

the administration of the law. 'Unless the adult members of society possess enough self-control and intelligence to understand and obey the law if they wish, social life becomes impossible in any form but that of a slave society.' He further emphasizes that guilt is not an illusion. It is an awful reality, though not (for a Christian) the final reality. 'The grace of God dwarfs all calculations of merit or demerit.'

In the conclusion, this problem of the relative guilt of society and the offender tends to obscure Lord Pakenham's vision. The reason does him credit: he is so overflowing with passionate sympathy for the man in collision with the majesty of the Law that he seeks to shift the burden in every way possible. He certainly admits that 'Human law and human penalties in accordance with human justice are in principle at least . . . sanctioned by the best Christian thinking', but later on he writes (and this is his 'new approach' to crime and criminals), 'Once we see delinquents as people who may be receiving justice, but may equally be receiving gross injustice at our hands, we shall approach each individual prisoner on the assumption that it is at least possible that he ought not to be there at all . . .'

Now nearly everyone who has had practical contact with criminals is agreed that the great stumbling block to reform is their inability to appreciate the fact that what they did was wrong and that they themselves were responsible. I cannot think Lord Pakenham's attitude could help them. It is Dr Moberley's view that if he is not definitely pathological 'it is disastrous to lead a man to believe that he is more sinned against than sinning and to imply that strenuous moral effort on his part is unnecessary'. We should without doubt bear one another's burdens, but we cannot lead one another's lives. It is the defect of a most stimulating and inspiring study that the author tends sometimes to forget—or seems to forget—this fact.

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ORIGEN, THE SONG OF SONGS: COMMENTARY AND HOMILIES. Translated and annotated by R. P. Lawson. (Ancient Christian Writers, No. 26. Longmans; 21s.)

'While Origen surpassed all other writers in his other books, in his *Song of Songs* he surpassed himself.' This is the judgment of St Jerome, writing to Pope Damasus in his dedicatory letter prefixed to his own translation of the two Homilies. Jerome does not give us his reasons for this judgment. We may conjecture, however, that for a man so deeply concerned with the text and the letter of the Scripture as St Jerome, Origen's method of interpretation would commend itself most when applied—as it is in these Homilies—to a dramatic poem rather than to an historical narrative. For a modern reader, too,

Origen's mystical or spiritual interpretation of the *Song of Songs* must seem less artificial, more in touch with the true bearing of the Biblical imagery, than other examples of its use.

Origen's approach to this love-poem was not new. The rabbinic tradition had already seen in it a marriage-song celebrating the nuptials of Israel to Yahweh; and Christian commentators soon discerned the relevance of its imagery to the marriage of the new Israel, the Bride of Christ, to the Bridegroom. Origen's work takes its place in an already established tradition. His own, peculiar, search for a threefold meaning in Scripture did, however, give rise to a new contribution to the Church's bridal imagery. Approaching the Scriptures armed with his threefold scheme of body-soul-spirit, with the three senses, literal, psychical and spiritual to correspond to its terms, his quest for a 'psychical' meaning revealed to him a third sense. In addition to the plain literal sense of the poem, which he describes as an 'epithalamion', and the spiritual sense which it has in relation to the Church's nuptials with Christ, he introduced a third sense. This is the 'psychical' sense, according to which the poem has a further reference to the betrothal of the Christian soul with the Logos. Origen may not have been the first to allude to this further dimension of meaning; but he is certainly the first to have established it definitively within the Church's tradition of bridal imagery, and the first to have deepened its significance to an extent such as to secure for it a lasting and central place within the main stream of Christian spirituality.

The translation here offered is excellent, the brief introduction and scholarly notes are sufficient to allow the layman to appreciate the text, and the student to pursue some of the more obscure or controversial questions further. On the controversial passage of the Prologue to the *Commentary* (pp. 30-35 of the present translation), there is, surprisingly, no mention in the notes of the criticism voiced by writers like Harnack and Nygren. There are a few minor errors of translation. On page 36, *ille amor probabilis est qui Deo et animi virtutibus coaptatur* would have been rendered less misleadingly as 'the only laudable love is that which is fitting to [instead of 'directed to'] God and to the powers of the soul': on page 119, the rendering of *Mesochorus* by 'chorus-leader' is both inaccurate and misses the dramatic significance which Origen expounds in more detail in his stage-setting given at the beginning of the Second Homily. These and a few even more unimportant slips scarcely detract from the accuracy and liveliness sustained throughout the translation, reaching, at times, singularly felicitous combinations of racy idiom and precision.

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