever" (p. 19; cf. pp. 82, 93). It has been argued, I think correctly, that the prophets were not quite that naive about human nature or about history: the devotion characteristic of the new age would endure for a while, then itself need renewal. History has shown such a perspective to be a correct one. (For brief remarks along these lines, see James Ward, *Hosea* [Harper, 1966], pp. 86f., 125f.)

2. Not everyone, including the reviewer, is quite so sure that the historical Isaiah proclaimed Jerusalem's inviolability, although temple rituals (e.g., Psalm 78: 132), popular religion (Jeremiah 26), and non-canonical

prophets (Jeremiah 28) certainly did so. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that not everyone is sure that the passages which seem to indicate that perspective (e.g., chapters 36-37) belong to the earliest Isaianic collection. Even when faced with explicit statements in unquestionably genuine material (e.g., 5:5-6) which contradict his interpretation, Bright merely says that "one might gain the (wrong) impression" (p. 103) and shunts the evidence aside without explanation. For a more cautious interpretation, see Th. Vriczen, "Essentials of the Theology of Isaiah," in *Israel's Prophetic Heritage*, B. Anderson, ed. (Harper, 1962), and for the position that Isaiah expected Jerusalem's destruction no less than other prophets such as Jeremiah, see James Ward, *Amos and Isaiah* (Abingdon, 1969). [The reviewer was amazed to find no reference in Bright's discussion either to Ward's volume or to the position which he ably represents; this is an imbalance quite uncharacteristic of the rest of Bright's volume.]

The scope of Bright's volume could have been expanded in an exciting way to include the so-called "false" prophets. They, no less than the so-called "true" (canonical) prophets, spoke from a theological perspective based upon Israel's ancient covenant traditions. For an introduction, see "Prophecy, False," in *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, Supplementary Volume (Abingdon, 1976), pp. 701-702, and the bibliography cited there. For a more detailed treatment of the problem of conflicting religious voices, see Henri Mottu, "Jeremiah vs. Hananiah: Ideology and Truth in Old Testament Prophecy," *Radical Religion*, II, nos. 2-3 (1975), 58ff.

In conclusion: this is a basic volume for the pastor, and is recommended for the church library.

Lloyd Bailey

As most of the readers of this *Review* already know, the Old Testament Library from Westminster Press includes some very sound and helpful volumes. The present book under review is no exception to the general over-all strength of the series.

Hopefully, most will remember that Professor Mays has already contributed two volumes to the segment dealing with the prophetic books, commentaries on Amos and Hosea. The present volume on Micah was sorely needed since so little has been done recently in English on this prophetic book.

Professor Mays contends that the book of Micah as it now stands contains prophetic material from the latter part of the eighth century B.C. all the way to the end of the sixth century B.C. He discusses the form of the book and suggests a history as to how it came to settle in its specific arrangement. Naturally this includes denying to Micah of the eighth century B.C. a goodly portion of the book as it now stands. Mays thinks that only the sayings in 1:3-5a, 8-15; 2:1-5; 2:6-11; 3:1-4; 3:5-8; 3:9-12 can be attributed to Micah, and that even these have been subjected to some additions and revisions.

The author begins his volume with a relatively brief but thorough introduction to the prophet and the book. This is followed by a verse by verse commentary which follows the order of the Biblical text.

The present reviewer encourages the reading of this book on a significant but often overlooked prophet. The present volume by Professor Mays does not seem to be as smoothly written as his volumes on Amos and Hosea, but this may reflect the complexity of the redaction process of the book and is not intended as a negative criticism. This book is a significant piece of work and is a volume worthy to be included in any pastor's library.

James M. Efirid

Micah: A Commentary. James Luther Mays. Westminster. 1976. 169 pp. \$10.95.

Hebrews, James, 1 and 2 Peter, Jude, Revelation. Proclamation Commentaries. R. H. Fuller, G. S. Sloyan, G. Krodel, F. W. Danker, E. S. Fiorenza. Fortress. 1976. 122 pp. \$3.50.

For those who are already familiar with the Fortress Press series, Proclamation Commentaries, the style and format of this particular volume can be anticipated. This series is designed primarily for pastors in order to keep them abreast of current interpretation of the books of the Bible and to offer suggestions for application of the message of the books for present and contemporary society. The Biblical books are presented topically and are not exegeted in a verse by verse format. The emphasis is upon attempting to relate the meaning of the original writings to the problems of the contemporary church and thereby to assist in the preaching ministry in the local setting. It is an attempt to assist the preacher with the "hermeneutical problem," to use the more common term in vogue today.

The present volume deals with six New Testament books which originated in what is sometimes referred to as the "post-apostolic" period. The authors generally have performed a commendable service by discussing the books in a way that is enlightening and helpful to the contemporary preacher.

It would be impossible in a short review to discuss each of the writers and the content of his/her contribution. Suffice it to say that over-all this book would be a good investment for the contemporary preacher, especially at today's book prices. Even though no one will agree with all the points made by the various authors, nevertheless there are many interesting and helpful comments contained in this short and concise presentation. There is also a short bibliography at the conclusion of the book which gives some direction for further study. The books which are listed are fine, but it would have been even more helpful

if some additional volumes had been included as well.

James M. Efrid

Truth and Method. Hans-Georg Gadamer. Seabury. 1975. 551 pp. \$22.50.

It is cause for great satisfaction that this classic of hermeneutic analysis (first published in the German in 1960) is now also available in the English in this country and can be used by students and instructors alike in university and seminary classes. The translation is usually very readable. There are occasional blunders, though, for which the reader might want to gird himself beforehand. For example, on p. 378 we are told, "Incarnation is obviously not embodiment." What is said in the German is difficult to say in the English, since it lacks an exact equivalent. But the German text certainly does not imply that incarnation is not embodiment. The best I was able to come up with as translation was, *incarnation is not in-corporation (Einkörperung)*. Gadamer in this section is speaking against the notion of the transmigration of the soul according to which the soul merely indwells the body. As over against this type of thing, Gadamer probably would very much want to say that incarnation is embodiment, excluding a view of incarnation that would intimate a mere indwelling (in-corporation) of the soul.

Since I am on the subject of translation, the reader needs to be forewarned that on p. 155 the second paragraph chops up a whole sentence of the original. In translation it should appear as: "Not only counter-reformation theology viewed it that way, but also Dilthey." And on p. 237 in the last paragraph at least a clause from the German got lost ("... it cannot be a general expectation that what is stated in a text . . ."). According to p. 532 (note 123) R. Guardini's book on Rilke is supposed to have been mentioned on p. 333. No such

reference appears on that page. Since in the U. S. the Swabian Pietist Oetinger is so little known, the name index might have done well had it listed also pp. 441 and 502 where Oetinger is also mentioned. On p. 358 interpretation is misspelled, and perception on p. 406. But these are minor blemishes. They will not keep the reader from getting the message.

Why is the book important for theology? The development of thought from Rudolf Bultmann to Ernest Fuchs, today partly represented by Eberhard Jüngel, had a peculiar hermeneutical valency that turned theology almost into hermeneutic. Gadamer is very aware of this development: "Theology here almost becomes hermeneutics, since—following the development of modern biblical criticism—it does not take as its object the truth of revelation itself, but the truth of the statements or communications that are related to God's revelation. . . . Hence the chief category is that of communication" (p. 478). In some ways, in Gadamer's philosophy we have a more "original" representation of the milieu of the new hermeneutic than what theologians John B. Cobb and James M. Robinson could bring off in their second volume of the *New Frontiers in Theology* (1964).

The particular thrust of Gadamer's project focuses on the place of the tradition in human understanding. The "existential structure of There-being must find its expression in the understanding of historical tradition as well" (p. 234). There is no way in brief to summarize the richness implied in this stress on tradition, as there certainly is no way to offer the gist of the book in capsule form. The tradition stands for the fact that all of us are more influenced by our personal and collective histories than we are willing to admit. Perhaps in contrast to the more familiar views of hermeneutic, some derived from German romanticism, one might summarize Gadamer's position as *tradition vs. subjectivity*. In some re-

spects Gadamer's great antipode turns out to be Dilthey: "Self-reflection and autobiography—Dilthey's starting-points—are not primary and are not an adequate basis for the hermeneutical problem, because through them history is made private once more. In fact history does not belong to us, but we belong to it. Long before we understand ourselves through the process of self-examination, we understand ourselves in a self-evident way in the family, society and state in which we live. The focus of subjectivity is a distorting mirror. The self-awareness of the individual is only a flickering in the closed circuits of historical life. That is why the prejudices of the individual, far more than his judgments, constitute the historical reality of his being" (p. 245).

Gadamer is aware of distortion in subjectivity. But how much is he willing to work with the distortions in the tradition and in the language which encompasses the tradition? The model on which he examines language is the philosophical dialogue or everyday conversation. He admits of the awareness of "the fundamental inexactness of all human knowledge" (p. 396) at certain points of the philosophical tradition. Yet what of the fact that society cannot be modeled only on dialogue? What about the factor of constant conflict in society? Is not language in the conflict often used to hide our thoughts? Does not a kind of language poisoning take place all the time in the concealment? And is not one of the reasons for the concealment the use of language for domination?

Gadamer is deeply aware of the problem of domination. Perhaps here criticism of Gadamer's position can be most fair. The principal domination criticized by Gadamer lies in the area of the natural sciences: "But the knowledge of all the natural sciences is knowledge for domination" (p. 409). One wonders, how about domination in politics and economics?

This is the crucial point raised by Gadamer's German colleague, Jürgen

Habermas. Language as tradition is itself dependent on societal processes. Language itself also functions as an instrument of domination and power. We cannot overlook the fact that language legitimates all kinds of relationships in organized power. To the extent that the legitimation process is not articulated in explicit terms language is *also* ideological.

Segregation in the South is a case in point. Language was used to legitimate the apartness of two people. It was said, "Separate, but equal." And it took more than language to change the previous language pattern of isolation between two races, even on university campuses. It took political clout. Today it is an issue of making the language catch up with the new power situation.

While Gadamer offers no help in locking horns with societal conflict, there is a basic contribution in regard to the relationship between philosophy and theology that represents a milestone. In spite of the social conflict blindspot, there is a step toward liberation in Gadamer (p. 433). With Heidegger one had to take over Heidegger as the *right* philosophy (*pace* Bultmann, or Macquarrie, or Ott). Gadamer one cannot take over even if one wanted to. Gadamer wants philosophy to do its business in paying attention to its tradition. Theology (by implication) is invited to do its job in terms of *its* tradition, to take seriously its own experience structure, and to make headway by turning first of all to its own root-metaphors. Theology cannot be apologetic anymore (as still in Macquarrie). But it also does not have to be *not* on speaking terms with philosophy (as in Barth). We are breathing a freer air.

If one remembers how much theology has been under the thumb of either the historical consciousness as an absolute or philosophy as an absolute one can quickly sense a few dimensions of what it means to breathe more freely in the Gadamer context. (1) We can approach Christian origins in a new way—as em-

powerment of contemporary Christian understanding. The conflict between the historical Jesus vs. the Christ of faith goes by the board as a primal issue. On the primal level language cannot be chopped up into language that yields objective data (historical Jesus) and language that expresses subjectivity (Christ of faith). In the heavily metaphorical language of Christian origins we have the real thing first of all. On the primal level it does not symbolically point beyond itself. It claims us in its uniqueness. Says Gadamer: "I must allow the validity of the claim made by tradition, not in the sense of simply acknowledging the past in its otherness, but in such a way that it has something to say to me. This too calls for a fundamental sort of openness. Someone who is open in this way to tradition sees that the historical consciousness is not really open at all, but rather, if it reads its texts 'historically' has always thoroughly smoothed them out beforehand, so that the criteria of our own knowledge can never be put in question by tradition" (pp. 324f.). Theology is challenged to give an account of the claim of its own tradition first of all in regard to the primal language of Christianity in Christian origins.

(2) What is hardly understood as yet is the hermeneutical shift as a seismic shift of sensibility. With the Enlightenment the old metaphysical consciousness collapsed and the historical consciousness came into being. Today the historical consciousness yields to the hermeneutical consciousness—as the Enlightenment passes over into the Liberation. This also entails a shift in the Reformation understanding of the Scriptures. We are no longer underscoring the *sola Scriptura*. What we are struggling with is the *prima Scriptura*. The originative language of the Christian community because of its primacy comes to us as claim. It is not the *story* as such that now overrides the creed. We are learning that the largely metaphorical character of the

originative language confronts us with a reality-gain. Some metaphors in the New Testament reflect God's struggle in history in a new way. Concepts, such as those of the creeds, grow out of metaphors. They are secondary. The metaphors reflect a new experience structure that lies at the root of the Christian tradition. The task of theology time and again is to recapture the character of this new experience structure.

The new approach delivers us from all kinds of dualisms or splits of thought. I shall mention only two examples. The split between self-giving love (Jesus' death on the cross) and justice (Jesus' life and teaching of the kingdom) is shown to be spurious. Language as the center from which we think encompasses both on the primal level. Only the historical consciousness creates the split. The same is true of the awesome split between the modern community of epistemology (what are the objective criteria?) and the community of the church (what is truth commitment?).

It has to be underscored that in the context of the growing hermeneutical consciousness theology, however, has to go its own way. We have stressed the new experience structure reflected in the originative language of the Christian faith. What Gadamer as a philosopher has to say of *every authentic experience* does not do justice to where theology needs to look: "As a genuine form of experience it must reflect the general structure of experience" (p. 321). The root-metaphors of the Christian faith do not fit into the general structure of experience, at least not in their most unique aspects. There are occasional overlappings. But basically the root-metaphors do not dovetail with what we otherwise know of reality. In a way Gadamer knows this too. But the book offers the strange spectacle of a philosopher honest enough not to deceive himself over the specificity of the Christian experience structure, and yet caught in the web of the traditional philosophical expectations

of a universally accessible truth. Christian theology can only take the route of inquiring first into its own experience structure, without being derailed by expectations of universal truth.

Gadamer knows the uniqueness of the Christian tradition, and yet as a philosopher will not carry through consistently what it implies. For example, in regard to Christology Gadamer understands the specific experience structure it reflects rather well: "In the midst of the penetration of Christian theology by the Greek idea of logic something new is born: the center of language, in which the mediation of the incarnation event achieves its full truth. Christology prepares the way for a new philosophy of man, which mediates in a new way between the mind of man in its finitude and the divine infinity. This will become the real basis of what we have called the hermeneutical experience" (p. 388). It can become the real basis of the hermeneutical experience only if the history of Christian origins is adequately struggled with. Christian history is not just mediation between finitude and infinity. It is quite clear that the center of language in the church relates a solidarity of the infinite with the finite in the struggles for justice in history. The oppressed, the marginals, the poor are the center of language, not philosophers engaged in dialogue. Christian theology is compelled to relate God's involvement in the conflict. Gadamer does not take this route. But for once the philosopher does not block the way.

Frederick Herzog

What Is Structural Exegesis? Daniel Patte. Fortress, 1976. 90 pp. \$2.95.

Structuralism has to do with the discovery of fundamental structures of narrative and myth which come to expression in concrete texts. Their existence, or subsistence, has been suggested on the one hand by advanced research in linguistics and on the other hand by cultural anthro-

pology. That such insights or discoveries should be relevant to the Bible and to biblical exegesis is certainly a reasonable proposal and one worthy of serious and sustained investigation.

To the end that the insights and perspectives of structuralism might be made more accessible, this brief paperback has been issued as a volume in Fortress Press's useful "Guides to Biblical Scholarship Series." According to the advertising blurb on the back cover, we have in this boot "at last . . . an introduction to structuralism . . . which does not presuppose advance [sic] knowledge of linguistics or anthropology." Moreover, "through clear analytic explanations illustrated by application to specific texts, Professor Patte shows how structuralism and traditional scholarship must go hand in hand so that they can carry the exegetical task to its end. . . ."

These statements represent reasonable goals and expectations for the book, but regrettably this reviewer cannot agree that either has been entirely fulfilled. As one whose nascent interest in structuralism has not yet led to a mastery of the relevant works of Levi-Strauss or de Saussure, I can only confess that without such firsthand knowledge I found some of Patte's book to be profoundly opaque, particularly parts of chapters III and IV, where he deals with biblical texts. While such an incomplete knowledge of structuralism does not allow one

the right to criticize the substance of Patte's presentation, which seems quite erudite, I must express disappointment that I myself found no greater help here. Furthermore, it is really misleading to claim, as the blurb does, that Patte shows how structuralist and traditional exegesis go hand in hand. He repeatedly insists that they may and should, but in the analysis of specific texts he does not actually show how they complement one another.

In all likelihood the problematic nature of this book bears testimony more than anything else, to the presently inchoate and burgeoning state of the subject matter. As I understand it, structuralism is itself an approach, perspective, or method that is still coming into being as the result of research and insights in various disciplines. An author who is asked to explain it to neophytes must therefore attempt to accomplish a synthesis that has not yet emerged in actual research and to describe a method that is not yet firmly established. No wonder then that Patte's prose seems awash in jargon and punctuated by recondite formulae.

Possibly the time for such a book as this on structural exegesis has not yet arrived. Let us wait five years or so. In the meantime, those of us who are interested and uninitiated should perhaps read Levi-Strauss and de Saussure!

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