

Having for centuries asked what *use* everything is, he has eventually turned his eyes towards our play. When we tell him that we do not need to state a *use* for our play, because it is delightful in itself, he is incapable of understanding us. He has so thoroughly perverted his own nature that he is incapable of *enjoying* anything, including our delightful play. And so, in his jaundiced perversity, he has even turned what was our play into an article of commerce, by inventing professional sport, and making it an occasion for gambling. Having lost the capacity for play he has poisoned the play of others.

But this captain of commerce will not have the last word. For if you wander into cities which his bombs and shells have reduced to rubble, you will still find 'the city full of boys and girls, playing in the streets thereof'. They laugh as they play over the businessman's destruction; these children prove themselves true men—in St Thomas's definition of man—'a rational animal capable of laughter'. And in the last day they shall laugh, these children in the rubble, when they walk the streets of the New Jerusalem, playing before the face of God.



TYOLOGY IN THE SCRIPTURES

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IN the great pastoral effort of contemporary Catholicism, a return to sources seems to provide one of its most powerful inspirations and also to give some of the finest results. Catholics are re-discovering an interest in the Bible, the Fathers, the Liturgy, an interest which completes and perfects what the return to the texts and teaching of St Thomas has contributed to Christian thought during the last fifty years. But since in this case a purely scientific perspective is not sufficient, what is required being not only to admire but to assimilate, the problem of the approach to, and interpretation of, these sources cannot fail to arise. And, primarily, the problem of how to read the Bible, how to discover anew a constant source of spirituality and of triumphant Christian energy in the Old Testament which modern exegesis seems at first sight to have drained of its spiritual value. A more extensive

reading of the Fathers, by revealing innumerable possibilities and resources, has made the problem of the Bible more acute. We know that the Fathers, like the men of the Middle Ages moreover, were familiar with the sacred text through and through; many of them knew it by heart; it formed the subject of their prayers, the theme of their sermons; their language, even when there is no explicit quotation, is of the very warp and woof of the expressions of Holy Scripture. For them the Scriptures truly and unceasingly provide a meeting place with God, a discourse and a lesson given by God to man repeated over and over again in a thousand different forms, but (the point is an important one) directly and totally translatable, in terms of Christianity and the mystery of the New Covenant. Recently, considerable attention has been drawn to the important connections and analogies which the Fathers made between the Eucharist and the Scriptures; that it should have been possible to suggest a 'real presence' of the Word in Scripture also, shows how far the devotion of the early Church went in this respect. Yet none of the Fathers claimed to find in Scripture a substitute for the catechesis of the creed and none drew their rule of faith from their interpretation of the Scriptures. To repeat a saying of Loisy about St Paul, they do not prove their theories by the Scriptures, they see them in the Scriptures. Origen and Augustine give proof of a very deep humility in this respect. Origen fully admits that his interpretation may contain that which is personal and fallible; from the outset, Augustine penetrated the obscurity and mystery of the Scriptures as a means willed by God to arouse curiosity and to bring the Christian's mind to linger over their pages, pages which will form the sustenance of his life. In this sense it is not incorrect to say that their work in the field of Scripture is a theology, if by theology is meant the profound research attempted by the human mind into the truths to which it adheres by faith.

But can we still read the Old Testament in this spirit? Is it possible to accept otherwise than as an accommodation St Augustine's perpetual identification of Christ with the 'orante' of the Psalms? Or of the mystery of baptismal renewal with the Flood? Or to see the Cross where the sacred text speaks of the wood, the sacrifice of redemption where blood is mentioned? If one turns to the Liturgy, the question becomes more acute; is the Liturgy no more than a pious transposition or does it make use of

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the real content of the Old Testament when it makes us pray in the words of the psalmist or the prophets, or makes us apply to ourselves the deliverance of Israel or the night of the pasch? And, to speak plainly, what did St Paul mean when he wrote: '*omnia contingebant illis in figura*'?

It is well known that modern exegesis has had to pursue paths which at first sight can hardly be said to favour this constant and almost explicit presence of the New Testament in the Old. The study of literary genres and of comparative literature has necessitated an insistence on the inchoative and pedagogical character of Revelation. Instead of seeing in the first chapters of Genesis the mysteries which Origen and Augustine discovered there, a popular and very simple presentation of the Creator as one only God is now recognised as their content. Truth has lost nothing by such admissions; the first chapters of Genesis—to speak of Genesis alone—have revealed in a manner perhaps still more pregnant how rich their content is. The crude character of their form has only served to throw more clearly into relief the sublimity of their content: man created in God's image in a communication of the divine breathing; the sin of pride followed by the unleashing of man's lower forces; death, and maternity that would be painful, as well as work, being the punishments of man's refusal to occupy his true place in the sight of God. Then came the slow remoulding of humanity by God. One people was chosen and, centring itself from the beginning on the unicity of its God, it slowly separated itself from the other nations. Its contact with God became more intimate, its seclusion more marked; the spirituality of the prophets succeeded that of the patriarchs with their confidence in the word of God and their conception of the perpetuity of their race as the greatest fulfilment of his promise. The perspective became enlarged and the seed of hope planted at the very outset of the drama of sin gradually developed with the messianic perspective. Thus was accomplished the era which was to finish with the revelation of Christ, a revelation which had been sufficiently prepared for him to be able to affirm that a conscientious reading of the Scriptures would have led men to recognise him.

Seen in this perspective the history of the people of God loses nothing of its supernatural quality or of its vigour. Several excellent publications have already endeavoured to extract the spiritual lessons to be learnt from a reading of the Bible undertaken

in this light.¹ Exegesis, on the other hand, without losing sight of this providential perspective, feels itself better equipped to handle the instruments and information furnished by contemporary criticism. The voice of the Church never ceases to encourage this, and the encyclical *Divino Afflante Spiritu* has recently set its seal on and highly approved the tendency represented by those who saw that truth had nothing to fear from genuine research.

It is at this point that other investigators, no less conscientious about the integrity of their work and contact with the sources, have come into the field. Not that they call in question the value of the efforts already made, but they fear that by dint of utilising scientific method and considering the phenomenon of the people of Israel historically, the essential content of the Holy Book may be overlooked. Both the modern apostolate and the rude shocks which our times have had to sustain have caused men's minds to turn with increasing insistence towards the period when the Church in the freshness and spontaneity of its youth won over a corrupt civilisation to the heroism of Christian martyrdom. The very buildings of that period seem to carry within themselves a sap and vigour which our over-elaborate presentations have too often lost. And was not one of the great features of this teaching the placing of the Christian within a drama the acts of which were multiple but always similar, and which were all explained and fulfilled in the victory of Christ? It was the great purification of the Flood, symbol of the eschatological cataclysm and of the great renewal of baptism. The exodus of the people of Israel demonstrated to the world the greater exodus of the Christian paschal night. A certain people had been chosen by God, and what happened to this people was in function of the total perfecting towards which it was progressing. Noe, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Josue, David—so many beacons, so many acts of election, of sacrifice, of liberation which would find their explanation in Christ and in those who would be his members. All this marvellous history, like the legislation and the sapiential teaching, the Christian can, nay must, make his own, provided that he passes beyond the signs and cleaves to the reality to which they point. The primitive liturgy is based on this assumption and the exegesis of the Fathers

¹ Among others we should like to instance the Collection 'Témoins de Dieu' and various articles in *La Vie Spirituelle* such as 'Moïse' by Caselles (1946, pp. 405-419) and 'La Vie Intérieure à l'École de l'Éclésiastique' by C. J. Kearns, O.P. (1950, pp. 137-146).

is meaningless if one claims to reduce the import of the Old Testament to less.

Expression has been given to these ideas rather pungently on the occasion of a controversy around an article of the Abbé Steinmann.² The author, one of the most successful exegetes in the use of modern critical methods, expounded the point of view of the modern exegete wholly concerned with defining and limiting the literal sense, and that of the exegete of former times anxious to get beyond the letter (and its difficulties) in order to come in contact with the spirit. At the end of his article M. Steinmann, endeavouring to effect a reasonable conciliation of the two positions, invoked Sacy. Retaining only the assertions of 'Richard Simon', Paul Claudel, who had already attacked the position of the Abbé Steinmann in the *Vie Intellectuelle*, wrote two very pungent letters which *Dieu Vivant* published with an erudite note from the orientalist Massignon and Père Daniélou.³ Paul Claudel, who has created a whole poetics for himself by adopting the allegorical procedure of the Fathers, protested against a conception according to which 'the New Testament has come to crown, successfully or unsuccessfully, the substructures of the Old, whose editors in no wise foresaw the fuller meaning'. To M. Steinmann's exegesis Père Daniélou opposes 'a philological and archaeological exegesis, "making epilogues" on dusty documents'—'a complete exegesis'—which 're-establishes the spiritual meaning at the very heart of the exegesis itself' and 'will re-discover the Church's traditional exegesis rendered more precise by the contributions of Biblical criticism'.

No one has worked harder than Père Daniélou, unless perhaps his confrère Père de Lubac, for the honour of the 'spiritual sense' and to establish its legitimacy scientifically. A series of studies collected and published as *Sacramentum Futuri* has given him the opportunity of investigating the typological value of Paradise, the Flood, the sacrifice of Isaac, the exodus and Josue; subsequent studies on 'La Typologie de la femme dans l'Ancien Testament' and 'Rahab, figure de l'Église' have appeared. Père de Lubac has made an important contribution in his 'Histoire et Esprit', a profound study of Origen's exegesis. Such works (other names and

² 'Entretien de Pascal et du Père Richard Simon sur le Sens de l'Écriture' (*Vie Intellectuelle*, March 1949, pp. 239-253).

³ *Dieu Vivant*, xiv. 'Sur l'exégèse biblique'.

titles could be cited) are noteworthy for their wealth of information and their concern for accuracy. The patrologist is indebted to them for an important elucidation of the idea of the Fathers in using allegory. There was little or no question, even with Origen, of denying the historical meaning of a fact or event but a concern to justify its mention in the Scriptures! The influence of the surrounding milieu has been considerable; rabbinical and philonic allegory have intervened and there is no question of defending the subtleties and the hundred and one accommodations which such allegory has inspired in the Fathers; although the latter, in the interpretation of numbers for instance, have often proved to be right, more familiar as they were than we are with the constructions which a particular sacred author, St John, for instance, used in writing his work. But, making due allowance for personal exegesis and separating the chaff from the good grain, a solid block remains: the typology of the great realities of the Old Testament. It is 'the traditional doctrine of the spiritual sense . . . the very expression of the relationship of the Old Covenant with eschatology, as the prophets even in their time and the New Testament later, taught it before the Fathers of the Church.'⁴

Here we touch on the two best arguments put forward in favour of typology. The first is that the New Testament is actually composed in function of the great themes of the Old. Thus the exodus is everywhere present in St John's Gospel. The person of Noe haunts the mind of primitive Christianity as does that of Josue; the place assigned to these themes in apocalyptic literature can but confirm the basic truth of such assertions. The primitive Church, that marvellous interpreter of the New Testament, testifies to their authenticity. Further, making explicit reference to the works of the Rev. G. Hebert, *The Throne of David, The Authority of the Old Testament*, our authors have maintained that the Old Testament itself placed the facts and events of the past in the perspective of the facts and events contemporary with its final version. This analysis of themes has, for instance, enabled Père Daniélou to lay the firm foundations of an exegesis which was dear to the Fathers but the acceptance of which might seem difficult to us. Tradition has always seen in the courtesan Rahab the figure of the pagans called into the Church and, more especially, in the red ribbon which will save her house from

⁴ *Dieu Vivant*, xiv, p. 75.

destruction, a type of the redeeming blood of Christ. This latter point, which seems so blatantly an accommodation, will no longer appear so once it is admitted that this story was written within the perspective of another catastrophe, that of the first pasch when the Israelites were protected from the destroying angel by the blood with which they sprinkled their door-posts. Other themes dear to Christian symbolism, wood, water, would find similar justification. To such developments, rich as they are in authentic discoveries, it may perhaps be objected that if some themes are obviously typological (that of the exodus, for instance), others are much less certainly so. The reason I say that the theme of the exodus is obviously typological is that on the one hand it contains the idea of redemption of an elected people within a perspective which is wider than the historical fact, and, on the other, the New Testament is too closely centred in this typology for us to be able to reduce it to an allegory as it stands. This is apparent from the paschal context in which the history of Christ is set. But I am by no means convinced that the same evidence holds good in the majority of the other cases.

The other argument in favour of a fairly highly-developed typology is drawn from the Fathers' approach to revealed data. This approach is essentially concrete, it views Christianity as the fulfilment in Christ of the historical drama opened by Adam's sin. The central mystery of Christian teaching is the paschal mystery which by its liberation in Christ and the sacrament leads the new Israel to the repose of supernatural realities now reconquered. In the world, the eye sees only Christ and his people, announced by a foreordained Israel, but fulfilled in the true Israel. The Scriptures thus assume their full meaning with the mystery of Christ who is the key to and fulfilment of the whole of God's action on humanity. Nothing concerns us so much as this action, but without the mystery of Christ no explanation of this action, continued as it is at every moment of time, is possible. That is why typological exegesis is essential to Christian teaching itself. Here, through patristics, we link up with the conclusions which A. Jungmann reached about fifteen years ago through the Liturgy.

The facts put forward are clearly undeniable and the sum total of the work which has led to these results forms one of the finest achievements of contemporary Catholic scholarship. But the theory which has been deduced from the facts is perhaps less

certain. We have already pointed out that for the Fathers catechesis does not derive from, but precedes, inspires and directs this exegesis. The patrologist further observes that the basis of these investigations supplies good material for defining the interpretation common to several Fathers and the most famous ones at that. But a whole line of exegetes, among whom may be instanced the mast of St Jerome, Apollinarius of Laodicea, the great commentator St John Chrysostom, the shrewd exegete Theodore of Mop-suesta whose work has been made accessible to us in the course of recent decades, make little account of it. On the other hand, even in the case of the Fathers who have used typology, the latter is not exclusive in their exegesis. St Ambrose wrote works on the patriarchs which are excellent moral exhortations but which scarcely go beyond what the Bible itself, at its most literal, tells us about the subject. And in particular, to confuse exegesis and theology in the case of such authors is to ignore the great theological works which in the eyes of both the authors themselves and their contemporaries set forth the very substance of the faith: especially one should bear in mind Athanasius' *Discourse against the Arians* or Augustine's *De Trinitate*. Neither typology nor the historical concept of the doctrine could account for it.

It thus seems that the arguments set forth in favour of typological exegesis on a vast scale cannot be accepted without reserve. Without speaking of the problem of prophecy, there is a prefiguration of the New Testament in the Old. The witness of St Paul in the first Epistle to the Corinthians, the unanimity of liturgical tradition, the express teaching of the Encyclicals forbid us to doubt this. Exegetes have not rejected the problem nor questioned the fact itself. They have doubtless had no difficulty in showing that several of the references in the New Testament to the Old are based on something which is not direct and explicit typology. Rabbinical exegesis, the desire to show that the new covenant included as much as, and more than, the old; accommodation in short—a process perfectly natural to minds as steeped in the letter of the Old Testament as those of the authors of the New, have had their place here and provide the obvious explanation of a book like the Epistle to the Hebrews. It remains true that there is prefiguration in certain events, but how is it to be understood? One of the most distinguished of contemporary exegetes, Canon Coppens, has devoted his attention to this matter in the

course of a learned study on 'Les Harmonies des Deux Testaments'. If I understand him rightly, it is in the *sensus plenior* of Scripture that he finds the most authentic 'spiritual sense'. Throughout his argument, which is dependent upon and connected with other labours in the same field, the author is scrupulously careful not to force the letter and not to put anything in the text which may be the result of a subjective view. His solution is consciously directed towards the perspective indicated for prophecy by the school of Antioch, the theory with which a series of recent works has been concerned. One accepts the fundamental idea of it, namely that the sacred author laid hold of the germ rather than of the complete reality. The rules of language, which demand that the rich content of the idea shall not be exhausted by one word alone, are recalled and hold *a fortiori* when we are dealing with a Semitic language in which words are much less rigorous than in our own. Thus the idea can be enlarged and can develop its potentialities; the latter will then be indicated either by the whole in which the word is found or by the providential but homogeneous course in accordance with which the doctrine has been developed and clarified. The definition which Canon Coppens gives is clear and sufficiently explicit to show his position clearly; the full sense is 'the ensemble of the virtual relationships which attach a text of the Old Testament to the Christian faith and which derive from the affinities it possesses with Christian teaching as well as its participation in the doctrinal and historical development which has led the Old Testament to the New'.⁵ As regards the typological sense properly so-called, Coppens seriously questions the value of Père Daniélou's arguments and the right to appeal from them to Scripture and Tradition to justify their use on a large scale.

With this well-weighed expression of the full sense, many will declare themselves satisfied. It does not hamper the work of the exegete, it does not compromise his acceptance of modern methods of interpretation, it leaves the door open as far as the great harmonies between the two Testaments are concerned. I do not think one could better illustrate or to a large extent justify it than by saying that for practical purposes the text of the Vulgate provides a development of this full sense. In composing his Latin text and the *veritas hebraica* notwithstanding, St Jerome on the whole speaks the language of a Christian with the wealth of

⁵ *Nouvelle Revue Théologique*, Jan. 1949, p. 38.

almost four centuries of Christianity already behind him. Because he was both scholar and exegete by nature, he refrained from forcing the text which he was translating. It remains incontestable that he has produced a book in which the New Testament values lie much closer to the surface than in the original, and it is this which made the Bible so easily accessible to medieval prayer and theology; again, this is what makes St Jerome's psalter of value today, despite obvious weaknesses. I would not say that the full sense is here the key to the whole text, but rather that there is no better characterisation of the Vulgate than by the evocation of the full sense.

And yet we think that Canon Coppens goes too far in urging his point of view. The great typologies of the exodus, of the elected people, of the prophet king, seem to us to overlap too far into the teaching of the New Testament itself for one to be able to refuse to recognise their authenticity. Without making typology into a theology, without making as extensive a use of it as people would wish today, we think it remains true that certain features are repeated in Revelation and that they could not thus concur unless the intention of God had willed it. The pasch is essential to the mystery of Redemption. And perhaps the only reason we are able to deny the extension of typology we have criticised above is because we do not believe, great as it is, that the paschal mystery is the whole of Christian teaching. It remains in the order of means, and faith moves through and beyond the historical fact towards the Triune God who is above all movement and all figure; Christ yesterday, today and the same for ever, but Christ outside the terrestrial city, Christ beyond the veil, where there is no longer a temple, for God and the Lamb are the temple.

(translated by KATHLEEN POND)

NOTICE

The April issue of BLACKFRIARS will include 'Justice and the Laws' by Sir Henry Slessor (the second article in the series on Contemporary Moral Problems).